

State tests in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math are required once a year by the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and are designed to provide important information about whether students are prepared to progress through school and graduate with the critical thinking, problem-solving, and reasoning skills they need for long-term success in school, college, and careers, and life, and to support students in their pursuit of economic security and a choice-filled life.

When are the State tests for grades 3–8?

ELA: April 19-20	Math: May 2-3
Make-up ELA: April 24-28	Make-up Math: May 4-11

Some schools may have previously approved alternate testing schedules. Any modification requires approval from the Office of Assessment but still must adhere to the administration windows as defined by the New York State Education Department.

Why are State tests important?

State tests are an important part of a student’s core educational program. Students and families benefit when:

- They receive detailed information about students’ performance on tests aligned to the standards they should be reaching in their curricula.
- Schools have measures to determine whether every student has the same foundation to prepare them for college, careers, and life.
- Schools have data to determine which students or groups of students are progressing, which are falling behind and need more support, which are excelling, and where teachers might need extra support.

How has the pressure of test taking been reduced in response to public concerns?

The New York State Education Department has made a number of changes in recent years to the Grades 3-8 tests in response to public concern. The changes include reducing the number of questions, decreasing the number of test sessions, and moving to untimed testing. Additionally, the New York State Education Department has involved NYC teachers in developing test items to ensure that tests are aligned with classroom instruction.

For more information about the types of items and number of test questions, see [these guides on NYSED's website](#).¹

Test results cannot be used as the sole or primary measure for promotion or admissions decisions. During the year, schools assess student progress toward attaining New York State Learning Standards. Students are assessed using multiple measures that include but are not limited to grades, report cards, samples of student writing, projects, assignments, and other performance-based student work.

How long does a student have to complete a State exam?

¹ <http://www.nysed.gov/state-assessment/grades-3-8-ela-and-math-test-manuals>

State tests are untimed. Students who need more time will be able to work at their own pace to better demonstrate what they know and can do. Students have as much time as needed within the confines of the regular school day to complete the tests as long as they are productively working.

Schools should continue to group students in testing rooms based on the expected testing times needed.

What happens if a student is not present in school when the test is being administered?

Schools should make every effort to ensure high attendance and student participation during the initial test administration. For students who are not present during the test, they should be tested during the make-up period when they return to school.

If students are also not present in school during the make-up test administration period, then they will not be tested. No additional test administrations will be provided, and students will not be penalized or retained in the same grade solely for not taking a State test.

Is there a provision for parents to opt their children out of State tests or request an alternative evaluation?

There is no formal opt-out provision, permission process, or option to request an alternative evaluation for the State tests; however, parents who want to opt their child out of State tests are encouraged to consult with the principal. If, after consulting with the principal, a parent still wants to opt their child out of the exams, the principal must respect the parent's decision and should maintain a written record of this conversation.

What should a principal do if parents express an interest in opting their children out of the State exams?

State tests are an important part of a student's core educational program, as students, families and teachers receive detailed information about students' performance on tests aligned to the standards they should be reaching in their curricula.

The principal should offer to meet with parents (individually or as a group) to discuss their concerns. The principal may want to explain that the State and all schools in the State are subject to the requirement that 95% of students in tested grades are tested each year, but that over time the State has made changes to the exams in response to legitimate concerns from parents and educators over previous years' tests, including greater teacher involvement with test development activities. Each test has two sessions and no time limit for students as long as they are working productively. Students can work at their own pace, which should help alleviate testing stress for both students and parents.

The principal may also want to explain that a student's test scores are only one of a number of factors that evaluate his or her academic progress and that these scores are never weighed more heavily than factors such as class grades, projects, and classroom activities in making promotion or admissions decisions. The principal may also want to describe the impacts of refusing to sit for the State exams (as detailed below). If, after consulting with the principal, the parents still do not want their child to take the exams, the principal should respect the parents' decision and let them know that the school will work to the best of their ability to provide the child with an alternate educational activity (e.g., reading) during testing times. The parent and the principal should maintain a written record of this conversation.

What happens during test administration if a student refuses to take a state exam?

If a student is in school and refuses to take the entire State test, the school will fill in the “Refused Session” bubble on the answer document for each test session. The school must make every effort to arrange for another instructional activity, such as reading or completing another project or assignment.

What happens after test administration if a student refuses to participate in State testing?

Students who do not participate will not receive a score. Please note that students who answer one or more questions on any part of the test will be considered a tested student and receive a score.

Test results and promotion

As noted above, test results cannot be used as the sole or primary measure for promotion or admissions decisions. Given the promotion timeline for the 2022-23 school year and the multiple measures that schools can use to measure student progress, schools should be prepared to make promotion decisions without State test scores as one of their measures.

For more information about the promotion policies, including the promotion criteria for English Language Learners and students with IEPs, see [Promotion Policy and Process](#).²

How does test participation impact state and federal accountability for school performance?

New York State’s previously approved ESSA plan contains a number of provisions relating to test participation. As of March 2023, New York State does not yet have a draft plan for State Accountability for 2023-24 statuses based on 2022-23 data. In recent years, the plans covering data for each school year have only been released after the school year was over. Prior state and federal accountability processes are described below:

Two Achievement Measures:

For the elementary and middle school grade levels, two sets of indexes (the Weighted Average Achievement Index and the Core Subject Performance Index, WAAI) are calculated for each school by combining performance on state ELA, Math, and Science exams.

There is one key difference between the Core Subject Performance Index (CSPI) and the Weighted Average Achievement Index (WAAI). CSPI is based only on continuously enrolled and tested students. Schools are not penalized on this index if less than 95% of students are tested. The WAAI on the other hand, includes all continuously enrolled students regardless of their tested status, and will only be relevant to schools where fewer than 95% of students participate in testing. This means that if more than 5% of students are not tested, then any additional non-tested students will count as level 1 on this performance index.

Recognition Schools:

² <https://infohub.nyced.org/nyc-doe/topics/Policies/promotion-policy-process>

Prior to the pandemic, schools could be designated “Recognition Schools” if they showed strong performance and progress and maintained a participation rate above 95%. In prior years, schools in NYC met all other requirements but did not meet the test participation rate requirement, which prevented them from being designated for Recognition. At this time, we do not know when or if the Recognition status will be resumed.

Plans and Audits:

There is also a separate provision in the ESSA regulations that requires schools whose test participation rate is under 95% to create a “school self-assessment & participation rate improvement plan.” In the past, schools were required to make a Participation Rate Improvement Plan (PRIP) if they are under 95% for two years in a row and have declines for two years in a row and have a level two or lower on the Weighted Average Achievement Rate. Comprehensive Support and Improvement schools (CSI) and Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) schools that must complete the PRIP will not be able to exit their CSI or TSI status until participation improves. For schools in the bottom 10% statewide participation rate, the plan requires NYSED Commissioner approval before the next testing period. Bottom 10% schools would also have the following escalating requirements in subsequent years if their participation rate does not improve:

- a. Year One: School self-assessment & participation rate improvement plan for Commissioner approval before the next testing period.
- b. Year Two: District participation rate audit & district participation rate improvement plan for the school.
- c. Year Three: Contract with a BOCES to conduct a participation rate audit & participation rate improvement plan.
- d. Year Four: Required by NYSED to implement activities to increase participation rate.

The PRIP requirement was not enforced for the 2021 nor 2022 exams. At this time, we do not know whether or how it may be enforced for 2023.

How does test participation impact the NYC DOE School Quality Reports?

How test scores from the 2023 ELA and Math exams may be used in School Quality Reports for 2022-23 has not yet been determined.

How will this year’s State test results impact teacher and principal ratings?

Teachers: State tests are eligible for use in Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) this year. Similar to last year, they remain optional instead of required as they were in past years. Depending on each school’s MOSL selection criteria, state test results may or may not impact teacher ratings.

Principals: Principal MOSL has not yet been determined for 2022-23.

Must students who are taking Regents exams participate in the State test for their grade level?

In an effort to reduce the number of standardized tests students take, the following policies apply to math and science:

- Students in grades 6 through 8 in high school math courses where a Regents exam is the culminating assessment are exempt from the NYSED math test for their grade level. Schools must not administer the grade-level test to these students unless their parents request it.
- Students in grade 7 or 8 in high school science courses where a Regents exam is the culminating assessment are exempt from the intermediate-level science test. Schools must not administer the grade-level test to these students unless their parents request it.

Schools must administer the grade-level ELA test to middle school students taking courses that culminate in the English Regents exam in June.

See the [Middle School Academic Policy Guide](#)³ (page 15) for more information.

Can parents review their children’s tests after they have been administered?

Parents may review portions of their children’s tests after they have been administered. Parents may contact their child’s school to request a review of their child’s responses to open-ended questions in English Language Arts Books 1 and 2 and Mathematics Book 2. The review must take place in the presence of school personnel.

The State does not permit parents to review their children’s responses to the multiple-choice component of their children’s test. Instead, alongside score release, they have historically released a portion of the questions on their [website](#)⁴ to illustrate the types of questions that appear on the exams.

Parents can view their child’s scores through their [NYC Schools Account](#).⁵ The State also distributes Individual Student Reports that provide more detailed information about student performance. Those reports are available to schools through the L2RPT Reporting System. Families may reach out to their child’s teacher or principal to discuss State test scores and overall academic progress.

What are field tests, and why are they given? Is parent permission required for field testing? Can parents opt out of field testing?

Through field testing, the State tries out new questions to make sure they are valid, reliable, and unbiased before they are included in operational tests. Without field testing, there is no way to ensure that test questions are fair and accurate. Field testing ensures that questions are valid, meaning that the questions measure what they are intended to measure. Field testing also ensures reliability, meaning that the tests produce consistent and stable results. An important part of this process is ensuring that test questions are not biased against any group of students.

Similar to State tests, there is no formal opt-out provision or permission process for field tests. If a student is in school and refuses to take a field test, the school will indicate that the student refused testing. While there are no specific consequences for individual students who do not participate, field tests are an important part of the test development process.

³ <https://infohub.nyced.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/AcPolicy-MiddleSchoolAcademicPolicyGuide>

⁴ <http://www.nysed.gov/state-assessment/past-grades-3-8-tests>

⁵ <https://www.schoolsaccount.nyc/>

What field tests are being given to students this spring?

Field test questions will be included in the operational tests, and additional stand-alone field tests will be administered later this spring. Because field testing takes place during the school day, the State has taken steps to minimize the impact of field testing on instructional time:

- Multiple choice field test questions are included on the operational math and ELA tests to reduce the number of standalone field tests required. So, within the operational tests administered in the spring, there will be some embedded multiple choice field test questions spread throughout each section of the test. These questions will not be included in students' scores. Students will not know which questions are field test questions and which questions will count towards their score.
- In addition, standalone field tests will try out additional multiple-choice questions and open-response questions, which cannot be included in the operational tests. Schools are only selected for standalone field testing once a year. Schools will be selected for field testing in math or ELA, not both. Schools that are selected will administer field tests in no more than two grades. School staff will not be responsible for scoring these field tests.
- Field tests take no more than one period to administer, and students engage in regular instruction for the remainder of the school day.

This year, every school chosen by the State to participate in field testing is required by the NYCDOE to participate in computer-based field testing. Schools participating in the spring will be informed by the State of the grade and subject they are required to administer to students.