PARENTS' FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT NEW YORK STATE'S ANNUAL GRADES 3–8 ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS & MATHEMATICS TESTS & THE ELEMENTARY-LEVEL (GRADE 5) AND INTERMEDIATE-LEVEL (GRADE 8) SCIENCE TESTS

The Grades 3–8 English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, and Science Tests are administered in the spring to students across New York State. These annual tests for students in Grades 3–8 are required by the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015. Public and charter school students enrolled in Grades 3–8 are expected to take the ELA, math, and science tests administered for their grade level. The tests are designed to measure how well students are mastering the learning standards that guide classroom instruction and are a valuable tool used to help ensure students have the support needed to succeed. The tests can also help identify any learning needs a student may have. The annual tests are one measure used to assess student learning and is one tool of many used by educators to ensure students are getting the services and supports they need to prepare for career, college, and civic readiness.

1. **What is computer-based testing (CBT)?**
   - Students in Grades 3–8 take the ELA, mathematics, and science tests via CBT.
   - Students testing on computer will select their answers for the multiple-choice questions on the computer instead of on an answer sheet and will type their responses to the open-ended questions on the computer instead of handwriting them in paper test booklets. For the science tests, students will also respond to technology-enhanced items. Technology enhanced items include graphing items, drag-and-drop items, multi-select items, and grid items.
   - The Question Sampler (https://ny.nextera.questarai.com/tds/#practice) is available publicly online and offers an opportunity for students, parents, and educators to become familiar with CBT.
   - Paper-based testing is available as an accommodation for students who, according to their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or Section 504 Plans, must test on paper and for students who require an alternate language edition or oral translation of the mathematics or science test. In addition, paper-based testing is available to religious and independent schools who do not make use of technology in the classroom because of religious beliefs.

2. **When will the tests be administered?**
   - There will be a multiple-week window to administer the Grades 3–8 ELA, Mathematics, and Science Tests. The testing schedule is available online (https://www.nysed.gov/state-assessment/testing-schedules).
   - Schools will select two consecutive school days within the window for ELA and mathematics and one day for science. Make-ups can be administered up until the end of the window. The expanded computer-based testing window provides greater flexibility to schools.

3. **How long are the tests?**
   - The Grades 3–8 ELA and Mathematics Tests consist of two sessions each that are administered over two consecutive days.
   - The Grades 5 & 8 Science Tests consist of a single session that is administered in one day.

4. **Will the tests be untimed?**
   - The Grades 3–8 English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, and Science Tests are untimed. Schools and districts have the discretion to create their own approaches to ensure that all students who are productively working are given the time they need within the confines of the regular school day to take the tests. A supervised lunch break should be arranged for students during any of the test sessions if necessary.
   - If the test is given in a large-group setting, administrators may permit students who finish to hand in their test materials (or submit the test if testing on computer) and leave the room. If so, students should exit quietly so they do not disturb any students still working.
   - While exact testing times will vary by student, estimated testing times are in the Educator Guides for ELA, Mathematics, and Science (https://www.nysed.gov/state-assessment/grades-3-8-test-manuals).

5. **What types of questions are asked on the tests?**
   - The tests include multiple-choice, open-ended questions, and technology-enhanced items, which assess the students' learning of the standards.
   - The questions require students to apply their knowledge and, in open-ended responses, explain their reasoning. Students will read texts, write responses, and solve real-world word problems, all of which are foundational skills necessary for success in their next grade.
   - Released test questions are posted on the Department's website (https://www.nysed.gov/state-assessment/past-grades-3-8-tests) for review.
   - Additional information on the test design is available in the ELA, Mathematics, and Science Educator Guides.

6. **How are New York State teachers involved in the test development process?**
   - Hundreds of New York State educators were involved in creating, reviewing, and selecting questions for the tests to ensure each question is fair and accessible for all students.

7. **Are there testing accommodations for students with disabilities?**
   - Yes. Testing accommodations are changes made in the administration of the tests that provide an opportunity for students with disabilities to demonstrate mastery of skills and attainment of knowledge without being limited or unfairly restricted due to the effects of a disability. Specific testing accommodations are recommended for individual students by the school's Committee on Special Education (CSE) or Section 504 Committee based on the student's unique needs.
   - Testing accommodations must be documented on students' IEPs or Section 504 Plans and could include: flexibility in scheduling (e.g., scheduled breaks); flexibility in the test setting (e.g., separate location); changes in test presentation (e.g., enlarged print); and changes in the method of response (e.g., use of a scribe for written responses).
   - Principals are responsible for ensuring that accommodations for students with disabilities are implemented on all State and local tests consistent with the recommendations in the IEP/Section 504 plan and in accordance with Department policy.

8. **Do English Language Learners (ELLs) who are new to the United States take the Grades 3–8 ELA Tests?**
   - For the Grades 3–8 ELA Tests, schools are allowed to exempt ELLs (including those from Puerto Rico) who, on April 1 will have been attending school in the U.S. for the first time for less than one year.
   - All other ELLs are expected to participate in the ELA tests.
   - There are no exemptions for students from the mathematics or science tests.

9. **Are there testing accommodations for English Language Learners (ELLs)?**
   - Yes. The school principal may authorize certain testing accommodations to ELLs in accordance with their best judgment about the needs of these students. Principals should consult with each student's classroom teacher in making these determinations.
   - Testing accommodations could include, for the ELA, mathematics, and science tests, separate location and bilingual glossaries; and, for the mathematics and science tests only, translated paper editions in Arabic, Bengali, Chinese (Simplified), Chinese (Traditional), Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian, and Spanish; oral translation (for lower-incidence languages); and writing responses in students' home language.

10. **What will I learn from my child's score report?**
    - The results of the annual assessments will provide information about your child's academic progress and achievement. You can use your child's score report to guide a discussion with your child's teacher(s) about additional supports that may be helpful in school, as well as ways to support your child's learning at home.
    - The report will show how your child scored in specific skill and concept areas.
    - State test results may differ from the information on your child's school report card. Report card grades are cumulative and based on many factors, including class participation, homework, attendance, quizzes, tests, and other instructional activities, all of which are important in determining a child's academic achievement.

11. **When will the test results be available?**
    - We anticipate the test results will be available in September.

12. **How will the test results be used?**
    - The results can be used to see how schools, districts, and the State overall are progressing with the State learning standards. Last year's scores for your school/district are available on the Department's public data site (https://data.nysed.gov/).
    - State law and Regulations of the Education Commissioner prohibit school districts from making promotion or placement decisions based solely or primarily on student performance on these tests. However, the statute provides that a district may consider student performance on the assessments in these decisions provided it uses multiple measures in addition to the assessments and the assessments do not constitute the major factor in such determinations. Districts should also establish procedures to ensure that parents/students are involved in and may appeal such determinations.
    - Additionally, the results cannot be used to evaluate teachers.

13. **How are the state assessments different from the other assessments that my child takes in school?**
    - Schools use a number of assessment strategies throughout the year to provide information about what students know and are able to do. This local assessment of student learning allows appropriate services and supports to be provided to students. To get a full picture of the learning that has taken place, district- or teacher-developed assessments, vendor-developed assessments, coursework, and portfolio- or project-based assignments may all come into play. These measures can be formal or informal, formative or summative, and/or pencil and paper or computerized.
    - State assessments provide a critical picture of opportunity to learn across New York State. Based on the results, the Department can identify areas that would benefit from additional resources or support from Department staff. The purpose of assessing and identifying where support can benefit students and educators is to foster equity.
    - Each type of assessment has a specific role to play, and a full picture of student achievement is best seen when these multiple measures are reviewed together.