

*The federal Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 maintains the requirement that students in Grades 3-8 are tested once a year in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math. The tests are designed to measure how well students are mastering the learning standards that guide classroom instruction and ensure that students are on track to graduate from high school with the critical thinking, problem solving, and reasoning skills needed for success in college and the modern workplace.*

### **When are the State tests for grades 3–8?**

ELA tests: April 11-12, 2018

Make-up ELA tests: April 13, and April 16-18.

Math tests: May 1-2, 2018

Make-up Math tests: May 3-4, and May 7-9.

A complete test schedule by grade level is available on the online school [calendar](#).

### **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 or not every student has the same basic 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?**

In response to public concerns, the New York State Education Department has made a number of changes to the Grades 3-8 tests including:

- Moving to untimed testing
- Reducing the number of questions on the tests
- Decreasing the number of test sessions from three days to two days for both the ELA and Math tests, and further reducing the number of questions
- Involving NYC teachers in developing test items.

For more information about the types of items and number of test questions, see [these guides on Engage NY](#).

Test results are no longer used as the sole measure for promotion or admissions decisions. During the year, schools assess student progress toward attaining Common Core Learning Standards. Students are assessed using multiple measures that include but are not limited to grades, report cards, samples of student writing, projects, assignments, other performance-based student work, as well as State test scores. State test scores

may be considered, but they may not be the primary or major factor in promotion decisions. Students may not be penalized or retained in the same grade solely for not taking a State test.

For more information about the promotion policies, including the promotion criteria for English language learners and students with IEPs, see [“What to Expect: Promotion and Summer School.”](#)<sup>1</sup>

Some middle and high schools have academically screened programs that use test scores as one of several criteria for admissions, as described in the [Middle School Directories](#)<sup>2</sup> and [High School Directory](#)<sup>3</sup>. Students without test scores are eligible to apply to these programs, and schools have been instructed to develop policies around how to account for missing test scores in admissions decisions. Please reach out to schools directly to learn more about their individual policies; if you have difficulties obtaining admissions policies from a school, please reach out to the school’s [Family Leadership Coordinator](#).

**I’m worried my student’s teacher will be teaching to the test. Can my student’s teacher be penalized based on test score results?**

No. The State responded to concern about State test results used for teacher and principal evaluations. Per State law, student performance on State 3-8 ELA and Math tests will not be used in teachers’ and principals’ annual professional performance review ratings. Great instruction is always the best preparation for any assessment.

**How long does a student have to complete a State test?**

The tests are untimed.

Students can work at their own pace to better demonstrate what they know, and have as much time as they need as long as they are productively working.

**What should a student do to prepare for the test?**

Help your child get a good night’s sleep the night before the exam; rest is important.

In the morning, encourage your child to have breakfast, either at home or in school. Breakfast helps students stay energized throughout exam day. Tell your child you have confidence in his or her ability.

**When will parents find out how their students performed on the tests?**

New York State historically has released test scores during the summer.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/64DAAB5A-BED4-4F9C-B9ED-396D6D87FC25/0/Acpolicypromoforfamilies.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <http://schools.nyc.gov/ChoicesEnrollment/Middle/Resources/default.htm>

<sup>3</sup> <http://schools.nyc.gov/ChoicesEnrollment/High/Resources/default.htm>

Once the State releases the results, parents can view their child's scores through their [NYC Schools Account](#). The State distributes Individual Student Reports that provide detailed information about student performance. Families may reach out to their child's teacher or principal to discuss State test scores and academic progress.

Parents may review portions of their children's tests after they have been administered. Parents may contact their children's school to request a review of their child's responses to open-ended questions in English Language Arts Book 2 and Mathematics Book 2.

### **What happens if a student does not take a State exam?**

It is important to prioritize taking the test. Please do all you can to support your child and ensure they are at school when these tests are administered.

If a student is absent, the student will have a second opportunity to take the test during the make-up period. If a student is also absent during the make-up period, there will be no additional opportunities to take the test.

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

Under State and federal accountability requirements, New York State Education Department periodically assesses and designates schools according to their performance. In general, having lower rates of participation in State tests could increase the risk that a school could be designated as low performing. The lowest performing schools are subject to additional improvement efforts by the DOE or by the State. Additionally, schools that have less than 95% participation in State tests will be required to make a plan to improve participation in State tests.

In the past, schools that received the Reward designation from the State for high achievement or strong improvement were eligible to receive funds (up to \$50,000) to further enhance the school's own best practices (e.g., purchase extra materials for classroom math instruction). To be eligible for this designation and additional funding, schools needed to have at least 95% participation in State tests.