



Office of the Chancellor

52 Chambers Street
New York, NY 10007

212 374 0200 Tel
212 374 5588 Fax

March 15, 2016

Dear Parents,

I am writing today to let you know about several improvements to the New York State English Language Arts and Math exams that students take in April.

This year, the State has made changes to the exams in response to legitimate concerns from parents and educators over previous years' tests. This year's exams will have fewer questions and will not have a time limit for students as long as they are working productively – reducing testing stress for students and parents. Students, including those requiring accommodations, will be able to work at their own pace in order to fully demonstrate their knowledge of the subject.

Additionally, teachers from across the City and New York State have had a greater say in developing tests for this year and future years. Their input will ensure that the tests truly measure what students are learning in the classroom every day. And, after the State tests are completed, teachers will receive earlier access to exam questions and results so that they have more time to plan for the next school year.

It is important to note that State exams are just one of multiple measures we use to assess student progress. A student's promotion and school admissions are determined through a multi-measure, inclusive process which gives us a holistic perspective on how to best support your child's achievement.

I want to emphasize the value of these tests. They are incredibly important for teachers and schools, who use the results to improve instruction and to provide individual support to all of our students. They are a valuable experience for our students, helping them learn to rise to a challenge and apply the skills they've been taught every day.

As a mother and grandmother, I appreciate these efforts to reduce student stress and make sure State exams are as educationally valuable as possible. I urge you to support your child in taking these tests and I encourage you to reach out to your child's school if you have additional questions about these changes to the State exams.

Sincerely,

Carmen Fariña