



Testing and Assessment

A Parent Guide





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The New York State Testing Program

Striving Towards Standards



The New York State Board of Regents has developed high standards of learning for all students. These standards drive the curriculum and instruction in schools all across the State, while teachers strive to align instruction and student learning to meet those standards.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is a federal law that requires all students in every district to meet the State English Language Arts and Mathematics Learning Standards. The goal of the act is to improve the quality of education nationally by increasing accountability for states, school districts, and schools. The New York State Testing Program was developed to assess student achievement towards those standards with standardized tests.

The New York State Testing Program is a series of required assessments that are aligned with the standards. They are given each year at the same time to all students in Grades 3 through 8, including students with disabilities. These tests are designed to challenge their knowledge and skills in English language arts and mathematics.

The purposes of the tests are twofold. They are used to measure adequate yearly progress and gather information to determine whether schools and districts are achieving State standards. These results comprise a school report card which not only shows how well all students are doing, but also shows if there are achievement gaps among different groups of students based on economic background, race, and ethnic group membership, English language proficiency, and disabilities. The school report cards can be accessed at <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/irts/reportcard/>.

The assessments are also used to reflect the high standards set for elementary and intermediate grades to help well prepared for high pose monitors the students, and the and school districts for public. These tests are not promoting students to the must still pass their required courses and fulfill district requirements.

If parents of elementary students are concerned about testing, or test results, they should contact their building principals. If parents of secondary students have any questions about testing or testing results, they should contact their school guidance counselor.

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Overview of District and State Assessments

In Half Hollow Hills, our students participate in assessments that include district and State assessments to monitor progress and achievement. The assessment system helps to provide important information about students and helps the district and teachers evaluate instructional programs.

Types of Assessments

There are different types of assessments that include standardized tests, authentic assessments, and classroom assessments.

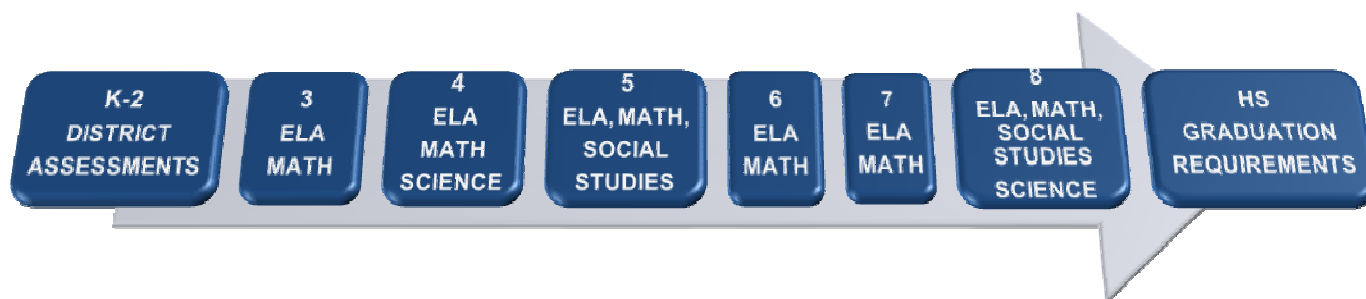
Standardized tests generally measure performance with skills, knowledge, or aptitude. Tests are standardized when the development, administration, and scoring follow established guidelines and procedures to ensure all students are given an equal opportunity to respond correctly. Standardized tests are considered to be *norm-referenced*, or *criterion-referenced*. Norm-referenced means that the individual student's performance is compared to the performance of other individual students of the same age, or grade. Criterion-referenced tests measure what test takers know, understand, and are able to do, but not in comparison to other students. Criterion referenced tests report how well students perform relative to a specified set of educational goals or outcomes, such as our state standards.

Authentic assessments allow educators to differentiate how students demonstrate mastery of concepts and skills learned. These assessments can be performance-based, which require the student to participate in the process through some type of performance, such as creating, producing, or doing something, often in settings that involve real-world application of knowledge and skills. Projects are another way to show achievement by allowing students to extend their learning. Students investigate problems and come up with solutions. Students can also be assessed through a portfolio, which is a collection of student work over time. These work samples can be used to evaluate progress and achievement in learning throughout the school year.

Classroom assessments are tasks that are created by teachers, or districts, to assess mastery of a topic, or skills. The assessments can vary in form, from written tests to oral reports. Teachers use a combination of authentic and classroom assessments to monitor concept and skill acquisition throughout the school year.



Overview of District and State Assessments



District Assessments for K-2

In kindergarten and first grade our students participate in district and classroom assessments to monitor foundations and progress towards building literacy skills. More formal testing begins in second grade. The TerraNova is given at the end of second grade to begin establishing a baseline of student skills that are norm-referenced in English Language Arts, and in Mathematics. The InView provides an assessment of cognitive abilities that includes verbal reasoning, sequences, analogies and quantitative reasoning. Students are assessed in both second and third grade with the InView. These district-wide assessments help to establish appropriate paths of learning for all of our students.

New York State Testing Program, Grades 3-8

These tests are given to students in January (ELA) and in March (Mathematics) for students in Grade 3 through Grade 8. The testing periods are from one and a half to three hours over the course of two to three days, depending on the grade. Certain grades also receive tests in science and social studies.

The English Language Arts Test (ELA)

Students are tested on their ability to read, listen, and write in response to reading passages and a listening passage. They need to be able to demonstrate comprehension of the information presented by reading passages and selecting responses from multiple choices, or responding through writing. The students all respond to listening passages through writing. The tests vary slightly in format from grade to grade. To view different grade level samples of the test visit: <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/3-8/ela-sample/home.htm>.

The Mathematics Test

Students are required to demonstrate an understanding of basic mathematical concepts and procedures through problem solving. They need to be able to support their answers by showing the steps they used to solve problems and explaining the process they used. There are multiple choice, short-response, and extended response questions. Math sample items can be viewed at the following site:

<http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/3-8/math-sample/home.htm>.



The Science Test

The test in Science is given in grades 4 and 8. The assessment is composed of two parts--written and performance. The written portion measures knowledge and understanding of concepts with questions and multiple-choice responses. The performance part assesses student ability to apply the knowledge and demonstrate scientific thinking through hands-on problem solving. For more information visit:

<http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/ciai/mst/pub/elemiscisamp.pdf>.

The Social Studies Test

In grades 5 and 8, students also take the social studies assessment. It is composed of two parts. On the first day, the students answer multiple-choice questions to evaluate their knowledge of social studies concepts. The second day is comprised of written responses to questions based on documents, which requires a synthesis of social studies concepts and facts. Visit the website to see samples of the 8th grade Social Studies assessment:

<http://www.nysedregents.org/testing/scostei/socstudies8.html>.

Testing Accommodations

Students with limited English proficiency and students with disabilities are permitted to have accommodations. Students with limited English proficiency may have accommodations that include extra time, or a separate location. Students with disabilities may have accommodations that are specified on their Individualized Education Program or on their 504 Plan. However, some testing accommodations are not permitted because they would change what the test specifically measures. For example, it would not be permitted to read a reading test aloud to a student when the test measures the student's ability to read.

New York State Alternate Assessment

The New York State Alternate Assessment is for students with severe cognitive abilities to be able to participate in the state assessment program for students in grades 3 through 8. The assessments correlate with the State learning standards for each grade level and are called Alternate Performance Indicators. Rather than a pencil and paper assessment, data is accumulated over a three-month period of student work samples and observations of performance on specific assessment tasks. The data for each area of assessment is compiled into a datafolio. For more information about the New York State Alternate Assessment process, visit <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/osa/nysaa/info.html>

High School Graduation Requirements


Students must earn a minimum of 22 credits from required courses to earn a high school diploma. This requires participation in state assessments including Regents examinations, or Regency Competency tests as well as district requirements. High school requirements have evolved and current information is in Appendix A.



Parent Involvement

Parent involvement begins at home through daily conversations and family experiences. Keep in mind that simple daily activities such as working in the kitchen to double recipes, talking and explaining a movie watched together, or using the circular in the supermarket to calculate prices, can give your child important foundational skills. Research shows that your involvement can blossom into better test scores, better attendance, and a better education.

It is important to communicate with your child's teacher and to be supportive. Encourage good habits by making sure your child completes homework assignments and has a place that is free of distractions to do so. Support a good work ethic and check to see if your child followed directions in the homework. Keep an eye out to see if your child needs help. Let the teacher know if there are homework difficulties.

Prepare your child physically and emotionally. For tests, whether classroom tests or State tests, make sure your child has a good night's sleep and a healthy breakfast. Be positive and encouraging. Let your child know you have confidence in them and assure them that it is okay if some of the questions are difficult. Parent involvement and school preparation make a powerful team. 

APPENDIX A**Graduation Credit Requirements 2009-2010**

*In order to earn a diploma, every student must earn a **minimum of 22 credits** in addition to meeting specific testing competencies. Only those students who successfully complete the diploma requirements will take part in the graduation exercises.*

Classes of 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013

REQUIRED CORE COURSES	LOCAL DIPLOMA (*Freshmen entering High School from the <u>Fall 2005 - Fall 2007</u> , review item #1 below regarding State Regents exams.)	REGENTS DIPLOMA (*Freshmen entering High School from the <u>Fall 2008 & beyond</u> , review item #1 below regarding State Regents exams.)	REGENTS DIPLOMA WITH ADVANCED DESIGNATION
English	4 credits with 1 Regents exam (55 or higher grade)	4 credits with 1 Regents exam (65 or higher grade)	4 credits with 1 Regents exam (65 or higher grade)
Social Studies	4 credits with 2 Regents exams (55 or higher grade)	4 credits with 2 Regents exams (65 or higher grade)	4 credits with 2 Regents exams (65 or higher grade)
Mathematics	3 credits with 1 Regents exam (55 or higher grade)	3 credits with 1 Regents exam (65 or higher grade)	3 credits with Math A & Math B Regents exams (65 or higher grade) ⁶ Important information for students entering High School in Fall 2007 & beyond
Science	3 credits ³ with 1 Regents exam (55 or higher grade)	3 credits ³ with 1 Regents exam (65 or higher grade)	3 credits ³ with 2 Regents exams (65 or higher grade)
Foreign Language	1 credit ⁴	1 credit ⁴	3 credits with 1 Regents exam (65 or higher grade) ⁵
Physical Education ²	2 credits	2 credits	2 credits
Art and/or Music	1 credit	1 credit	1 credit
Health	½ credit	½ credit	½ credit
Electives	3 ½ credits	3 ½ credits	1 ½ credits
TOTAL	22 credits	22 credits	22 credits

1. As of the **Fall 2006**, entering freshman (**graduating class of 2010**) must score a **65 or above on 3 required Regents exams** and score a 55 or higher on 2 required Regents exams. (Local Diploma)

2. As of the **Fall 2007**, entering freshman (**graduating class of 2011**) must score a **65 or above on 4 required Regents exams** and score a 55 or higher on 1 required Regents exams. (Local Diploma)

3. As of the **Fall 2008**, entering freshman (**graduating class of 2012**) must score a **65 or above on 5 required Regents exams**. (The **Local Diploma option is not available** unless a student is classified with a disability.)

4. All students must take Physical Education each semester and earn the equivalent of **2 credits** in order to graduate.

5. Included in the **3 Science credits** earned must be **1 Physical Setting** course and **1 Living Environment** course.

6. Students are required to complete **1 credit of Foreign Language** in High School or to have passed the **Second Language Proficiency Exam and the Checkpoint A class** in Grade 8.

7. Students may substitute 5 credits of Art, Music or Occupational education. However, students who use this substitution option must still earn at least **one Foreign Language credit**.

8. Students entering Grade 9 in the **Fall 2007 & beyond** must earn at least a **65 on 3 Regents exams (Integrated Algebra, Geometry, and Algebra II & Trigonometry)** or at least a **65 on both** the **Math A** and **Integrated Algebra II & Trigonometry Regents exams** in order to earn an **Advanced Designation Diploma**.

Note: The Regents Competency Test (RCT) safety net for students with disabilities will continue to be available for students entering Grade 9 prior to September 2010. Students using this safety net will receive a Local Diploma. The low-pass option of scoring 55-64 on the required Regents exams to earn a Local Diploma will continue to be available for students with disabilities.