



May 16, 2018

Dear Commissioner Elia and the New York State Board of Regents,

With the conclusion of the 3rd through 8th grade math assessments make up dates this past Friday, the coalition of High Achievement New York would like to formally request the early release of test participation numbers from the New York State Education Department.

While we also support the faster release of test scores, we understand that certain important activities, such as local scoring, delay this process and that release of test scores for this year is scheduled for a timeline similar to last year.

However, we do not believe that there is a significant reason why the release of test participation data must be concurrent with the public reporting on assessment scores.

Early data collected by the media from around the state and compiled below indicates that test participation increased significantly from last year. Even on Long Island, an outlier in test participation over the last few years, reports from Newsday showed more students taking the test this year. Here is a regional breakdown of changes in ELA refusals by district, according to media reports:

Change in Refusal Rate on 3-8 ELA Exam in 2018, By New York District

| Region | # Down | % Down | # Flat | % Flat | # Up | % Up | Total | Counties |
|--------------------------|------------|------------|----------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------------------------------|
| Hudson Valley | 21 | 94% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 6% | 22 | Dutchess, Putnam, Rockland, Ulster |
| Westchester | 22 | 92% | 2 | 8% | 0 | 0% | 24 | Westchester |
| Rochester/ North Country | 17 | 89% | 2 | 11% | 0 | 0% | 19 | Monroe, St. Lawrence |
| Long Island | 81 | 73% | 2 | 2% | 28 | 25% | 111 | Nassau, Suffolk |
| Total | 141 | 80% | 6 | 3% | 29 | 17% | 176 | All |

Fewer outlets reported on math participation, but the data trends remained the same. Newsday reported that test refusals were down from [53.6% in 2017](#) to [46.7% in 2018](#). Likewise, the Poughkeepsie Journal reported that [all 11 districts](#) which responded to their inquiry showed increased test participation.

Increased participation in the grades 3-8 assessment is an important development for New York's families, and it deserves to be reported as soon as possible. The state has been deemed the "epicenter" of opt out organizing, but the hard work the Commissioner, the Board of Regents and advocates have done to improve both the assessments themselves and the information provided to parents has clearly built greater confidence in the tests. Moreover, as the only universal, objective assessments that all public school students around the state take, increased participation in the tests is a vital link in ensuring greater educational fairness and equity.

Please consider releasing the participation data as soon as you are able.

Thank you for your consideration on this important matter and do not hesitate to reach out to us with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

The Coalition of High Achievement New York
American Association of University Women- NYS
Bethlehem Parents for Excellence
Buffalo Urban League
Educators 4 Excellence
Business Council of New York State
Business Council of Westchester
CAO- Better Schools, Better Neighborhoods
District Parent Coordinating Council- Buffalo
Patricia Siano- Teacher, Corinth
Jeff Smink, Parent, Brighton
StudentsFirstNY

ABOUT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT NEW YORK

High Achievement New York provides New York parents, teachers, business and community leaders with an organized platform to support college and career ready standards and promote more equitable outcomes for all New York State children. To ensure educational fairness statewide, HANY provides community and educator driven solutions to issues that arise as higher standards and aligned assessments are implemented into local schools.

Coalition members include: Albany Colonie Chamber of Commerce, America Achieves, America Achieves New York Educator Voice Fellowship, American Association of University Women – New York, Association for a Better New York, Bethlehem Parents for Excellence, Buffalo ReformEd, Buffalo Niagara Partnership, Buffalo Urban League, Business Council of New York State, Business Council of Westchester, Center for American Progress, Committee for Hispanic Families and Children, Chautauqua County Chamber of Commerce, Council For a Strong America, District Parent Coordinating Council of Buffalo, The Education Trust – New York, Educators 4 Excellence, Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce, The Hispanic Federation, Manufacturers Association of the Southern Tier, National Council of La Raza, New York Campaign for Achievement Now, New

York Urban League, Otsego County Chamber of Commerce, Partnership for Inner-City Education, Parent Power Project-Rochester, Printing Industries Alliance, StudentsFirstNY, Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce, Urban League of Rochester, and Urban League of Westchester.

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