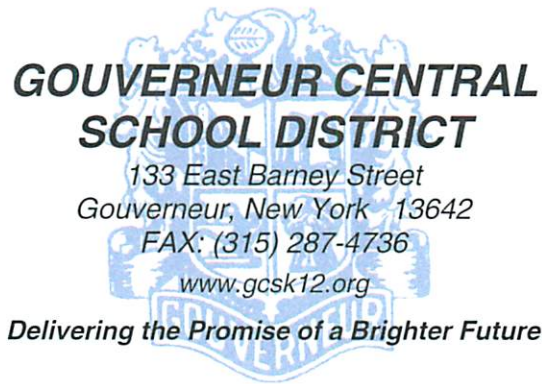


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April 4, 2018

Dear Parents and Families of the Gouverneur Elementary and Middle Schools:

Soon it will be time to administer the New York State assessments in ELA, Math and Science. Again, there have been some changes, and we want to take a moment to share those changes with you:

- Grade 3 will be taking paper-based assessments (PBT) in both ELA and Math.
- Grades 4-8 will be participating in computer-based testing (CBT) in both ELA and Math.
- After field testing computer-based assessments for the last two years, the district elected to go with CBT, as it complements our use of technology in daily instruction.
- Grade 4 and Grade 8 Science remains unchanged and will be paper-based.
- Gouverneur has been designated by NYSED as a Focus District since 2016. Despite any academic improvements achieved, under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the designation cannot be removed without 95% participation on the State Assessments. This designation adds the additional burden of data collection and reporting, hosting external reviewers, and the submission of written plans to achieve established targets. The time we allocate to these requirements is additional time away from what we value most, designing and delivering instruction to our students.
- The NYS testing program will have no bearing on teacher evaluations, student promotion or retention. Assessment results will be used to evaluate curriculum and inform grade level instruction.
- Additional information on the updated 2018 State Assessments is provided on the back.

Gouverneur CSD Assessment Schedule: 2017-2018 School Year

NYS Grade 3 ELA/Math (PBT): Apr. 11-12/May 1-2

NYS Grade 4 ELA/Math (CBT): Apr. 10-11/May 1-2

NYS Grades 5-8 ELA/Math (CBT): Apr. 12-13/May 3-4

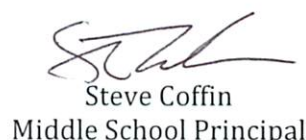
NYS Grade 4 Science Performance/Written: May 29-30/June 4

NYS Grade 8 Science Performance/Written: May 23/June 4

Please direct any questions you have about this letter to your building administrator.

Sincerely,


Charity Zawatski
Elementary Co-Principal


Steve Coffin
Middle School Principal


Donna Runner
Assistant Superintendent



The 2018 Grades 3-8 New York State Assessments: What Parents Need to Know

Every spring, the Grades 3-8 English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics Tests are administered to students across New York State. These annual ELA and math tests for students in grades 3-8 are required by the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015. The tests are designed to measure how well students are mastering the learning standards that guide classroom instruction and help to 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. The tests also show how schools and districts are progressing with the learning standards and can support professional development for teachers. Below you will find information about the 2018 tests.

Fewer Test Sessions

- The 2018 Grades 3-8 ELA and Math Tests have been reduced from three test sessions per subject to only two sessions per subject this year, meaning each subject will have two days of testing instead of three.
- With fewer test sessions, each test will have substantially fewer questions than in recent years, lessening test fatigue for students and better enabling them to demonstrate what they know and are able to do.

Untimed Tests

- Like the 2016 and 2017 tests, the 2018 Grades 3-8 ELA and Math Tests will be untimed.
- In general, this means that as long as students are working productively, they will have as much time as they need to complete each test session, within the confines of the regular school day.
- Schools and districts have discretion to allow students to read silently or quietly exit the room when they have completed their test while others continue to work.

Test Questions Reviewed and Written by New York State Teachers

- Hundreds of New York State educators were involved in creating and reviewing questions for 2018 Grades 3-8 ELA and Math Tests and selecting the questions for the test forms.
- This year, the assessments will feature many test questions written by New York State teachers specifically for the annual New York State tests. The future goal is for all test questions to be written by NYS educators.
- Teachers from across the State serve on committees to write, evaluate and select questions for the tests.
- In all, hundreds of New York State educators were involved in creating and reviewing questions for the 2018 assessments and selecting the questions for the test forms.

Providing Results for Teachers and Improved Resources for Parents

- Like last year, the New York State Education Department plans to have instructional reports returned to teachers by the end of the school year and to release at least 75% of the test questions again.
- As in 2017, the 2018 Score Reports for parents will feature more information about what students should know and be able to do at each grade level.

Computer-Based Testing

- Some schools chose to administer the 2018 Grades 3-8 ELA and Math Tests on computers rather than by paper and pencil. The computer-based tests (CBT) will have the same questions as the paper versions. Students in those schools utilizing the CBT option have access to CBT practice tests and most have had prior experience participating in other computer-based tests in ELA and Math.
- The long-term plan is for all schools use CBT for annual State tests. CBT has the potential to further reduce the need for stand-alone field tests and make assessments better instructional tools for students with disabilities.