

Understanding the Score Results of State Tests

The ELA and mathematics tests given in April this year were based on new Learning Standards in English and Math. These standards, (known as the Common Core) are a more demanding set of knowledge and skills necessary for 21st century careers and college. The standards were adopted by the Board of Regents in July 2010 and provided to school districts shortly thereafter. In the Salamanca City Central School District the curriculum reflects the shifts necessary to meet the standards requirements.

- District Assessment scores which were released publically on August 7, 2013 for grades 3-8 in ELA and Math effectively create a new baseline for measurement of student learning.
- Individual teacher assessment results will be released to the District in late August 2013.
- Parents will receive their child's score once NYS releases student data results to the District sometime in the Fall of 2013.
- There are 4 levels for test scores:
 - Level 4:** Student excels in Learning Standards for this grade level
 - Level 3:** Student is proficient in Learning Standards for this grade level
 - Level 2:** Student is not proficient in Learning Standards for this grade level (partial but insufficient)
 - Level 1:** Student is well below proficient in Learning Standards for this grade level
- The Teacher and Student scores as widely reported, are expected to be lower than before since this is truly a new beginning; The “NEW” benchmark scores won’t easily translate or correlate with prior state assessment data for students, staff or the District and consequently it is not fair to compare these scores to last year.
- Changes in scores are largely the result of the shift of assessments to the Common Core standards, which more accurately measure predicted college and career readiness.
- It is important to know that these changes do not reflect that students have learned less or that schools have performed worse than in previous years. The results on the New York tests do not reveal a failure to learn or a failure to teach.
- These scores will be used as a baseline to show future progress since the tests in the coming year will again be based on the Learning Standards.
- A student’s score was determined by a week-long careful analysis of each Learning Standard, the clarity and fairness of the test questions and the range of answers given. This analysis was conducted by a cross section of ninety-five teachers and school leaders from all across the state.

What to Expect Going Forward

- The New York State Education Department, districts and BOCES are committed to ensuring that all educators have the resources and tools to understand their students' academic needs and also how to help their students meet and exceed these higher goals. An unprecedented body of materials has been developed to help principals and teachers to support our students in rising to the challenge of the Common Core.
- Far too many students become aware that they are not prepared when they arrive at college or in the

workplace, diploma in hand, and fail an assessment test of basic academic skills. It is far better to send a signal early to students (as well as their parents and teachers) that they are not on track to being college ready than to postpone it until it is too late to remedy.

- This is a complicated but imperative change. Given proper feedback, professional development, and curriculum/instruction resources, we trust our teachers to lead us and our children forward.
- New York State built and delivered high quality assessments that measure student knowledge and skills on the college- and career-ready Common Core standards not only to provide feedback to educators but also with the recognition that assessment data is a critical component for students, as well as their parent and families, to know whether they are on-track for college and workforce readiness.

Questions:

- Any questions about test data can be directed to the building principals
 - Mr. Hensel, Principal Prospect Elementary School @ 945-2400 x7126
 - Ms. Koch, Acting Principal Seneca Elementary School @ 945-2400 x5364
 - Mrs. Anderson, Principal Jr/Sr High School @945-2400 x 6003