

Berlin Central

School District

Berlin Middle High School 17400 NY 22, Cherry Plain, NY 12040 Phone: 518-658-2515, Fax: 518-658-2535
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Dr. Stephen Young
Superintendent

Mr. Fred Hutchinson
Director of CIA/CIO

March 19, 2018

Dear Parent or Guardian,

This Spring, our schools will administer the NYS Grades 3-8 assessments in English Language Arts (April 11 & 12) and Mathematics (May 1 & 2). You will notice that, unlike in previous years, **the number of days testing has been reduced from three days to two days**. This reduction in testing time is a response from the Commissioner of Education to parents' concerns that three days was just too many.

We, at the Berlin CSD, also understand and respect the concerns some parents and guardians may have about testing. While we appreciate those who participate in the State testing, we know that there will be parents who decide otherwise.

In an effort to remain transparent, and to appeal to those who might otherwise opt out, we would like to explain why we will encourage all students to sit for the test, and to do their best in all these assessments this year. First, the data from these assessments are never used to identify any individual student, though the information may be used along with other measures to determine how best to help a student who may be struggling academically. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, this data does give us good information regarding our Curriculum development and lesson design. If students opt out, it becomes difficult to make necessary updates to these elements with any accuracy. Finally, student participation is a measurement used by the State Education Department to identify schools in need of improvement. What this means, is that even though your students are not judged for their scores, the school can be judged if there are not enough scores. We, as a district in "Good Standing" do not want to lose our autonomy due to a lack of participation.

Our teachers, staff and administrators do everything we can to make students feel comfortable taking these exams. Like any traditional testing, we ask that students simply do their best. As a reminder, these **tests are not timed, and students may take as much time during the day of the exam as they feel they need**. This is an attempt to alleviate some of the stress some students may feel around testing.

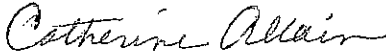
We hope this information helps explain how we use the testing data, and helps eliminate some of the concerns parents or guardians may have about these assessments. One final note, any student that begins a test on day 1 will be scored, whether or not they take day 2. It is highly preferable that any student who begins the assessment, complete the assessment so as not to negatively skew the data.

If you have any questions, please contact me or your school principal. We want to ensure you have all the answers you need on this important issue.

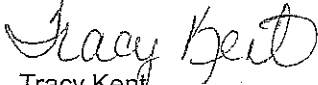
Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "F. Hutchinson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Frederick Hutchinson
District Data Coordinator

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Catherine Allain".

Catherine Allain
Middle School Principal

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Tracy Kent".

Tracy Kent
Elementary Principal