

Berlin

CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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March 29, 2023

Dear Parent or Guardian,

This spring, our schools will administer the NYS Grades 3-8 assessments in English Language Arts (April 19-20) and Math (May 2-3). Additionally, our fifth graders will be administered the assessments in a computer based format for English Language Arts (April 24-25) and Math (May 4-5). Fifth grade students had the opportunity to participate in a simulation of computer based testing in January to help prepare them for this new format. All grades will eventually be required to test in a computer based format by the Spring of 2026.

The ELA and Math Tests include multiple choice and open-ended questions, which assess grade-level learning standards. The questions require students to apply their knowledge and, in the open-ended responses, to explain their reasoning. Students will read texts, write responses, and solve real-world word problems, all of which are foundational skills necessary for success in the next grade.

The results of the annual assessments will provide information about your child's academic progress and achievement. You can use your child's score report to guide a discussion with your child's teacher(s) about additional supports that may be helpful in school, as well as ways to support your child's learning at home. The report will show you how your child did in comparison to other students across the State and how your child scored in specific skill and concept areas. For example, the ELA report gives scores for both reading and writing; the Math report gives scores for the key math concepts for your child's grade level. State test results may differ from the information on your child's school report card. Report card grades are cumulative and based on many factors, including class participation, homework, attendance, quizzes, tests, and other instructional activities, all of which are important in determining a child's academic achievement.

Score reports are typically mailed home to parents in September.

Our teachers, staff and administrators do everything we can to make students feel comfortable taking exams. Like any test, we ask our students to simply do their best. In response to parent and educator concerns, New York State has also made a number of changes to testing over the past several years. These include:

- **Fewer test questions:** Exams will be shorter with fewer questions in ELA and Math.
- **Untimed tests:** Students will have as much time as they need to finish exams at their own pace.

- **More teacher involvement:** The state has increased the number of teachers who create and review exams.
- **Results not tied to evaluations:** Results from the 2023 Grades 3-8 ELA and Math tests will not be used to evaluate teachers.

We hope this information helps explain how we use the state's testing program to evaluate and measure student growth as well as a measure of our own performance. Also, the data collected from these tests provides us with in depth information that will assist us in guiding our academic programming.

Unfortunately when fewer students take the exams we are left with an incomplete picture of how and what our students are learning. This limits our ability to address issues that would improve how we educate our students. It also gives us less information to work with if your child struggles in a particular area. We believe that participation in these assessments help us improve our instructional program.

In preparation for these exams we recommend a good night's sleep, breakfast (at home or school), and encourage students to do their best.

If you have any questions at all, please contact your student's principal. We want to ensure you have all the answers you need on this important issue. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Brownell
Kimberly Brownell
BMHS Principal

Tracy Kent
Tracy Kent
Berlin Elementary Principal