

LETTERS

Educated students need Regents exams

Like many politicians, the Board of Regents tosses around rhetoric but doesn't include solutions ["Alternative grad criteria by 2027," News, Nov. 5]. How exactly will the board make sure that every school district will use the same metrics to evaluate a student's level of success?

The differences between high-performing districts and those that struggle are already vast. Classroom grades are sometimes subject to pressure from parents and administrations. A common exam is what truly connects various districts.

In this generation of participation trophies, the board has created the ultimate participation trophy: a high school diploma.

Why not create two distinct pathways? One would be a traditional Regents sequence. The other pathway could culminate in a proficiency evaluation that would include an exam or more project-based assessments.

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It is difficult to understand how lifelong educators like the Regents could imagine that making testing optional would ever increase the rigors of obtaining a high school diploma.

I suppose that along with the participation trophy we could apologize for not holding our students accountable and preparing them for life.

— **WILLIAM WICKES, EAST WILLISTON**
The writer teaches at Roosevelt High School.

A well-educated population is the key to a successful nation. Even those students who choose a vocational path, rather than college, should have a well-rounded education in order to receive a high school diploma ["Seismic shift on exams," News, Nov. 4]. The only way to determine how well a student has progressed toward this goal is by objective testing.

Projects, research papers and portfolios are not objective, and they are only indicative of a student's knowledge in that specific topic. They do not show how well-versed a student is in history, government, writing, literature, science and mathematics, of which all students should have at least a basic knowledge. If not, what kind of country will we have?

The proposals by the Board of Regents and state education department would be lowering standards, and I am suspect of the rationale behind them. Are they just trying to graduate more students when they should really be graduating more educated students?

There is no point in giving out a worthless piece of paper.

— **DIANE CODDINGTON,**
PORT WASHINGTON
The writer is a retired high school special education teacher.