

EDITORIAL

Don't abandon Regents exams

■ **MEMBERS OF THE EDITORIAL BOARD** are experienced journalists who offer reasoned opinions, based on facts, to encourage informed debate about the issues facing our community.

The Board of Regents and state Department of Education officials are right to thoughtfully consider the changing needs of students, to assess coursework and graduation requirements, and to address questions surrounding testing and how we examine student — and teacher — success.

But the plan to eliminate passing scores on state Regents exams as a high school graduation requirement and instead let individual school districts set the measures is the wrong answer. Instead, the Regents should develop a strategy that doesn't do away with such critical measurements as required statewide testing, but adds alternatives for those who need them.

Yes, innovative projects and public service opportunities are good barometers. Yes, the arts, financial literacy and other areas of study not measured by Regents exams are key. And yes, the existing Regents tests aren't perfect. But that doesn't mean it's time to do away with standardized testing requirements, and their ties to graduation. The Regents should supplement, rather than replace, the required tests. Improve the exams, don't throw them away.

Removing Regents requirements would leave the state with uneven

assessments, where each school district and each teacher evaluates students differently. There would be no adequate way to make comparisons. School districts could easily lower graduation standards so poor-performing students qualify, improving graduation rates and school performance without actually helping the students. There would be no check on inadequate teaching or bad administrations.

Also significant: Long Island taxpayers often buy their homes

based on a school district's performance, paying top dollar for access to top schools. Subjective graduation assessments would make it difficult to determine how a district is really doing, leaving taxpayers in the dark.

Another head-scratching development is that the Regents are considering a system where exams are offered but essentially mean nothing. Students would have to take English, algebra and science tests because federal law requires them, but they could fail them and it wouldn't affect graduation. Other exams — like history and government — would no longer be required, though they'd be available on an optional basis.

That's a shortsighted, nonsensical strategy.

State Education Commissioner Betty A. Rosa told the editorial board Wednesday she sees schools as places where students should be motivated and engaged, where their passions are cultivated, where their "natural curiosity is not turned off." She suggested that testing — and the anxiety it can provoke — damages that mission. Rosa said: "Life is not standardized."

But some of life is, indeed, standardized. We take tests to drive a car, to operate machinery, to be licensed in certain jobs, even to become certified to teach. There should be uniform standards, measurements and requirements for students as well.

Testing doesn't have to come at the expense of creativity, passion or motivation. We must make sure our schools and teachers can cultivate both.



HOWARD SCHNAPP

Removing Regents requirements would leave the state with uneven assessments.

MATT DAVIES


NEWSDAY / MATT DAVIES

■ **EDITORIAL CARTOONIST MATT DAVIES'** opinions are his own. You can see more of his work at: newsday.com/matt

LETTERS
Stop griping about cricket annoyances

I am so tired of people complaining about the T20 cricket tournament ["Opposing views of Cricket World Cup," Letters, June 11]. I know nothing about cricket but got caught up in the excitement. We have had an international event in our backyard. At least tens of millions of people have been watching.

Many countries play cricket. So, just because most Americans don't, many have complained. Two visitors to our home came from England and South Africa to watch. Except for our local news channel, what national networks have even men-

tioned it? Maybe if the matches were televised on something other than Willow TV, there would have been more interest.

Yes, the extra traffic has been a little annoying, but we were warned. And yes, the constant roar of helicopters overhead has been annoying, but I'd rather have that extra layer of security. Yes, the parks were closed until 6 p.m., but we were warned. My husband and I actually played golf on Monday at Eisenhower Park.

I hope that if another international event comes to Long Island it will be received with more enthusiasm. Oh, the Ryder Cup will be played at the Bethpage Black golf course in

September 2025. Will people complain about that, too?

— **LINDA GIORDANO, WESTBURY**

Always remember boys who won WWII

As I watched on television as our veterans marked D-Day in France 80 years ago, I was brought to tears ["D-Day vets honored," Long Island, June 7]. The speeches focused on the bravery of the young men who survived World War II and especially those who died for our freedoms.

Those boys went there to defend democracy all over the world, no matter the cost. Many never returned to their families.

The alliance of Britain, France, Soviet Union and United States was historic and saved the world from evil by defeating the Axis powers of Germany, led by Adolf Hitler, Japan, and Italy.

— **ANN LEAHY, WANTAGH**

■ **WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN OUR DAILY CONVERSATION.** Just go to newsday.com/submitaletter and follow the prompts. Or email your opinion on day's issues to letters@newsday.com. Submissions should be no more than 200 words. Provide full name, hometown, phone number. Include headline and date of item you're responding to. Letters are edited for all media. Published letters reflect ratio received on each topic.