



# VALLEY STREAM UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 24

HORTON AVENUE • VALLEY STREAM, NEW YORK 11581-1499 (516) 434-2825 • FAX: (516) 256-0163

Edward M. Fale, Ph. D.  
*Superintendent of Schools*

March, 2018

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Our grades 3-6 students will be taking the NYS Assessments. To help students prepare for these tests, I want to share with you some important tips to make your child feel as confident and comfortable as possible on testing days.

Some students become anxious when tackling standardized tests. While it is important to acknowledge the value of a test, it is equally important to remind them that a test is simply one measure of performance. The more relaxed and prepared students are about an exam, the more likely they are to perform their best and truly demonstrate their best learning. The Common Core State Standards emphasize critical thinking, careful reading of fiction and non-fiction, writing, effective communication of ideas, and real-world problem solving in mathematics.

While testing has become an integral part of students' education at every level, we recognize the concerns you may have about the upcoming testing and want to not only alleviate any fears your child may have, but also any concerns you may have about the use of these assessments in placement or grading.

We do not use these assessments as a sole determination in any type of program placement. We simply look at them as another measure of performance we have, in addition to many other valuable measures. Each child is unique; we look at the whole child in school, not how they perform on any single assessment. We certainly do not want any of our students to stay home simply to avoid taking one of these tests for fear of this.

Some parents/guardians may decide to "opt out" of the tests for their children. This is an individual decision that requires a written letter to the child's principal requesting that your child "opt out" of the test. The principal will provide access to another classroom or learning environment.

If your child takes Day 1 of any of the Assessment tests, it would not be wise to "opt out" of the additional days of testing since your child will still receive a score based on whatever part of the test was completed. "Opt Out" requests must be received before Day 1 of testing.

**English Language Arts Assessments will be given April 11<sup>th</sup> through April 12<sup>th</sup>. Mathematics Assessments will be given May 1<sup>st</sup> through May 2<sup>nd</sup>.**

The New York State Education Department has indicated that the school districts could face penalties if more than 5 percent of the children "opt out," however, there is no penalty for the individual child.

The child's teacher and principal can answer any additional questions you may have on this topic.

Sincerely,

Edward M. Fale, Ph.D.  
Superintendent of Schools  
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