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Lake Placid Central School

50 Cummings Road
Lake Placid, New York 12946

518-523-2475

Superintendent's Office Fax: 523-4971

Business Office Fax: 523-4901

www.lpcsd.org

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February 8, 2018

Dear Parents:

On April 11th we will begin administering the New York State English Language Arts (ELA) Tests to all students in grades 3 through 8. The Math exams will be administered in May.

I am happy to tell you that this year the number of days devoted to exams in each subject will be reduced from 3 days to 2. The ELA exams will be administered on April 11th and 12th, with Math exams scheduled on May 1st and 2nd. The exams will continue to challenge students to read complex texts, write well-reasoned responses, and solve real-world problems – assessing their level of academic readiness for further success in high school, college, and future careers.

The NY State Education Department instituted many changes to the exams over the last two years. Just like last year, the tests are untimed, allowing students to work at their own pace for as long as they are productively working. New York State teachers continue to be involved in reviewing and writing the exams. Questions from previous exams are available for your review at www.engageny.org/3-8. We will provide you with results from your child's exam once those results become available. Results are intended to help students, parents, and teachers assess each child's academic progress. Results are not included on official transcripts or permanent records, and -- unlike past years -- will not be used to evaluate individual teachers. We hope that these changes will reduce the undue pressure felt by some students in past years.

While we are required to assess students annually we make every attempt to do so in a way that is the most helpful and least disruptive for students, teachers, and families. Every public school is required to administer Math and ELA exams to students in grades 3 – 8, with the nature of the exams determined by each state. The changes I have outlined reflect New York's efforts to increase participation and to help families and schools see the value in the exams and score reports that follow. If a parent requests in writing that their child not participate, then students will be assigned to a separate location during exam time which will serve as a study hall. Feel free to contact me or your child's principal or teacher with any questions you have. You can find extensive resources available online at www.engageny.org and www.nysed.gov.

Sincerely,



Dr. Roger P. Catania

Superintendent of Schools