

Since 2010, all schools in New York State have been transitioning to the new Common Core Learning Standards, which mean more challenging work and a different kind of learning for your child. In April 2013, for the first time, New York State students took ELA and Mathematics tests in grades 3–8 that measured performance on the new standards. These tests indicate whether students at each grade level are on track for college and career success.

This document contains guidance for district leaders to use in conversations with students about their performance on April's state tests.

How do I talk to students about the test results?

The standards for learning and tests have changed.

- Tell students that adjusting to the new standards and this new way of learning may be difficult at first, but that you and their teachers and principals are working very hard to support them to learn in this new way.
- Reassure students that these tests are an important way to measure what they are learning and check to see if they are on track, and that teachers also use other assessments as well.
- Tell students that they will have the opportunity to review their score results with their teacher and discuss what they need to learn/become better at.

Lower test scores do not mean students didn't learn enough or didn't work hard last year.

- Reassure students that a score that is lower from past years doesn't mean they aren't learning or working hard enough. These are different tests that measure important knowledge and skills that weren't part of past tests.
- Remind students that the tests are meant to help their teachers support their learning.
- Reassure students that you and their teachers believe in them and will support them in learning what they need to know in order to ensure college and career success.

The test scores are not the full picture of who students are.

- Tell students that the tests are only one piece of what they know as a student and that the tests give teachers information about where support is needed.
- Explain that teachers also look at classwork, effort and other factors to get a full picture of who they are as a student.
- Tell students that when they face tests or schoolwork that seems really hard, it is important to keep trying and not give up. Reassure them that it is okay to struggle and you believe they can meet the challenge. Remind them that they should never be afraid to ask questions; they should ask their teachers and other adults questions regarding their schoolwork, the tests, and the new standards.
 - Remind them that by continuing to work hard and persist through difficulties, they will be prepared to be successful in school and life.
 - Talk about other ways in addition to determining students' academic and learning needs through tests that teachers and the school are preparing them to be successful.