

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.

We encourage you to speak to your child about his/her performance on the new tests, what the tests say about the knowledge and skills your child demonstrated, and what knowledge and skills your child may need to strengthen or acquire in order to have greater success in the upcoming school year.

How do I talk to my child about the test results?

The standards for learning and tests have changed.

- Tell your child that the questions were harder and that adjusting to the new standards and this new way of learning may be tough at first.
- Ask your child to share what was difficult about the test, what was easy and what they think they need help with.

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

- Remind your child that the tests are meant to help their teachers support their learning
- Talk to your child about how tests are not the only way that teachers find out what students have learned and in what areas that they need more help
- Reassure your child that you and their teachers believe in them and will support them in learning what they need to know in order to go to college or career.
- Discuss with your child all of the ways that he or she is preparing for the future.

The test scores are not the full picture of who your child is as a student.

- Tell your child 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 class work, effort and other factors to get a full picture of who they are as a student.
- Tell your child 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.

How can I learn more information in order to help my child?

The New York State website, EngageNY.org, has resources to help you learn about the new standards, including videos, parent guides to the Common Core Standards, and an FAQ document: <http://www.engageny.org/parent-and-family-resources>. You can also find activities to do at home with your child.