



## Whitney Point Central School District

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Superintendent of Schools

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### OUR VOICES HAVE BEEN HEARD!

Dear Whitney Point Families,

I am writing to update you on some positive changes happening in the world of education. These significant changes are being made by the New York State Education Department in response to feedback collected from New York State students, parents and educators! They will affect the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards, Teacher & Principal Evaluation systems, and grades 3-8 English Language Arts (ELA) and Math Assessments.

*A summary of what is on the horizon includes:*

- *A complete review of the Common Core Learning Standards and the creation of new Higher Learning Standards in New York State*
- *The removal of any consequence for students or teachers in relation to the grades 3-8 ELA and Math State Assessments during a four-year transition period while the new standards are being fully phased in*
- *Significant changes to the 2016 Grades 3-8 ELA and Math Assessments that will improve the testing experience for students and the validity of the assessments*
  - ✓ *Choice of a new vendor- Questar Assessments*
  - ✓ *Greater involvement of educators in the test development process*
  - ✓ *Decrease in the number of test questions*
  - ✓ *Shift to untimed testing*

As you can see, the Governor and the new Commissioner of Education have heard our voices! These significant changes are being made in response to the frustration students, parents, and educators have voiced over the last few years. The fact that the tests will have fewer questions and students will be no longer be restricted to time limits should greatly reduce the stress some students have experienced.

In return, we are asking that you support these changes by having your child/children participate in the new New York State Assessments. The data we receive from these assessments help guide our instruction and provide valuable information about our students and programs.

To provide you with additional information, I have enclosed a pamphlet describing changes in NYS Assessments. I will also be hosting a series of discussion and feedback sessions on February 23, 2016. Please see the enclosed invitation. I hope you will be able to join me at one of these sessions throughout the day.

Thank you for your continued support and collaboration!

Sincerely,

Patricia Follette  
Superintendent

**WE'RE READY FOR THE NEW NYS EXAMS!**



*The Mission of the Whitney Point Central School District is to provide an excellent education ensuring that all children maximize their potential, become contributing citizens, and pursue lifelong learning.*

## Why is it important for my child to take these assessments?

- The assessments provide teachers with information that can be used to guide their instruction.
- The results show teachers how well students have progressed in the skills and concepts being taught in the classroom.
- Achievement gaps among different student populations can be identified.
- Without widespread participation in the tests, it is more difficult for school and district leaders to identify and provide support and resources to students who need it.



The New York State Education Department (NYSED) is making significant changes to the 2016 Grades 3-8 English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics Assessments.

These changes will improve the testing experience for students and the validity of the assessments.

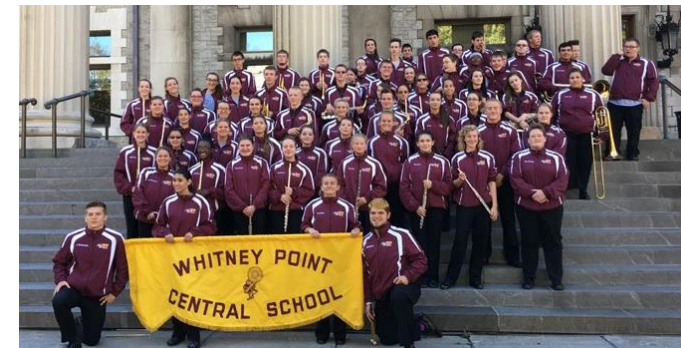
### **GREATER INVOLVEMENT OF EDUCATORS IN THE TEST DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

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### **DECREASE IN THE NUMBER OF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS**

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### **A SHIFT TO UNTIMED TESTING**



**WHITNEY POINT  
Central School District**

*Where KIDS are the POINT!*



## A Shift to Untimed Testing

NYSED received extensive feedback from parents and educators throughout the State about the inability of students to work at their own pace on the Grades 3-8 ELA and Mathematics Assessments.

As a result, NYSED is pleased to announce the transition to untimed testing for the spring 2016 Grades 3-8 ELA and Mathematics Assessments. This change will provide students further opportunity to demonstrate what they know and can do by allowing them to work at their own pace.

In general, this will mean that as long as students are productively working, they will be allowed as much time as they need to complete the ELA and Mathematics Assessments.

Additionally, this change in policy may help alleviate the pressures that some students experience as a result of taking an assessment they must complete during a limited amount of time.

Are changes being made to the testing program?

**YES! YES! YES!**  
Our voices have been heard!

- A new testing company, Questar Assessment, has been selected to develop future assessments.
- **FEWER QUESTIONS** and **NO TIME LIMIT!** This should greatly reduce the stress students have felt in the past!
- A greater number of New York State teachers will be involved in developing the assessments to ensure that they closely measure the learning happening in the classroom.
- In 2015, the State Legislature provided new funding to make additional improvements to the testing program, including releasing more test questions and eventually making test scores available before the end of the school year.
- The State is also exploring computer-based testing platforms. Computer-based tests will eventually reduce the amount of time students spend on the test and provide results more quickly.

*Source: New York State Education Department*

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## **TESTING DATES**

**Grades 3-8**  
**English Language Arts**

Tuesday, April 5 –Thursday, April 7

**Grades 3-8**  
**Mathematics**

Wednesday, April 13 – Friday, April 15

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## Contact Us

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District Vision

***To be a community of excellence achieved through a commitment to high performance, morale, & involvement***