



WHITE PLAINS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

EDUCATION HOUSE

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A Note for Parents/Guardians regarding NYS test scores in grades 3-8:

There has been a great deal of media attention surrounding the NYS ELA and Math testing program. You are probably aware that throughout New York State, for the past two years, students have received lower scores than in the past. The reason for this is that the tests are now based on the national Common Core Standards that were adopted by more than 40 states (including NYS), and test questions reflected these more challenging academic expectations. As you look at your child's test scores, you may have a number of questions. We've prepared this brief FAQ to help answer them. If you have additional concerns about your child's performance or progress, you may direct questions to the principal and teachers in your child's school.

Should I be concerned if my child's score dropped this year?

Many students' scores decreased or remained similar to last year's score due to the more challenging assessments. If your child received a Level 3 or 4 this year, this is an indication that they are demonstrating proficient academic skills in the context of the new Standards. However, we know that there is always room for improvement and growth. If your child received a Level 2, this indicates a need for more focused work and practice in order to develop greater proficiency. If your child received a Level 1 score, he/she will be eligible to receive Academic Intervention Services, at the discretion of school staff and the building RTI teams.

How will Academic Intervention Services be provided?

Elementary and Middle School students are eligible to receive extra support in reading /writing through small group/class instruction. This could be taught by a classroom teacher, reading teacher, ESOL teacher, special education teacher, learning facilitator, or related service provider. Middle School students also have an opportunity to attend Math Lab if additional support is needed. Your child's classroom teachers will closely monitor his/her progress and work in collaboration with support staff.

What else is the District doing to ensure that my child's success?

The White Plains School District is working to ensure that our teaching practices, materials, and student learning experiences are aligned to the Common Core Standards in English and Math, and that we infuse literacy instruction across all content areas. Our new elementary Envisions math program and our secondary English Springboard program are providing rigorous learning opportunities for our students that are aligned with the new standards. We have also engaged in extensive curriculum development in ELA K-5 and Math 6-8 to ensure our instruction in these areas is preparing our students to meet the expectations of the new standards. Rather than extensive "test prep" for students, we look to add rigor, critical thinking, and extensive reading, writing, and problem solving to the work students do each day in class. Teachers in **all** academic disciplines, including science, social studies, the arts, technology, and physical education have a responsibility to ensure that students have Common Core aligned learning experiences throughout their school day.

What can we do at home to help our child succeed?

- Don't dwell on these particular test scores. Look at them in the context of your child's overall performance in school and the many other types of assessments they complete each year. Focus discussion on setting goals for future learning.
- Your child should be reading, talking about what they've read, and writing about what they've read every day. Challenge your child to read more difficult books with your support and discuss ideas to support comprehension. Make sure that your child is reading a balance of fiction and non-fiction books.
- Make sure your child completes his/her homework every day and takes advantage of the computer/technology based resources that accompany many of our school programs. This can be particularly helpful in supporting students who need extra help in math or are learning English as a Second Language.
- Focus on the whole child. Children learn by playing, socializing, engaging in physical activity and teamwork, and also by balancing focused academic work with time to relax and think. A happy, well-rested child is ready to meet the daily challenges of school.

Please contact your child's teacher or principal if you have additional questions or concerns about the New York State testing program. You may also visit the EngageNY.org website for additional information about the Common Core and suggestions for helping your child.