



**SENIOR DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION – P-16**  
Office of Elementary, Middle, Secondary and Continuing Education  
Office of Higher Education

May 8, 2009

Colleagues:

Over the last several months, the Board of Regents and the State Education Department have been discussing modifying the administration schedules of the Grades 3-8 Mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA) examinations to accelerate the release of test scores and to use tests more effectively to encourage growth in student achievement. In February, we sent a survey to the field requesting your input into possible testing dates and your preferences for scoring models and test format. We received over 22,000 responses. I want to thank those of you who took the time to share your feedback and recommendations. A summary of the feedback we received is available on the Web at

<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2009Meetings/March2009/0309emscd2.htm>.

Based upon the feedback you shared in the first survey as well as in discussions with the Board of Regents, **we have developed three specific options for you to consider for future administrations of the Grades 3-8 ELA and Math exams. We are coming back to you now to provide you with an opportunity to provide feedback regarding which of these choices are most favorable for you and your district.** The three options, which are described in detail on the attached survey instrument, are:

- **Option 1:** Administer the English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics (Math) Tests concurrently during the first week of May and score both sets of examinations during the second week of May.
- **Option 2:** Keep the administration of the Grades 3-8 Mathematics Tests in early March and move the administration of the ELA Tests from January to late March/early April.
- **Option 3:** Retain the current testing calendar.

Please review each of three options carefully, as well as the advantages of putting in place each option and steps that would be required to modify the examination schedule, and indicate which of these options you find to be the most favorable. At the end of the survey instrument, we are also requesting your input into future scoring options for the examination, as well as any other feedback you may have on the scheduling of the Grades 3-8 testing program.

**Please complete the web-based survey and share your feedback with us by May 28, 2009.** The survey can be found at <http://www.forms2.nysed.gov/emsc/osa/Grades38TestingSurveyFollowup.cfm>. On behalf of the Board of Regents and my colleagues in the Education Department, thank you in advance for your willingness to help shape important policy decisions and for your input and recommendations on our State's future testing policies and procedures.

Sincerely,

Johanna Duncan-Poitier

cc: Members of the Board of Regents