



~~CO~~RRECT *the tests*

First-hand accounts detailing
the many problems with New York's flawed and unfair
grades 3-8 ELA exams







It doesn't have to be this way

The testing system in New York State is broken. It's flawed. It's invalid and it's hurting our kids.

We launched the “Correct the Tests” campaign because we know there are major problems with the grades 3-8 ELA and math state assessments. The tests are too long and developmentally inappropriate. Computer-based testing has been a disaster and is being rolled out too quickly. And the state's unfair scoring benchmarks continue to mislabel and harm students and their local schools.

In anticipation of another year of problems with these tests, we asked educators and parents to share their experiences during this year's ELA testing. This report compiles a sampling of the hundreds of heartbreaking personal stories submitted through our new

website, www.correctthetests.org, our hotline and via social media. They are painful to read. With support from state lawmakers, parents and educators around the state, we urge the Board of Regents to take action now to return sanity to our testing system. It's time for the state to stop making students pay for the mistakes of adults.

While the federal government requires testing, it doesn't have to be this way. It's time for state policymakers to correct these tests and restore trust in our assessment system.

In Solidarity,


Jolene T. DiBrango
Executive Vice President

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This year’s grades 3-8 ELA state exams proved to be a nightmare for students and teachers alike — and certainly underscored the need for NYSUT’s “Correct the Tests” campaign.

While State Education Commissioner MaryEllen Elia assured parents and educators this year’s testing would be better, it turned out to be much worse.

To help document the widespread problems, NYSUT set up a “Share your story” email link on a new website, www.correctthetests.org. We heard from hundreds of educators, parents and students who detailed incredibly painful testing experiences. We also received a wide variety of disturbing reports via social media and our testing hotline, with some calling the tests nothing short of “child abuse.”

The state testing woes went far beyond the epic failure of the computer-based testing, which froze up, crashed and eventually had to be shut down and postponed a week for some grades. There was just as much frustration with the traditional paper-and-pencil exams, which are still way too long and developmentally inappropriate. Untimed tests are cruel and traumatic for too many students, with some as young as 8 years old sitting for up to six hours and others unable to finish at all.

There were numerous reports of students crying, getting physically sick and expressing great frustration over vague and confusing test questions. Some teachers who looked at exams they were proctoring said questions were so poorly constructed that even they were unsure of the correct answer. Others noted reading passages and questions were significantly above grade level, with special education students and English language learners in much distress.

In addition to the horrific testing stories, there were troubling reports detailing how SED’s direction — and blatant misinformation — made it difficult for some

families to exercise their right to opt their children out of the state tests.

Some building administrators refused to honor parents’ requests to opt their children out, while others were offering bonuses for students to participate. Incentives

included exempting students from final exams and special events where the principal would shave his head or “do something fun like kiss a pig” if participation rates hit 95 percent.

While such events might sound like harmless fun, parents and educators said these kind of activities made students feel left out, harassed and traumatized. At least one family has filed a bullying complaint against their district under the Dignity for All Students Act.



These front-line reports are difficult to read, but it’s important for our education policymakers to hear what’s happening in the field and do the right thing.



— **Jolene DiBrango**
NYSUT Executive Vice President

At the end of the first week of testing, the commissioner and Regents Chancellor Betty Rosa called such reports “troubling” and issued a special message reminding school leaders of the importance of honoring requests received by parents to opt their children out of exams.

“These front-line reports are difficult to read, but it’s important for our education policymakers to hear what’s happening in the field and do the right thing,” said NYSUT Executive Vice President Jolene DiBrango. “Working with parents and state lawmakers, we know there is no voice louder than ours when we stand together and demand change.”

DEVELOPMENTALLY INAPPROPRIATE TESTS

Western New York teacher

I teach third graders. They are 8 and 9 years old. They have about a 30-minute attention span and that's NORMAL! They can barely multitask, let alone process text well above their reading level, answer higher-order questions in writing with evidence from the text and type all of that to boot. We are asking them to analyze text by line and paragraph number. This is not a college literary class. We want them to learn to read and to enjoy reading at this age. I call this process the "how to kill reading" in five minutes or less.

Capital Region teaching assistant

I work with two boys with autism and other issues. Because they are 4th graders, they were required to take the tests ... They were stressed out and spent all day on the test without finishing.

Central New York teacher

I teach in a class with several English language learners. One student has only had two years of formal education. This child wanted to do her best and spent five hours on day two of the ELA trying to read and answer questions that were far out of reach for her. It was torture to watch her struggle. Why not test her at her level and let her find some success?

Long Island teacher

The first day I proctored, every student on my attendance list but two opted out of the test. I'm not sure why all the time and money is being spent on a test that is only being taken by a few students. The students that are left seem demoralized by the fact that "all their friends" don't have to take it. I'm sure that this feeling can only hurt their performance. The time and money being used for this exam would be better spent working with students on the skills we want them to have.

Western NY librarian

I work with students using assistive technology to complete their tests. These are the students who use dictation and/or work recognition programs to complete their assignments. The current set-up for testing does not allow for these variations. Students were forced to use two computers to take the test. One was to read the questions and



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It's just insanity and a huge waste of time and financial resources! I feel so sorry for our students.

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the second was to enter their responses. Students printed their answers as they completed the questions. Then staff had to type the student responses into the test on the first computer. I typed in answers for over five hours yesterday. How dare the state not accommodate the IEPs and 504 plans for our students?

New York City teacher

I had 11-year olds working on the test from 9:30 a.m. until 2:15 p.m. The test says it should take 90 minutes. Ninety minutes to read three passages that are well above grade level, perform sophisticated analyses, write six short responses and an essay. This feat would be difficult for me with an undergraduate degree in literature, never mind my students who are not reading on grade level.

Southern Tier teacher

Today, I watched a good student break into tears after staring at an essay question prompt for 30 minutes. A few minutes earlier a student smiled shyly up at me and silently handed their test in; it was blank. My heart broke.



The state test the children took was not on their learning level. It won't provide feedback that will help them master subjects. It won't help teachers teach English Language Arts. What it will do is make students think they are not good enough. They are.

Hudson Valley special ed teacher

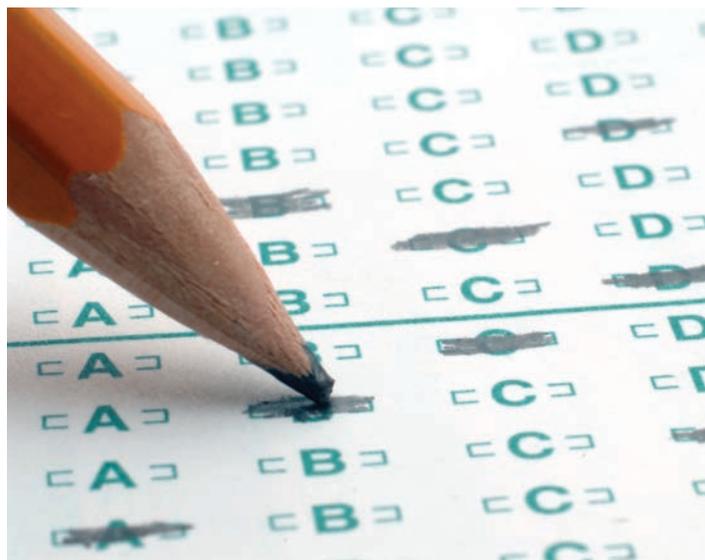
I had one student who took six hours to complete the test. All my kids who depend on structure and a daily routine lost control in the Opt Out room. Between the NYS testing and district testing, I will lose more than a week of instruction when I could be teaching children how to read.

Mohawk Valley teacher

It's a sad day in education when 8- and 9-year olds are falling asleep and/or having nervous breakdowns because of a test!! A test that is way too long for that age range and NOT academically appropriate. How is this test even an accurate assessment? Last week's debacle should have null and voided this year's test. Absolutely disappointed in NYS Dept. Of Education. They dropped the ball AND let a lot of kids down. Shame on them.

Lower Hudson Valley teacher

The 7th grade ELA test needs to be read by the state. There is a problem when students spend over two hours trying to figure out an answer that does not exist for a poem that made little sense to children.



The ELA test is so long, it made kids hate my subject.



Lower Hudson Valley parent

Today, my heart broke when my fifth-grade son told me he was stupid. After two days of anticipation due to the statewide CBT glitch, he took session two today. Three and half hours later, he finished and was completely emotionally drained.

Central New York teacher

You know it's bad when the principal leaves a classroom ready to cry because the students are so frustrated and anxious. Goes into the office and shuts the door because they cannot speak. Not a good look for an elementary school.

Western New York teacher

I proctored the paper test for a group of third grade students. They were stressed out, feeling down about themselves, and very frustrated during both days of the test. The second day of the test for writing, there were tears and mental breakdowns. These kids are 8 years old!

Southern Tier teacher

Ten-year-olds writing for four to six hours in one sitting. Seriously? This is wrong. Drastic change is needed for the length of the test. Why can't there just be one story with five or six questions on day two? Why so many reading selections?

Lower Hudson Valley grandparent

My grandson is a fourth grade honor roll student. He was so stressed out about taking the ELA test that he came home in tears. He was also very upset about having to take it on the computer because he did not feel confident in his computer skills during a testing situation. The week before the test he began blinking, and his eyes were twitching uncontrollably due to anxiety.

Central New York teacher

I had a child testing with special accommodations who had emotional concerns and much difficulty and frustration with writing. On the second day of testing, he melted down. He was unable to complete the test and the parent had to be called, as well as various guidance counselors and social workers in the building. Tests should not be so difficult that they push children over the edge in anxiety.

Western New York teacher

This year, despite the "shortened" test, I had 8- and 9-year old students sitting for at least two hours straight, working on the test. As I know through experience and research, a child is not developmentally ready to work at something for this length of time. If testing of this nature is required, at least make it accessible to children. There could be fewer texts to read and more developmentally appropriate questions. The written responses were incredibly long for third graders. They had six short response questions and an essay. This is way too much for them.

Capital Region teacher

Some English as a New Language (ENL) students who are 12 and 13 years old tested all day because there is no time limit ... from morning until dismissal. This is developmentally inappropriate for all children!!!! To further stress our ENL children in this manner is unacceptable. Most adults' career licensing exams would not run this long. Do people making these decisions realize these are children!?

Western New York teacher

The tests assess the highest level of metaphoric thinking and critical analysis, skills that take years to develop in most people; but these skills are presented in these assessments as skills we expect children to have already achieved — beginning in third grade! All research reveals that we do not make children college ready by hammering them with college-style tests year after year, when they are developmentally not ready to deal with such levels of thinking. What we do is frustrate the child, make the child feel dumb, and also deprive them of other important information, lessons and experiences that would be developmentally sound.



Randall Gunther @GuntherRandall · Apr 8

"My 3rd grade students should not be sitting for a test that lasts as long as a college entrance exam. @NYSSED needs to work with @nysut to #correctthetests" Natalie McKay @nysut

Lower Hudson Valley teacher

The state test is biased ... Many of the stories include experiences that have no connection to our students — only students from privileged backgrounds, means and/or with educated parents could possibly be familiar with many of these topics. What does this measure? It measures that our socioeconomically distressed children will under-perform when they are reading about a topic that is unfamiliar to them.

‘HORRIFYING’ COMPUTER FAILURE

Lower Hudson Valley teacher

Today I witnessed a very hardworking student hysterically crying because she was almost done and her test froze. When she was able to log back in, all of her work was gone. Insanity — this child worked SO hard. How on earth can you expect a 12-year-old to get back into the mindset to being test ready after having lost all their hard work?

Rochester area teacher

Computer-based testing is unreliable and invalid. In our district alone, every school was taking the test at different times so students were sharing information about it. When the test messed up, our school days were also messed up and students were frustrated. They also became even more anxious because they were worried about their results deleting and their scores decreasing. This is not an effective way to assess students. They should be allowed to choose the paper test or the computer test. I worry about the future if this is just the beginning.

Rochester area teacher

We had students in tears because they just wanted to do the right thing. We had a student who is visually impaired and used a big screen computer to do the test and lost everything and we are being told she will have to do it again. They allowed the child to take a break and get a snack and then forced the child to take the test again. This is just cruel behavior towards children!

Central New York teacher

This year students waited over an hour (some classes for two) for their test to load. The testing took all day and they haven’t even had the written test yet. If a test cannot be completed in an hour, it is too difficult or not a valid reflection of grade level curriculum.

Western New York teacher

I didn’t even administer the test and it still affected me. Because of technical glitches, my school modified our schedule for five days. My 8th grade Spanish class lost eight hours of instruction, effectively ruining our plans for an important unit.



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The perk to the computer crashing was that I instantaneously received 12 more opt-outs!

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Western New York teacher

I have a student who worked for two hours taking the ELA test. When he went to submit his test, on day two, there was an error code and **HIS ENTIRE TEST WAS LOST!**

Central New York parent

My child excels in his classes but gets 1 and 2 scores on his state tests every year. It’s not a measure of his knowledge at all! Let’s take the money we spend on the tests and put it to better use!

Western New York teacher

I had a student in a “holding pattern” when his computer froze. He had to sit and wait 40 minutes before he could get back to his work ... He acted defeated and just sat with his arms crossed. Once he was able to “finish,” he was done so fast that it was not an appropriate time for him to truly do his best.

Mid-Hudson teacher

I administered the test to my fourth grade class. On day one, I read through the directions and when we got to the point where the students had to log in, only five of my students were able to get into the program. We were told to wait, but that the students could not talk, read, or do anything. Nearly an hour later, we were told to start the test for the students who were able to log in.

Western New York teacher

Day two of the computer based, third grade ELA exam was an absolute nightmare. We started directions at 9:15 a.m., got halfway through, and then no one could log in. Waited until 9:50 (trying to entertain/stall the kids), tried again; all but two logged in. Finally at 10:15, the kids started their tests.

North Country teacher

Watching day one of CBT was horrifying; hours waiting for computer glitches to be resolved was beyond belief.

Lower Hudson Valley teacher

My students had to sit and wait 1 1/2 hours to get onto the system. Finally, when they did get on and completed the test, they could not submit! One of my students had a breakdown, crying. The psychologist needed to be called in.

Capital Region teacher

In addition to the CBT shutting down and the slew of problems that created, I had constant interruptions during the test. Tech personnel administrators were in and out of my room the entire time. There was no way my students could concentrate. Many of them were nervous to begin with. It was completely unfair to both them and me.

Southern Tier teacher

It took an hour for our students to log in to the test due to the system being “overwhelmed.” By then, they were frustrated. As they finished the test, once again, it took over half an hour and several tries to submit the test. Some computers had batteries go dead from all the delays.



No validity to the ELA test this year. Upon submitting day 1, my 8th grader’s computer-based test disappeared into nowhere so he had to start over from question #1. He wasn’t the only one that had to start over, either. No validity = waste of time for everyone!



Lower Hudson Valley teacher

NYS Computer-based Testing today —EPIC FAIL — again. I thought last year was bad but this year is a new worst.

North Country parent

My 6th-grade son took computer-based ELA session one on Tuesday 4/2/19. It was like a late April Fool’s Day joke. He answered all the multiple-choice questions and asked to use the restroom. His test was paused. When he returned and signed back in, all his answers were gone.

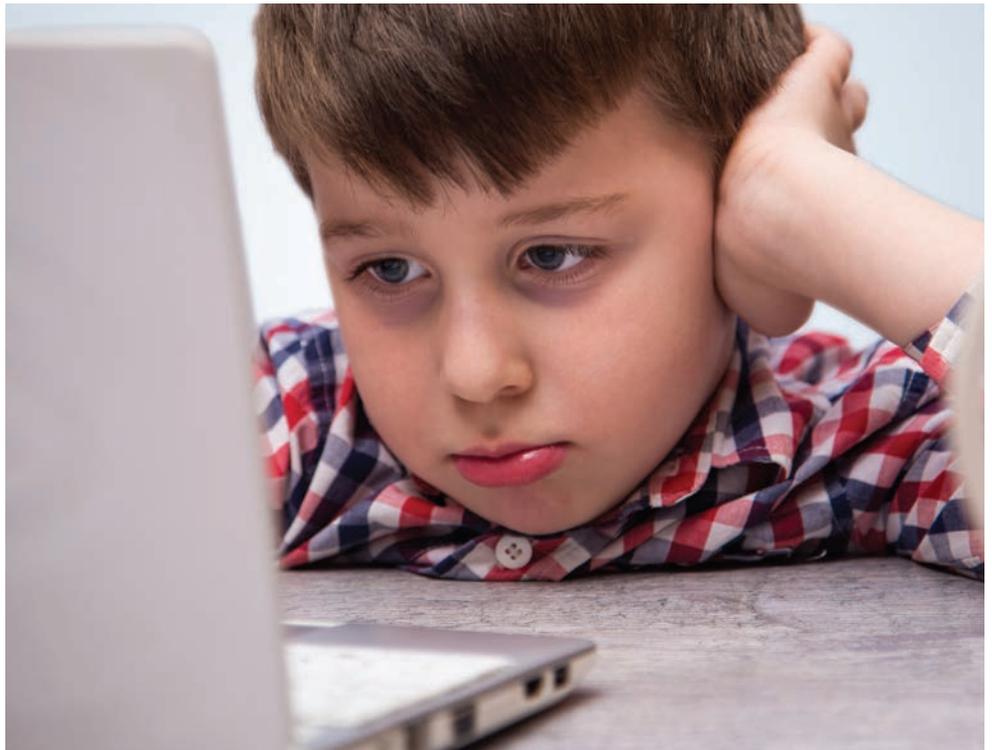
North Country teacher

Due to the fact that we did not have enough computers in the building to conduct the CBT at the same time across a grade level, administration had to make a schedule with three testing sessions. This only allotted students with 84 minutes to arrive at the testing location, hear the directions and begin the exam. If they needed additional time, which 90 percent of the classes needed, students had to pause their exam and walk down the hallway to a new location in an overflow room. This was extremely disruptive.

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“Students in computer-based testing schools have had substitute teachers for two weeks because their classroom teachers are still administering the tests.

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Rochester area administrator

What is even crazier is state ed sending a memo at 2:45 telling us that 8th grade should test tomorrow. They have no idea what kind of planning goes into these tests as well as the impact when only one grade is testing. Do they really think we have a ton of extra staff??? Also, what about communication to kids and families when they send it out at or after dismissal. They are not thinking of the kids at all!!!!!!

Lower Hudson Valley teacher

My third graders took part one on the day Questar’s servers failed. Twenty were testing while five others in the room were not. There were six different adults in and out to try to get the computers working, providing constant distractions. The students had abhorrent testing conditions on day one.

Hudson Valley teacher

Computer-based testing is completely inappropriate for elementary students. Not only does it inhibit their ability

to formulate answers to short- answer and extended- response questions, it does not allow them to highlight and annotate as we have taught them. It does not facilitate flipping back to the text to support their thinking as the questions ask them to do. Most importantly, we are damaging their eyes by having them read so much on a computer screen.

Southern Tier teacher

This is the second year in a row that system failure has dragged the testing process out and/or forced districts to start and stop testing for thousands of kids. It’s not a reasonable process and certainly not a valid testing environment.

North Country teacher

They can’t even get the computer-based testing out properly to the only 25 percent of NY schools who volunteered to pilot CBT. What happens when the whole state rolls over (to computer-based testing)? Unacceptable.

TESTING IS TOO LONG



Long Island teacher

The test was extremely long. I had students spend over four hours on it. They were focused and working the entire time just trying to do their best. I don't mind giving a test, but that was pure torture.

Catskills region teacher

As I see my students work so, so hard, part of me is very proud. But — and this is a huge “but” — part of me is also very disgusted. I am disgusted in myself because I have made students believe it is okay to sit for up to 6.5 hours just to complete part of a test, in 8th grade no less. There is something very, very wrong with this. Making my students sit for this long — for a test that doesn't even matter — is wrong. Making my students sit for this long — for a test that is graded within the next month yet we don't receive the results until the summer — is wrong. Making my students sit for this long — rather than me teaching them in my classroom — is just wrong.



Western New York teacher

Yesterday my students took the session one test: 24 multiple-choice questions. It took some of them three hours. Today my students took the session two test: SIX “short answer” questions that require at least one paragraph each if you want to get the best score, then one essay question that required at least two paragraphs to get the best score! These are 8-year-old students being asked to write eight

paragraphs! Most students took three hours. Three students took four hours. One student took all day! This is insane and inhumane because these tests do not tell us anything we don't already know about our students!

Lower Hudson Valley teacher

I proctored fourth-grade students who worked for four and a half hours. Why are 9-year-old children working longer and harder than 17-year olds taking the SATs?

Capital Region teacher

I proctored while third-grade students spent almost three hours taking day two of the ELA. They were asked for many, many writing passages and were ALL fatigued by the time they reached the extended response. One student tested for six hours. I wonder how valid a test is that is too long and too advanced? Why not two passages, two short response and one extended? No 8-year-old (or adult) can attend for that long productively.

Long Island teacher

I had two fifth-graders who began day two of the ELA test at 9:35 and continued testing until 2 p.m.! They missed lunch, recess and music. They were permitted to bring their lunch into the extended testing room and eat for 10 minutes. They were so stressed out, but wanted to do their best. Afterwards, when they finally joined the class again, one of the students asked me for a hug.

Western New York teacher

How painful it was to help proctor a test for two days for a dozen third-grade ENL students. These children were just learning English. Then on top of that make them use a Chromebook to take the test. These children read anywhere from K-2nd grade. It was horrible. Did they give up? Nope ... they kept going and worked from 9 a.m.-2:20 because they wanted to show their teachers they were trying their best.

Western New York teacher

Many of my students were still working on their test at 2:30 p.m. They were stressed out and crying as they did their best to answer the short response questions/essay. The test is unfair and too long.

New York City teacher

While taking the Day 2 of the ELA, which had an estimated time of 75 minutes, two students finished in this time frame. Nine of my students sat for three hours still not finished by lunchtime. They continued for another hour and two students didn't even finish by the end of the school day at 2:20.

Mohawk Valley teacher

I was proctoring a group of three special education students in a separate location in the library. I had to read the test to them according to their IEP's. The day started out with one of the fifth-grade boys crying because he was so nervous about failing the test. It then proceeded on to four grueling hours of passage after passage and extremely difficult questions. The children looked so confused and overwhelmed but they kept plugging along. We finally got a break for lunch at 1:00 and ate in silence in the library. The look on their faces was pure frustration and exhaustion. I felt so badly for them. It didn't end there though because we had to complete the test. The last student finished the test at 2:50. Unbelievable torture. The second day was no different, only they did get to eat at 12:15 rather than 1:00. A complete waste of two valuable instruction days.

Southern Tier teacher

Today my third-graders took part two of the NYS ELA exam. It took my class an average of one hour and 45 minutes while some of my students worked for almost three hours. This is ridiculous for 8-year-olds but they were trying their hardest to do well. They say they



“When ‘shortening’ the ELA to two days, all they really did was combine day 2 and 3. This day 2 is absolutely ridiculous and NO child should have to sit for hours to prove ANYTHING!



shortened the test to two days when in reality they just crammed two days of testing in one day.

Capital Region parent

My fourth-grade son tested for 5 1/2 hours yesterday completing book two of the ELA exam. At lunchtime, he was brought his food, but only ate his goldfish (crackers). Since he wasn't in the cafeteria, he didn't have a spoon to eat his other food and was too nervous to ask. He tested for 5 1/2 hours—almost the entire school day—and only ate a snack size bag of goldfish. He's 10.

Hudson Valley teacher

What is the state testing? Stamina? Testing could be done all in one day. Multiple choice, short answer and essay can all be completed in one test that is less than two hours.

Western New York teacher

In my school, the untimed nature of the tests proved to be a curse rather than a blessing. Students in my school tested for hours, without snacks or recess. They only had a short break for lunch ... The tests are too long. They say they made it better by changing it from three days to two, but it is still the same amount of work, just crammed into a shorter time frame.

Central New York teacher

A third-grade student told me she spent the whole day taking the test and only stopped for lunch. This is abuse. I think that (state policymakers) should have to sit and take the fifth-grade test and only be allowed to get up for lunch and the bathroom for two days straight.



Lower Hudson Valley teacher

On day two of the test, my students had to write six short answers and one long response! Of my 23 students, 15 were still writing their responses at 2:30! That's five hours of testing! When I took the SAT at 18, it only took three hours to complete and I was 18 not 8! This is a form of child abuse.

Capital Region teacher

I had one student work from the beginning of the day until the end of the day and didn't finish either day. She was so worried that she cried both testing days. She's a great student who doesn't deserve this. Other classrooms spent at least an hour more than last year. We had 30+ students still working when their lunchtime came around. What was the point of "shortening" the testing days only to make the two days longer?

Southern Tier teacher

I was the proctor for the "overflow" room during the ELA test this year. This is where those students who are not done with the test come when the majority of the class has finished. Both days of testing were painful to watch but day 2 was by far the worst I have ever experienced. I had students from all grades (3-5) and all levels of abilities in this room.

Most of these kids sat there distressed and dumbfounded for HOURS. They had no clue what the question was asking of them. Some students just gave up and put their head down. Some just blankly stared at the test. Some made comments about how stupid they were and how they were failures. And one little third-grader sobbed because he was so overwhelmed and said he couldn't take it anymore. Some of these students never finished because after several hours of still being on the first passage we made the call that they were done. Because there was no time limit on the test I had students working on this test right up to dismissal!

All this for what? As an educator I have no choice but to administer this test, but as a parent you better believe my child has not and will not be put through this senseless anxiety!

No Opt-Outs Allowed, Intimidation

North Country teacher

Our school district did not accept parent letters to opt out students. Students who refused were required to individually speak with the principal when tests were passed out.

Western New York parent

I sent an email saying I wanted to opt out my child from this week's ELA test. They said he would receive an alternate test. I said I wanted to opt him out of that one. As a response, the teacher said that the children would receive a "classwork" grade for use of strategies and effort — but not for performance — on the test. This sounds borderline illegal to me. Now I feel like I have to keep him home.

Western New York teacher

(There was) ... unacceptable coaxing and bullying to get kids to take the assessments. Also, some of the opt-out kids reported receiving rude, uncomfortable treatment.

Central New York teacher

I was told that if I even ask a child if they have an opt-out letter I would lose my certification. I was also told by admin that as a state employee I was to "sell" the test. Our school leader told students there were no opt-outs this year. For those who did bring a letter, a phone call to parents was made. Parents were told their child would need the test to qualify for accelerated classes or to get the help they need.

Central New York parent

This year our district didn't even send out a letter informing parents of their right to opt out (like they had in the past). Everything was kept hush-hush and we were told students are encouraged to test. They sent a letter home telling parents WHY kids should take the test and how the state listened to all of their concerns and changed the test. As a result, many students came to school and took the test that they had opted out of in previous years. The district said they were going to make a phone call to the parents, but they never did. Sneaky if you ask me.

North Country teacher

On the first day of testing I saw the principal of our elementary school speaking with individual students in the hallway, bullying them into taking the tests. His posture

was intimidating. Each time I saw him speaking with a student he had them backed up against the wall, while he leaned over them, one hand on the wall above their head. I heard from some of the teachers that he did manage to convince some to take the test.

Central New York parent

My 10-year-old son was sent home with a letter for me to sign saying that if I signed it and he took the tests he could participate in the fun day on Friday of that week. Needless to say I explained to him that I was not signing it and that they could not keep him from fun day if he didn't take the test. Well guess what? He opted out and was still able to enjoy fun day. This mama doesn't play that game!

New York City teacher

In my school, students who gave in refusal letters were bullied into taking the test. My administrators called some parents several times to sway them to have their child take the test and many of them caved. I was told last minute one of my students was now taking the test. And by last minute I mean the morning of the test as they were delivered. When I spoke to the child afterwards, he told me his mom still didn't really want him to take it and it was up to him. He told me he didn't want to, but he took it anyway. This is unacceptable bullying. I also take issue with making the children who do opt out feel bad by having them sit in the auditorium quietly for hours with nothing to do.

Mid-Hudson parent

Parents in our building who wrote to state that their child would not take the test were told that they had to take it, or were convinced to change their mind.

Rochester area teacher

Just found out from my kids' school that they are no longer sending home opt-out forms. It's being kept hush-hush this year.

Western New York teacher

It did not matter that the school had received our letter opting out our children from state testing. My 10-year old was forced to take the test today and my 12 year old

daughter was questioned repeatedly about her assertions that she was to not take the test. This insanity must not be tolerated by anyone any longer!

North Country teacher

A fifth-grade boy who had stayed home the day of testing refused the test on the make-up day. On the next make-up day (for session 2), the administrator made him sign in and take the test.

Mid-Hudson teacher

Our two middle schools are giving students incentives for taking the test. While (one) is offering to dye their principal's hair in exchange for 95 percent participation, the other is going to give a picnic party to their test-takers and give every student who takes the test a ticket to enter a prize raffle.

Western New York parent

I have been opting my children out for the past several years and have never had a problem. But this year my district had a very different attitude and approach. At middle school orientation the superintendent told parents

that the kids needed to take the test to improve our school rankings and that it was mandatory for honors students, basically guilt-tripping parents who have previously opted their children out to take the test this year.

Teachers were encouraged to promote testing week slogans like "Celebration of Knowledge Week for ELA" and "Do your Best to Rock the Test." A letter was sent home promoting each day of the testing week including "Wear PJ's to 'Chill Out' before the test" and "Wear a Hat to put your thinking cap on."

It seems as though kids are being bullied to participate in this test and lured in. They also bribed the students ... if they had 100 percent participation in the state tests, they were offering the kids a pizza party. Does this mean that my child who is ruining it for the class is going to have to withstand some backlash?

I believe that this is still something that parents can decide for their children and I do not appreciate the administrators putting such heavy emphasis on student participation.



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