



April 2015

To: BOCES District Superintendents
Superintendents of Public Schools
Principals of Public and Nonpublic Schools
Charter School Leaders

From: Ken Wagner 

Subject: July 1 Release of Instructional Reports for the 2015 Grades 3-8 ELA and Mathematics Testing Program

The Department has authorized a July 1, 2015 release of instructional reports for the 2015 Grades 3-8 English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics Testing Program. A July 1 release will allow schools and districts to use this information for summer curriculum writing and professional development activities. These instructional reports have been available in prior years but, through this early release, superintendents, principals, and teachers will have more time to use the results when planning for next school year.

These reports can be accessed via your Regional Information Center (RIC) and/or Level 1 data center. As in the past, information will be available about each student's response to each test question.¹

These secure reports will allow authorized school personnel to view, for each question that contributed to a student's score, whether the student answered the question correctly, and the Common Core learning standard(s) measured by the question. The reports will allow raw score comparisons at the item, cluster, and standard levels for students, classrooms, schools, districts, and regions of the state.

Our assessments are tools that can help improve instruction through the identification of student strengths and areas in need of additional support. For example, if a class had difficulty with questions that measure addition and subtraction of fractions with unlike denominators, the teacher can adjust instruction next year to strengthen students' understanding of this topic.

¹ For a summary of the instructional reports made available by the RICs, see <http://www.boces.org/Portals/0/Web%20Docs/RIC%20Reports/NYSRICsCognos.pdf>. The New York City Department of Education and the Yonkers school district serve as their own Level 1 data center and will have different reporting solutions and time lines. For a summary of last year's release of instructional reports, see <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/assessment/ei/2014/earlyreleaseinstructionalreports.pdf>.

See <https://www.engageny.org/3-8> for detailed information about the Grades 3-8 ELA and Mathematics Testing Program, including subject- and grade-level test guides, the criteria used to select passages and design questions, detailed performance level descriptions, and suggested data analyses.

Later in the summer 2015, the Department will release approximately 50% of the 2015 test questions. Released test questions, coupled with the instructional reports described above for all test questions, are important components of a comprehensive approach to instructional planning and professional development.

In addition, the Level 1 data centers are exploring the creation of additional informational reports for parents based on the released items and other pertinent data points. These additional parent reports would supplement the score reports that parents already receive for the Grades 3-8 ELA and Math assessments (for examples of these parent reports, see <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/assessment/ei/eiscorereports14.html>).

Please note that the instructional reports available beginning July 1 will be based on raw scores only. They will not include scale scores or performance levels until the statewide results are released later in the summer. Please also note that 2015 raw scores are not comparable to prior-year raw scores.²

If you have questions about these instructional reports, please contact the Office of Information and Reporting Services at dataquest@nysed.gov or your Level 1 data center at <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/sirs/RICBIG5.pdf>. Report availability will be determined by your data center. If you have questions about the Grades 3-8 ELA and Mathematics Testing Program, please contact the Office of State Assessment at emscassessinfo@nysed.gov.

Thank you for your continued support with this important work.

² Because each year's test includes different questions, it is likely that the questions are, on average, slightly easier or slightly more difficult than was the prior year's test. To ensure that test scores are comparable given these slight year-to-year differences, a standard statistical process called equating is employed. Equating adjusts slightly the number of raw score points (i.e., questions answered correctly) needed to achieve a certain scale score and performance standard, relative to the small difference in difficulty of the current year's test. For example, if the current year's test is slightly easier than was the prior year test, the number of raw score points necessary to achieve a given performance standard will increase slightly. If the current year's test is slightly harder than was the prior year test, the number of raw score points necessary to achieve a given performance standard will decrease slightly.