

Test Refusal Q & A

Q: What is test refusal?

A: In practice, “refusal” is a bubble on the top of a student answer sheet (grades 3-8 ELA and math). Prior to the onset of common core testing, this bubble was only used in rare cases where a child with a behavior issue refused to take an assessment. However, in the past three years, a significant number of children across New York State have refused assessments. The movement has been called the “opt out” movement, but in practice, the child refuses to take the assessment. A proctor bubbles in this bubble, and the child is counted as not tested for NYS accountability purposes.

Q: Are there negative consequences for the school and/or district if my child refuses the NYS ELA and/or math assessments?

A: Yes. Refusals are counted as not tested. NCLB (federal law) mandates that schools annually test at least 95% of their students in grades 3-8 in ELA and math. If a school fails to meet the 95% participation rate three years in a row, that school is designated as a LAP School and is required to submit an improvement plan to the State Education Department. Plainview-Old Bethpage has not yet been required to submit a plan as of yet.

Q: When/how should I notify my school if I choose to have my child refuse to take their ELA and math assessments this spring?

A: Should you anticipate that your child will **refuse** to take the ELA and math assessments, please submit a letter to your child’s principal **on or before March 21, 2017** for ELA and **on or before April 25, 2017** for math. This will allow the administration sufficient time to plan for the anticipated number of refusals. Please be specific in your letter as to whether your child will be refusing the ELA and/or math assessments. Submissions sent via electronic websites like www.saynototests.com will not be accepted. There is no way for the district to know if requests submitted in this manner are legitimate or not. Parents should follow the process listed above.

Q: Should my child refuse an assessment, what will he/she be doing?

A: Children will be permitted to read quietly while the other children take their assessments. Children should bring multiple independent reading materials. (No word puzzles or games)

Q: Should my child refuse an assessment, will he/she be brought to a different space in the school to read?

A: Yes, we will be providing an alternate location. Advanced notice of refusals will help with our planning. Students will remain in this location throughout the estimated testing period.

Q: Should my child refuse an assessment, will an alternative learning activity be offered?

A: No. Children will be permitted to read quietly while the other children take their assessments. We encourage you to pack a healthy snack so children can have a break at the end of the testing period.

Q: Could my child’s refusal have a negative impact on my child?

A: Your child’s progress and growth towards meeting the standards will be assessed using other means. We take a multiple measures approach to assessing learning.

Q: Will my child's refusal impact consideration for Project Challenge?

A. No, all children who meet the IQ criteria will be moved forward in the process. Keep in mind, the New York State exam results are one of the factors considered for inclusion into the program. If your child does not take the exams and we require more information to determine eligibility and you want your child advanced in the process, your child may be required to take locally developed exams.

Q: Could my child's refusal have a negative impact on my child's teacher?

A: ELA and math teachers in grades 4-8 will continue to receive a growth score from the State. However, as per recent changes, these scores will not be a factor in the annual professional performance review (APPR) process until the 2019-2020 school year. At the present time, districts are prohibited from using the 3-8 assessments for the purpose of teacher and principal evaluation.

Q: Will the tests this spring (2017) be similar in length? 0

A: Yes, for the most part. The ELA Book 1 for grades 5-8 is extended an extra 20 minutes, yet for mathematics grade 5, Book 2 was shortened by 10 minutes.