

PLAINVIEW-OLD BETHPAGE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

106 Washington Avenue, Plainview, New York 11803

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Dr. Lorna R. Lewis
Superintendent of Schools

Board of Education
Debbie Bernstein, President
Ginger Lieberman, Vice President
Jodi Campagna
Seth Greenberg
Ronelle Hershkowitz
Lauren Sackstein
Susan Stewart

September 7, 2017

Dear Commissioner Elia and the Board of Regents,

We, the Plainview-Old Bethpage Board of Education, would like to express our deep concern over the 2017 Geometry Regents exam. Numerous questions were poorly constructed, putting all students – even those who clearly went into the test with a mastery of the subject matter – at a huge disadvantage. While you have made the appropriate adjustments for three of these questions, others still remain unaddressed.

We strongly believe that Regents exams should have a singular goal – to assess whether or not students learned what they were taught during the course of the year. When questions have multiple correct answers, or are worded in such a way as to confuse the test taker, we are obliged to call the test's validity into question.

Exams with these kinds of flaws serve no purpose other than to frustrate hardworking students, and discourage them from pursuing higher-level coursework. They also become an unfair obstacle to students seeking to obtain a Regents Diploma with Advanced Distinction or a Regents Diploma with Honors, and may even, in cases where the exam is required for graduation, prevent students from receiving a diploma at all.

These kinds of flawed tests will continue to erode public trust in the New York State assessment system, furthering support among parents for opting out of other exams.

Because we feel that this particular exam was so highly flawed, we will be removing it from GPA calculations in any case where it negatively impacts the student's average (Regents exams usually account for 11% of a student's final grade for a course). We simply cannot sit by and allow our students – who worked so hard all year – to suffer for the errors and missteps of the State Education Department.

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Our students deserve Regents exams that are a fair representation of the standards and the curriculum, with straightforward questions designed to determine whether or not they grasped a particular topic. "Gotcha" questions simply have no place on a test with such high stakes. We hope appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that questions on future exams are presented with higher content validity and reliability.

Respectfully,

The Plainview-Old Bethpage Board of Education

Debbie Bernstein, President

Ginger Lieberman, Vice President

Jodi Campagna, Trustee

Seth Greenberg, Trustee

Ronelle Hershkowitz, Trustee

Lauren Sackstein, Trustee

Susan Stewart, Trustee