



Wisdom, Commitment, Success

Mickey Edwards, Superintendent

WYOMING CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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RE: State Assessments

Dear Parents, Legal Guardians and Students,

As spring begins to come into view and the joys of summer ahead, we are tasked with the NYS ELA and Math Assessments each April. These tests, in Grades 3- 8, are a required mandate in the educational process under state and federal law.

Many are concerned that these tests do not assess some of the more beautiful aspects that each child brings to our school, such as a personality, kindness and a love for learning that makes Wyoming Central Schools a terrific place to learn.

What these tests *do measure* is how each student is doing in English Language Arts and Mathematics as compared to “like” students across the state. These tests give us valuable information as to how well we are preparing our children academically to be successful in life, and give us an opportunity to make adjustments if necessary. These results help shape our future instruction both on an overall basis, as well as for individual children.

No matter how you view these assessments here are a few important points to understand:

- First, *federal law* requires that states assess students in grades 3-8 on an annual basis in specified areas. It also requires that 95 percent of students in each school participate in such assessments. According to the U.S. Department of Education, failure to comply with these requirements can subject school districts to sanctions including, but not limited to, loss of funding for programs such as Title I and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- Second, the State Education Department considers such testing to be part of the core academic program that school districts must offer all students attending their schools.
- Third, school district officials are bound by an Oath of Office that requires them to comply with legal requirements that affect the operation of school districts, including the administration of state assessments. Therefore, school district officials have no authority to encourage or promote parental opt out efforts.

- Fourth, the State Education Department has taken the position that school boards refusing to administer state assessments are subject to removal from office, and administrators taking a similar course of action are subject to proceedings leading to the loss of Professional Certification.
- Fifth, the State Education Department has stated that there is no provision in statute or regulation allowing parents to opt their children out of state tests.

The reality is that Wyoming Central Schools may potentially face severe consequences even if only a few parents decide to have their children opt out of the state assessments. As I am sure you are aware, being a small district, one or two testing refusals will have a much greater impact on our ability to comply with these requirements than a larger district and has the very real potential to negatively impact all of our students.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Mickey Edwards
Superintendent of Schools