



New York State Board of Regents  
Dr. John B. King, Jr.  
Commissioner of Education  
The State Education Department  
The University of the State of New York / Albany, NY 12234



Office of Communications / (518) 474-1201

## **NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE September 13, 2011**

For More Information, Contact:  
Tom Dunn, Jonathan Burman or Jane Briggs  
(518) 474-1201  
[www.nysed.gov](http://www.nysed.gov)

### **REGENTS ACT TO ENSURE THE INTEGRITY OF NEW YORK'S TESTING SYSTEM**

The Board of Regents today approved a series of measures aimed at reinforcing the integrity of New York's testing system. The Board's actions will enhance security at every stage of the testing process: before the exams are given; during their administration; and when they are being scored.

"We are relying more than ever on state exams – to measure student achievement, to evaluate teacher and principal effectiveness, and to hold schools and districts accountable for their performance," Regents Chancellor Meryll H. Tisch said. "If we're going to use the tests in these ways, we need to be absolutely certain that our system is beyond reproach. Today's action by the Board will help ensure that our tests are not compromised in any way."

State Education Commissioner Dr. John B. King, Jr. said the new measures were targeted to preserve equity and fairness in New York's assessment process.

"The Regents have strengthened the integrity of New York's assessments," King said. "The overwhelming majority of educators just want to get things right. These new integrity measures will help them do just that. We have been encouraging students to 'work hard and get smart.' We need to make sure their hard work is valued. Meaningful, legitimate assessments are integral to the Regents' reforms, and they're also integral to ensuring our students are learning what they need to know to graduate from high school college- and career- ready."

The State Education Department (SED) oversees administration of approximately six million state exams and assessments every year in the following testing programs: Regents exams and Regents Competency Tests (RCTs); grade 3-8 Math and ELA; grades 4 and 8 Science; the NYS English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT); and the NYS Alternate Assessments.

SED has already taken several administrative actions recently to improve the testing system. On August 1, King announced the formation of an internal workgroup to review and recommend actions to reinforce the integrity of New York's testing system and create a model testing program based on best practices. The actions approved by the Regents today will be implemented in three stages: 1) addressing the immediate changes that can be made to the current system; 2) revamping and reforming the system as part of the educational reform process; and 3) planning for the testing system of the future.

The Regents Item detailing the actions taken by the Board today is available at: <http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2011Meetings/September2011/911p12a8.pdf>.

### Current Efforts

Since 2010, SED has taken a number of steps to increase oversight of local school districts to ensure that Regents exams are accurately scored, including: a new certification requirement for proctors; phasing-in the scanning of exams; no longer permitting schools to rescore open-ended questions on Regents exams; and beginning this school year (2011-2012), requiring districts to use external scoring, regional scoring, or distributed scoring technology for assessments that are used for teacher and principal evaluations.

### Options for Improving the Administration and Scoring of Tests

The following SED administrative actions, approved by the Board, will help prevent potential cheating and enhance the security of the state assessments and exams:

- Universal grade 3-8 exam dates. Administering exams on the same day across the state will create tighter control of answer sheets and minimize improper discussions about exams. Exceptions will be made for students who are legitimately absent and for students who require testing accommodations.
- Expand to all state assessments the requirement that all teachers and administrators certify that they have received and will follow all security protocols. This requirement currently exists for Regents exams.

Additionally, the Board of Regents took the following actions:

- Voted to direct SED to secure an independent review of procedures related to incident reporting and follow-up on allegations of testing improprieties.
- Voted to direct SED staff to develop further specific proposals for consideration in October in the following areas:
  - Implementing a system of centralized statewide scanning and scoring of multiple choice questions that would include erasure analysis and enhanced error pattern analysis and data forensics;
  - Requiring all districts to prohibit teachers from scoring their own students' Regents exams and state assessments;
  - Requiring districts to retain answer sheets longer than one year, to allow for improved investigations and research into potential improprieties;

- Prohibiting teachers from proctoring exams for their own students or in their certification area, to prevent inappropriate assistance to students during the exams;
- Developing a distributed scoring platform that would be used to score open-ended responses throughout the state. Platform would include the scanning of responses, anonymously warehousing student work, and distributing responses digitally to scorers, enabling experienced scorers to effectively grade assessments at centralized locations. Distributed scoring is recommended as a best practice by the Congressional Budget Office as a way to mitigate costs and deter test tampering.

### PARCC Multi-State Testing Consortium and the Future of Testing

In January 2010, the Regents endorsed New York State's participation in the 24-state Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). The PARCC consortium worked together on a joint proposal to the US Department of Education to seek Race to the Top funding for the development of a K-12 assessment system aligned to the Common Core State Standards in ELA and math for grades 3-11. PARCC was awarded \$185 million in September 2010. One of the hallmarks of the PARCC design is that it is a computer-based test; PARCC is working to ensure that as much of the assessment as possible can be machine-scored.

-30-

New York State Board of Regents

The State Education Department / The University of the State of New York

Albany, NY 12234

Office of Communications / (518) 474-1201