



# Horseheads Central School District

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[www.horseheadsdistrict.com](http://www.horseheadsdistrict.com)

To the Parents/Guardians of \_\_\_\_\_:

I am in receipt of your letter stating your intention to have your child refuse to take some or all of the New York State 3-8 Assessments. I realize you have already given this issue a great deal of thought, but I hope you might reconsider. It is not uncommon for some students to find testing to be stressful. However, it is important for parents and students to understand that the Horseheads Central School District is bound by the rules and regulations set forth by the New York State Education Department (NYSED) and the United States Department of Education (USDOE). NYSED requires the district to administer state assessments to all students in grades 3 through 8. As such, your child is required to be presented with the tests each time they are administered. Test security of these exams requires that students remain in the exam rooms until their testing is complete.

The district is not obligated, nor does it have the resources available, to create an alternate plan for students who refuse to take state tests. If a student does refuse a test, when it is administered, he/she will be required to sit quietly and read while other students complete the exam. All students, including your child, will be able to bring reading material into the exam room to read upon completion of their exam. If a student is determined to be causing a distraction to other students during the test, they will be asked to leave the exam room. A building administrator will then address any disruption issues. It is important that we comply with test administration rules and regulations established by NYSED and USDOE. A student who remains present for the duration of each testing period and refuses the exam will receive a score of "999" or "not valid" according to the rules set forth by the New York State Education Department.

In the very rare case a student is required to legally leave during the administration of the assessment, for a scheduled appointment, the parent should pre-arrange this excuse with the school prior to the examination period. The student will be held back from the exam to convenience the parent in picking the child up for their appointment. However, the student will be subject to any make-up procedures for state testing. If an emergency arises, the building administration will have to address this rare situation in the best interest of all.

I hope you can understand that the State and the District consider testing to be a part of our educational program. It provides an evaluation of student knowledge of content and skills in various courses of study, as well as helps to shape future instruction. While testing serves as a tool for evaluation, we routinely remind students that a test is simply one measure of performance. Horseheads does not use these assessments as a determination in promotional decisions. We do our best to look at each student's unique qualities and strive to educate the whole child rather than focus on any one single measure.

Like you, we do not want students to experience undue pressure or anxiety, and our school will do everything possible to create the most appropriate assessment environment for your child and his/her classmates. We only ask that all of our students simply try to do their best on any exam.

While the decision is ultimately yours to make with your child, please give some additional thought to our obligations as a public school district in the State of New York and our record of commitment to your child's education. Most importantly, please understand that regardless of your final decision, all students will be required to be present for testing and make-up procedures.

If you have further questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to your building principal or myself.

Sincerely,

Dr. Thomas J. Douglas  
Superintendent

*Building Principal Name*  
*Building Principal*  
*Phone Number*

## ***"Quality Education for All"***

The Mission of the Horseheads Central School Community is to provide a quality education for all within a nurturing environment which promotes excellence, growth, and a sense of civic responsibility.