



COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCIL DISTRICT 15

February 5, 2021

Dear New York State Education Department Officials:

As elected representatives of over 35,000 students in NYC's District 15, we are writing to ask that NYC schools receive a waiver from the NYS ELA, Math, and Science Exams.

The pandemic, Covid-19, has wreaked havoc on communities in New York City, with over 26,000 deaths so far, leaving countless people out of work, struggling, and fearful. NYC students have suffered significant losses, including deaths of family members, friends and teachers, and summer jobs, and have experienced extensive challenges and inadequacies with remote learning, and have endured inequity in every area, including food insecurity.

Prior to the pandemic, State tests have been shown to be ineffective in their stated goal of identifying schools and districts for improvement, assessing student acumen, and tailoring education to individual students. As such, they are no longer even required by the state for teacher evaluations, due to the evidence and successful activism on the part of parents, teachers, administrators, and students. There are various alternatives to the state tests, which can effectively assess student learning.

The millions of dollars that NYS spends on these annual tests should be put to astronomically better use considering all that is required in providing safe and equitable schools.

We believe that schools should spend time and resources helping students with the academic and social emotional challenges caused by the pandemic and should put equity at the forefront of decision-making. Teachers and school leaders need time and flexibility to address the trauma their students are experiencing without having to worry about test prep.

We wrote to you last year in CEC15's *Resolution to Support Suspension of 2021 State Tests*¹ dated August 25, 2020, with our concerns around the state tests, and again, we ask that NYS tests be suspended for the 2020-2021 school year.

Signed,

Tia Schellstede
Co Vice President

Camille Casaretti
President
Community Education Council District 15

cc:

NYS Governor Andrew Cuomo
NY State Senator Shelly Mayer
NY Assembly Member Michael Benedetto
NY State Senator John Liu
NYC Mayor Bill DeBlasio
NYC Schools Chancellor Richard Carranza
Brooklyn North Executive Superintendent Karen Watts
NYC District 15 Superintendent Anita Skop

¹ [RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT SUSPENSION OF 2021 NEW YORK STATE TESTS](https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/951dd9a1-96ac-438b-8642-d89cc6651997/downloads/Resolution%202021%20State%20Test%20Suspension.pdf?ver=1612365945430)
<https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/951dd9a1-96ac-438b-8642-d89cc6651997/downloads/Resolution%202021%20State%20Test%20Suspension.pdf?ver=1612365945430>