

HIGHLAND CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

BOARD OF EDUCATION

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April 5, 2016

Dear Members of the Highland Assessment Committee:

First and foremost, the Board would like to thank the Assessment Committee for your hard work and your passion for educating our students. We sincerely appreciate what you do each and every day. You do not have an easy job, as every student is a unique learner, some with significant challenges. Currently, the State expects them to learn and succeed at the same rate and they are assessed as though they are all on the same level.

The Board of Education shares many of your concerns about the current state system for testing students in grades three through eight. A one size fits all assessment, administered on one point in time of the school year is not a sufficient or completely accurate reflection of that student's knowledge, potential or growth. We believe in high standards for every student, as well as using valid assessments to measure every student's progress. Unfortunately, at this time, there is little to no faith or trust in the state testing system.

It is our hope that the new Commissioner of Education, together with the Board of Regents and its new Chancellor, will make much needed changes to regain the trust of the teachers, the parents, the students and Boards of Education across the state of New York. It is also our hope that the state legislators will repeal the flawed APPR laws that were included in the 2016-2017 budget bills.

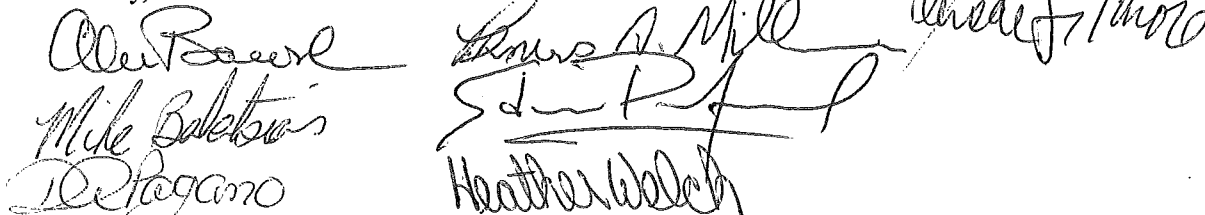
It is our understanding that Commissioner Elia has extended an invitation to every school district to recommend teachers for their assistance in revising state assessments and to make sure that questions are age and grade appropriate. We encourage anyone that is interested to let your principal or the Superintendent know so that you can be a part of making improvements to the current system.

We are confident that as these changes and improvements are being made you will continue to teach and assess your students' progress and learning in other ways that are most authentic.

In the meantime, we recognize that parents have the right to make decisions about their child's education, including whether or not their child should take the state assessments. Parents are our most important partners and the Board respects their choice, especially in this matter.

As elected officials of a New York State public school district we are compelled to comply with regulations that we may not always agree with, but we promise to do so when we take our oath of office. Thank you again for your commitment to our students and to excellence in teaching.

Sincerely,



The Highland Board of Education