



## ARDSLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL

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### Grades 3-8 State Testing Refusal Letter

Dear Families:

In April and May, children in grades 3-8 across New York State will be taking standardized tests in mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA). Over the past few years, we have seen a steep decline in the number of our students taking these assessments. This has had serious, negative consequences for the District. The New York State Education Department (NYSED) has put in place several measures to increase participation. Please consider them and the information that follows before you submit a request to refuse.

In response to feedback from parents and educators, NYSED has:

- Reduced the testing administration period from three days to two days;
- Reduced the number of test questions;
- Implemented untimed testing, allowing the children to work at their own pace;
- Significantly increased the involvement of teachers in writing test items. Beginning this year, all test questions will have been written by NYS educators.

In addition, standardized testing provides us with important data that we use to ensure that our ELA and mathematics curriculum is, and continues to be, of the highest quality. A review of our data is most impactful when we have all our students represented in it as it allows us to look at student performance as individuals, as a cohort, as a school and across the District.

Finally, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act requires an assessment participation rate of 95 percent or higher. When this does not happen, it makes the District vulnerable, and damages our standing in the State. **As a result of our high number of refusals last year, we were deemed by the State as not making, “adequate yearly progress.” This is a serious designation. Should that happen again this year, the State will impose corrective measures upon us in order to remediate this issue. This will severely impact our State and National rankings.** Given our high level of achievement, it is extremely troubling and wasteful to be mandated to engage in a process that is completely avoidable.

We hope that you will have your child participate in the ELA and mathematics assessment. If you have any questions about State assessments, their use, and the impact of refusals, please feel free to give me a call at 914-295-5610. Please click the link to access the [2018-2019 Testing Refusal Notice](#).

Sincerely,  
Stuart Horlacher