

Buried in the story of 2017 State ELA and Math Scores is a big warning about the graduation rate dropping for the class of 2018 and future years.

Three weeks ago, NYSED released the NYS 2017 Grade 3 to 8 Math and ELA test scores. With another year showing a small but steady gain in the proficiency rate (Level 3 or 4), State and City education department and elected officials saw much to be pleased with. All of the press releases and powerpoint presentations only showed the changes in the number of students with a proficient score. However, one media outlet, the New York Post, [reported on a disturbing trend that continues with the 2017 NYS Math Scores: *The persistence of large numbers of 9th Graders entering high school not on track to graduate.*](#) While the article focused on NYC-DOE schools, it's a statewide problem and can only be solved in Albany by NYSED, the Regents and Legislature.

NYS Students Scoring Level 1 on the NYSED 8th Grade Common Core Math Test 2011-2017

8 th Grade Math Scores	2011 (Pre-Common Core) Students/%		2012 (Pre-Common Core) Students/%		2013 Common Core Students/%		2014 Common Core Students/%		2015 Common Core Students/%		2016 Common Core Students/%		2017 Common Core Students/%	
	Students	%	Students	%	Students	%	Students	%	Students	%	Students	%	Students	%
Level 1	18,291	9%	14,050	7%	61,446	31%	54,371	37%	44,822	40%	42,338	40%	43,701	41%

Source: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/reportcard/>

- **Spring of 2018 may see significant drop in graduation rate for the first time in 15 years:** This coming spring will be the first year cohort for students taking that were only allowed to take the Common Core Algebra I Regents Exam for their first year Algebra requirement. The 2014 cohort (began high school in the fall of 2014) graduates in June of 2018. Our high schools are now must help not just one year of incoming 9th graders with Level 1 scores but now four years of large numbers of students with Level 1 scores. Thousands of students at risk of not graduating are caught in this policy spider web.
- **What are the high schools doing?** If the number of students entering a high school not on track to graduate is three times as large as pre-Common Core Regents, the big question is what are high schools doing to help these students graduate? Did the high schools implement a plan to address the problem? It's now five years since the first large numbers of Level 1 students began high school. High Schools have had sufficient time to find solutions including changing curriculum, adding more tutoring time and extending the class time for Algebra 1.
- **Last year's Algebra Regents scores showed 11,340 more students, across New York State, did not get a passing score in comparison with pre-Common Core Regents.** For more information, please see our ["Algebra 1 Common Core Regents Exam Transition Discussion Paper Update"](#) report.
- **A GED can no longer be relied as an alternative to a Regents Diploma.** For years school officials could take comfort in knowing that students that don't graduate with a Regents Diploma have the option of getting a GED. However, due to a major restructuring of the GED exam, which is now known as the Test Assessment Secondary Completion or TASC, that option has also become a big hurdle. "After the New York State Department of Education switched from the GED to a new high school equivalency exam, TASC, in 2014, the number of New York adults obtaining their HSE fell by half."¹ Without a Regents Diploma or GED, the prospects for successfully launching a career are a long shot.

¹ Source: "Adults stranded without a credential: The high school equivalency emergency" by Thomas Hilliard New York Daily News March 13, 2017.