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PATRICIA GIBBONS, DIRECTOR OF PUPIL SERVICES

March 1st, 2018

Dear Parents and Guardians:

It will soon be time once again for students in Grades 3-8 across New York State to be assessed in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science. The dates for these assessments have been listed below.

All schools in our State are required by the United States Department of Education to administer high-quality annual assessments in at least reading/language arts, mathematics, and science that meet nationally recognized standards. The expectation at the federal level is that all states in our nation ensure that school districts have a sufficient number of students being assessed in order to accurately measure academic progress across the country.

In the last few years, a movement urging families to reject standardized exams gained momentum in New York State. A significant number of NYS children "opted-out" of one or more New York State Assessments. It has gained the attention of the leaders in state government as well as of the powers that be in the New York State Education Department (NYSED).

That is why I am writing to you now. Because of the strength of this movement, the NYSED has made a concerted effort to improve the quality of and students' experiences with the Grades 3-8 ELA and Mathematics Tests. First, the NYSED has moved to a new testing vendor and significantly increased the number of New York State educators involved in creating and reviewing the assessments. Secondly, the NYSED has reduced the length of the tests. There are now fewer questions on the 2018 3-8 ELA and Mathematics tests. This will allow students more time to read the passages more closely and apply their knowledge and skill in answering the questions. It also is expected to decrease testing fatigue for some students. Lastly, NYSED will continue to allow untimed testing for the Spring of 2018 Grades 3-8 ELA and Mathematics Tests. This change will provide students further opportunity to demonstrate what they know and can do by allowing them to work at their own pace.

At Lyme Central School, we are optimistic that these changes will continue to address the concerns held by members of our school community about the NYS assessments and that participation of our students in the annual NYS testing will increase this school year. Our students will show what they have been learning all year in the way that they have been instructed in the classroom. Student results will not appear nor affect report card averages. All in all, the results are used to help administrators and teachers make future programmatic and curricular decisions and are not used nor meant to be punitive.

If a parent/guardian still desires to have their child opt-out of NYS Grades 3-8 Testing, please notify me via email or letter by **Friday, March 23, 2018**. Please do not wait until the day of the test to contact me or have your child verbally state your intention. Verbal requests by a parent or student will not be honored. Please know, when students enter 9th grade, they are required to participate in the NYS Regents Assessment Program. Families do not have the option of refusing to take these exams as they are required to graduate from high school.

Schedule of Assessments in Grades 3-8

ELA	Math	Science (grades 4 & 8 only)
April 11 th and 12 th , 2018	May 1 st and 2 nd , 2018	Performance: May 30 th , 2018
		Written: June 1 st , 2018

Sincerely,

Pat Gibbons
Director of Pupil Services