

2017-18 New York State Regents Exams Results

Policy Alert

Big one year increase in number of students failing Algebra 1 and ELA Regents Exam

David Rubel, Education Policy Consultant
www.davidrubelconsultant.com
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Summary: this past November, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) released the Regents Exam scores for 2017-18. It's now five years since the Algebra 1 (Common Core) Regents and Exam was first used in June of 2014. After five years of a transition period, schools should be in a much stronger position to teach the Common Core (now known as the Next Generation Learning Standards). However, this year's test results show a surprising shift downward with thousands more students failing the Algebra 1 Common Core Regents Exam. At the very least, the number of failing students should stay comparable with pre-Common Core Integrated Algebra Exam. There was also a significant increase in the number of students failing the ELA Regents exam. There are two big questions that deserve an answer from NYSED, school districts and all stakeholders: ***why are more students failing and what can be done to help these students.*** Below is an analysis of the 2017-18 Regents test scores with new findings and questions highlighted here.

1. 13,000 more students failed the Algebra 1 (Common Core) Regents exam in 2017-18: For reasons that have yet to be determined, last year's Regents Exam was tougher for thousands of high school students. 13,074 more students failed the Algebra 1 exam this year than in 2016-17. The scoring system did not change so other factors must be in play. Two high need risk groups, students with disabilities and English Language Learners saw more students failing. 61% of students with disabilities group and 60% of English Language Learners are now failing the Algebra 1 Regents exam. Passing a math Regents exam is a requirement for graduation. ***Are students with disabilities and English Language Learners getting the extra help they need to pass the Algebra 1 exam?***

Chart 1. NYS Students with a below 65 score/not passing on the Algebra Regents Exam

Regent Exam Test Takers	2016-17			2017-18			Change between 2017 and 2018	% Change between 2017 and 2018
	Total Test Takers	Failing/Score Below 65	% of total	Total Test Takers	Failing/Score Below 65	% of total		
All Students	280,741	71,106	25%	278,337	84,180	30%	13,074	5%
Students with Disabilities	49,046	26,844	55%	50,037	30,538	61%	3,694	7%
English Language Learners	28,308	15,257	55%	30,468	18,176	60%	2,919	6%

Source: <https://data.nysed.gov/>

2. 12,500 more students failed the ELA Regents Exam in 2017-18: 12,456 more students failed the ELA Regents in 2017-18 than in 2016-17; and increase of 6%. For the first two years of the ELA Common Core Exam, the test scores were impressive with a stable first year (2015-16) test results and even less students failing in the second year of test administration (2016-17) than with the old Comprehensive Regents exam. However, the 2017-18 test scores have thrown a wrench into the transition. The increase in the failing students occurred with both students with disabilities (3,955) and English Language Learners (2,699). 49% of SWD students and 64% of ELL students failed the ELA Regents this year. ¹

NYS Students with a below 65 score/not passing on the ELA Regents Exam

Regent Exam Test Takers	2016-17			2017-18			Change between 2017 and 2018	% Change between 2017 and 2018
	Total Test Takers	Failing/Score Below 65	% of Total	Total Test Takers	Failing/Score Below 65	% of Total		
All Students	225,096	36,535	16%	229,620	48,991	21%	12,456	5%
Students with Disabilities	34,954	14,735	42%	37,773	18,691	49%	3,955	7%
English Language Learners	17,946	10568	59%	20,776	13,267	63%	2699	5%

Source: <https://data.nysed.gov/>

3. At least 40,000 students entering NYS high schools need much more help than they are getting if they are going to have a chance at graduating: A Level 1 test score means a student is not on track to graduate. The number of 8th Graders with Level 1 Math Scores closely matches Algebra 1 Regents Level 1 test scores. 8th graders entering high school in the fall of 2017 took the NYS Math exam in the spring of 2017. **43,701** of these 8th graders scored a Level 1 on the Math exam (taken in the spring of 2017). **39,924** students that failed the Algebra 1 Exam in 2018 (while most students take the exam in 9th for the first time, this figure also includes students taking the test again). When students enter high school with a Level 1 Math score, how much extra help are they getting to give them the boost they need to succeed with first year Algebra and pass the math Regents diploma requirement. These students need more help than they will get just from their first year Algebra class (which is typically a classroom with a diverse range of learners); if the extra help is not made available, these students are basically doomed to struggle with failure and little chance of graduating. The chart below shows that every high school already has strong predictive data (Level 1 and Level 2 math scores for incoming 9th graders) for how well students will fare on the Algebra 1 Regents Exam and whether supplemental help should be offered.

Students Scoring Level 1 or Level 2 on the NYSED 8th Grade Math Test and Algebra 1 Regents

Level 1 Score: 2017 8 th Grade Math Test	Level 1: 2017-18 Algebra 1 Regents	Level 2 Score: 2017 8 th Grade Math Test	Level 2: 2017-18 Algebra 1 Regents
43,701	39,924	38,975	44,256

Source: <https://data.nysed.gov/>

¹ Regents Exams are administered three times a year: June, August and January.

4. How many high schools track struggling students and provide extra support?

Some high schools have met the challenge of the Algebra 1 and ELA Regents exams with their own supplemental programs. Why do some high schools have supplemental programs for struggling students while others do not? There is no statewide policy requiring high schools to track students for passing the required Regents Exams or provide supplemental help. There also is no database on how many high schools track their students or offer supplemental programs. Every high school is required to prepare an annual Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP). The CEP is the primary means for the school leadership to engage in thoughtful planning and direct resources to where needs are greatest. This information is available to any school district official by simply reviewing a high school's annual Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP).

Annual Goals and Action Plans in the CEP

ANNUAL GOAL #1 AND ACTION PLAN
Use this template to identify an annual goal. Respond to each section to indicate strategies and activities in support of accomplishing this goal.

Annual Goal #: _____
Describe a goal you have identified for the year. Refer to the directions and guidance for assistance in developing your goals.

Comprehensive needs assessment
Describe the identified need that generated this goal. The needs assessment should encompass the entire school and be based on the performance of students, in relation to State academic content and student achievement standards.

Instructional strategies/activities
Describe the research-based instructional strategies and activities that will be used to achieve this goal. Include descriptions of the following in your response:

- a) strategies/activities that encompass the needs of identified student subgroups,
- b) key personnel and other resources used to implement these strategies/activities,
- c) steps taken to include teachers in the decision-making regarding the use of academic assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies/activities,
- d) timeline for implementation.

Strategies to increase parental involvement
All schools should cite strategies to increase parent involvement that aligned to the goal when applicable. Title I schools should reference these activities in your school's Title I Parent Involvement Policy (PIP). The PIP template is provided on pages 11 through 15 in this CEP.

Budget and resources alignment
Indicate your school's Title I status: School Wide Program (SWP) Targeted Assistance Program (TAP) Non-Title I

Select the fund source(s) that your school is using to support the instructional goal.

Tax Levy _____ Title I _____ Title IA _____ Title II _____ Grants _____ Other _____

If other is selected describe here:

Service and program coordination
Describe how you will coordinate fiscal and human resources with the instructional strategies/activities to achieve this goal, referencing specific FY13 P3 and CIP3 budget categories selected above that will support the coordination and integration of Federal, State and local services, including programs supported under NCLB (i.e., services for Students in Temporary Housing (STH) violence prevention programs, nutrition programs, housing programs, Head Start).

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- There are five Annual Goal and Action Plan templates.
- Each plan is comprised of an annual goal and five components of the action plan.
- The responses provided for each of the components on the action plan should align with the specific annual goal identified.
- The collective responses provided on the action plans provide the regulatory information required (formerly captured in the CEP appendices).
- Each school should complete 3-5 annual goals and action plans.

5. The graduating class of 2018 will be the first cohort that was *only* allowed to take the Common Core Algebra 1 Regents Exam for the Regents diploma math exam requirement.

In the next month or so, the class of 2018 graduation rate results will be announced. The class of 2018 is the first graduating class that was only allowed to take the Common Core Algebra 1 Regents Exam for the math Regents exam diploma requirement. While there may be a dip in the graduation rate for the first time in 17 years, the newly implemented [New York State Education Department \(NYSED\) Multiple Pathways to Graduation](#) 4 +CDOS, 4 +1, test score appeals, local diploma safety net options and CDOS certificate will most likely keep the statewide graduation rate stable.



6. Tracking at risk students to ensure they get the support they need to graduate

Instead of waiting for the graduation figures to be released, one strategy for NYSED and NYC-DOE to consider comes from the US Department of Education Institute for Education Sciences-What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) 2017 [Preventing Dropouts in Secondary Schools](#) Report. The main recommendation for increasing the graduation rate is for high schools to use a tracking system for at risk students. The WWC reports are widely accepted as the gold standard for education research as well as having practical applications to the classroom. NYSED and NYC-DOE should be able to offer information showing how many high schools are currently using a tracking system to help students stay in school and graduate.

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