



Joseph V. Rella, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

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September 27, 2016

Dear Parents or Guardians:

In the middle of last month, I received the following memorandum from Commissioner Elia:



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Commissioner of Education
President of the University of the State of New York
89 Washington Avenue, Room 111
Albany, New York 12234

E-mail: commissioner@nysed.gov
Twitter: @NYSEDNews
Tel: (518) 474-5844
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September 9, 2016

TO: Superintendents of Schools

FROM: MaryEllen Elia

SUBJECT: District Grading Policy

As you are planning for this school year, please take some time to review your grading policies to ensure fair and equitable practices that do not have unintended consequences for students. New York State has no policy relative to students' course grades as grading policies are determined by each local Board of Education. This includes any decisions to use Regents examination scores in final course grade calculations.

The State Education Department does not require or recommend that schools use Regents examination grades as part of the calculation of the student's final average. It is up to local districts to decide whether to use Regents examination grades as part of a student's final grade average.

As in the past, any revisions to current policy must be made by the district's Board of Education.

I wish you a successful start to a new school year.

c: District Superintendents

Please take note of the first sentence of the second paragraph: **“The State Education Department does not require or recommend that schools use Regents examination grades as part of the calculation of the student’s final average.”** I am in full agreement with the Commissioner’s position. Therefore, effective immediately:

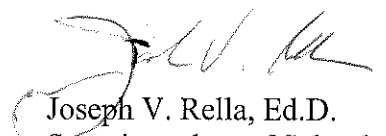
- All Regents examination grades for our current students, will be removed from the final averages of our students, retroactive to June 2014 and their final grades will be adjusted accordingly. The only exception to this adjustment will be if a student would benefit from the inclusion of the Regents examination grade, in which case the final grade will include the Regents examination grade. Please note: This has only occurred in very rare instances.
- All test grades for Regents examinations dating back to June 2014 will be recorded on the student’s official transcript as a Pass/Fail.

It is proper that our students should be evaluated on the examinations prepared by their teachers, the validity, reliability, and fairness of which have never been called into question.

However, the question must be raised that, if the State Education Department cannot recommend the inclusion of these examinations in the calculation of a student’s final average, then why are they still being used as a graduation requirement, as part of a teacher’s evaluation, and as a component of evaluating a school district?

I will keep you posted on any further developments.

Sincerely,



Joseph V. Rella, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

JVR:mr