

Hilton Central School District's Position on Assessment

In Hilton, we foster purposeful teaching and learning while striving for excellence. As a system, we continually reflect in order to identify strengths and needs so that we can promote organizational growth and development. We believe assessment centers on clear goals that flow directly from our district's vision and mission. Comprehensive assessment should be aligned to standards and use high quality multiple measures. It must be a recursive, on-going plan for the collection and analysis of data. Assessment needs to be systematically and thoughtfully linked to analyses of performance. Comprehensive assessment should inform important decisions at all levels and be used to improve instruction, accountability and use of resources.

Hilton Central School District students engage in a number of assessments, including but not limited to: New York State assessments, International Baccalaureate assessments, Advance Placement assessments, district common assessments, and classroom assessments. It is our goal to provide students with assessments that allows for effective and timely feedback, and promotes thinking, reflection and advancement for all.

With respect to New York State assessments, Hilton has fully participated in this mandate. Part of the assessment mandate includes field testing. While we have participated in field testing, we believe that field test questions embedded in standardized tests are problematic. We understand the importance of field testing, but we are concerned that poorly written field tests can create adverse testing conditions for some students. In addition to being subjected to embedded field test questions, our students are required to participate in stand-alone field tests. Stand-alone field tests necessitate that we carve out time in the instructional day for their administration. We believe that both means of field testing has created a negative assessment culture in our district.

As a participant in "Teaching is the Core" grant, which aims to reduce assessments, we are in agreement with the Commissioner's statement that "high quality assessments are an integral part of teaching and learning," and that "testing should be the minimum necessary to inform effective decision-making in classrooms, schools and districts." As a district, we decided to participate in the grant so that we can help reduce non-essential local testing. It is our hope that we can work with the New York Department of Education to ease the burden of testing.