

Dear Warwick Parents,

Next week, the New York State Education Department (SED) will release test scores for the grades 3 through 8 math and English Language Arts exams that were administered to students in May 2010. The results will reflect newly adopted procedures from SED that raise the scores students must earn in order to be considered “proficient” in a subject.

Like many districts across the state, Warwick may see a dip in its test scores due to a change in the “cut scores” that SED uses to determine whether students are achieving at high enough levels. We want to be sure our parents and community members understand how this new scoring system may affect individual student test scores and overall district results.

Under the state’s testing system, “cut scores” are used to classify students into one of four performance levels. Students at Level 1 are not meeting learning standards; those at Level 2 are partially meeting learning standards; pupils at Level 3 are meeting learning standards and those at Level 4 are meeting learning standards with distinction. SED has just raised the cut scores for Level 3, meaning students must achieve at higher levels than ever before in order to be considered proficient.

Because this change affects scores on tests that were already given, it’s possible that fewer students will be placed in Level 3 when we see the results from SED next week. We’re anticipating a few more students in each grade level may move from Level 3 to Level 2 for the math and English Language Arts tests. If this happens, it means our overall district scores will appear lower, as well.

Principals and Curriculum Directors will be looking carefully at each student’s score to determine his or her level of need and ways to address those needs.

In the meantime, we will work with the state as the bar is raised on student achievement. This change in the cut scores is just the first step in a larger push by the state to better prepare our students for success in a 21st century. We are confident that we will not only meet the state’s challenge, but rise above it.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at 987-3053 or mreinhard@wvcsd.org.

Best Regards,
Dr. Marijane Reinhard
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instructional Services