

# Chenango Valley Central School District

**Mr. David P. Gill**  
Superintendent of Schools



221 Chenango Bridge Road, Binghamton, NY 13901

Phone: (607) 762-6810 \* FAX: (607) 762-6890

E-Mail: [dgill@cvcasd.stier.org](mailto:dgill@cvcasd.stier.org)

Website: [www.cvcasd.stier.org](http://www.cvcasd.stier.org)

February 2016

Dear CV Families,

There has been much discussion in education regarding the Common Core Learning Standards, student assessments and the teacher evaluation system. The intent of this letter is not to debate or offer my own personal opinions on any of these areas, but rather to provide facts that I hope will help you to make informed decisions.

I recently formed a small committee consisting of a parent, administrator and two teachers to discuss the topic of “opting out” of state assessments. Collectively we developed the following list of facts that we hope will be helpful to parents when considering their child’s participation in future assessments.

- **There is no such thing as “opt out.” It is a “test refusal.”** With the exception of certain areas in which parental consent is required, such as Committee on Special Education (CSE) evaluations for students with disabilities, there is no provision in New York State statute or regulation allowing parents to opt their children out-of-state tests.
- **Common Core Learning Standards, NYS assessments and teacher evaluation plans are three separate and distinct things.** Currently, public schools in New York State are obligated to follow the Common Core Learning Standards, conduct assessments of students in ELA and Math and follow negotiated teacher evaluation plans.
- **Our testing program is federally and state mandated. Schools are obligated to meet a participation mandate of 95%.** If less than 95% of a school’s students or one or more of its subgroups of students (minority students, students with disabilities, etc.) take the Math or ELA assessments, the school will be designated as having failed to make “Adequate Yearly Progress” (AYP) for that school year. Legislative mandates state that when a school does not meet a participation rate of 95%, state funding will be withheld or re-allocated. We did not meet 95% participation rate for 2014-2015 school year in any of our buildings or for the district
- **Assessments are used to provide insight into each child’s progress as well as each school’s progress.** Assessments offer us – educators and parents – information on individual student performance as well as comparative data among student sub-groups, individual school districts and regional, state and national averages. Assessments help us to shape future instruction and make informed decisions on how to support a child’s academic growth and progress.

~ over ~

- **Assessments are nothing new to a child's educational program.** (Remember the IOWA tests and the California Achievement Tests?) Testing is a normal and expected way of assessing what students have learned and where they have weaknesses in understanding the material.
- **APPR.** There are no required state tests in grades K-2. Also, pending final State Education Department approval we have eliminated tests created to satisfy prior APPR regulations.

I hope this information is helpful to you in determining your family's personal decision regarding state assessments, and I encourage you to visit [www.engageny.org](http://www.engageny.org) to learn more about the Common Core curriculum, data-driven instruction and teacher/leader effectiveness.

Regardless of our opinions on standardized testing, we all want the same thing – for the students of Chenango Valley to be well prepared for success after high school. We want them to possess the critical-thinking, problem-solving and analytical skills they will need for a productive future in a global economy. As I hear almost daily, Chenango Valley is an excellent school community that works hard to help our students succeed. We support our families and appreciate the support we receive in return.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this topic further, please feel free to contact my office to make an appointment.

Sincerely,



David P. Gill  
Superintendent of Schools