

# HIGH OPT-OUT NUMBERS

## Nearly 68,000 LI kids boycott state math test

Nearly 68,000 elementary and middle school students in 95 districts across Long Island refused to take the state math test this week — 47.9 percent of students eligible in those systems to sit for the exam, according to responses this week to a Newsday survey sent to all 124 districts.

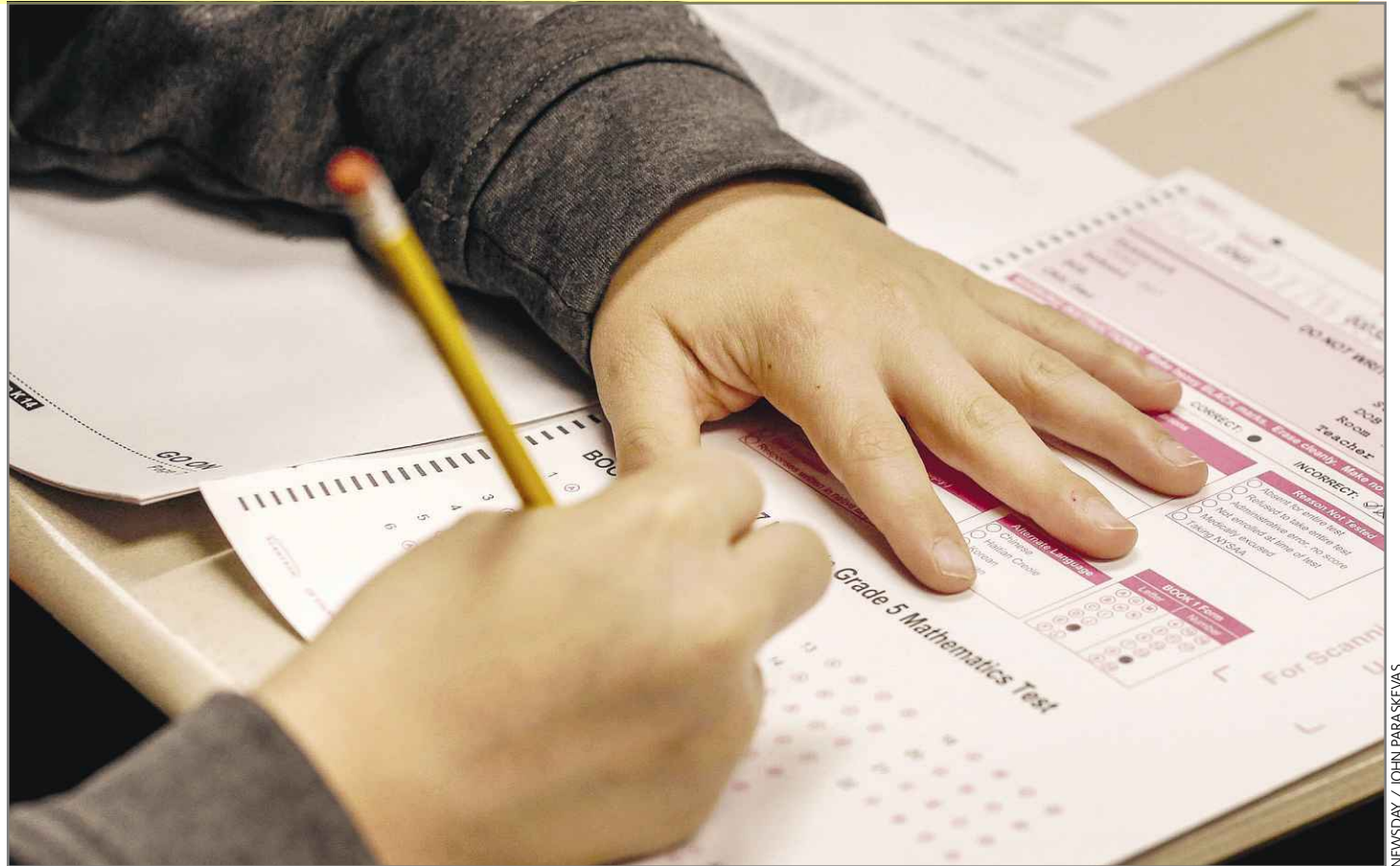
Friday was the end of the spring test season for most Long Island students in grades three through eight. It also marked the fifth straight year of large boycotts, with nearly half of the students opting out of exams both in math and in English Language Arts in the districts responding to the newspaper's surveys. The English test is given first, usually in April.

The exams, mandated by federal law and formerly known as Common Core tests, sparked a revolt by parents and educators that started on Long Island and spread statewide. Those opposed to the assessments say they do not accurately measure student achievement and are not developmentally appropriate, and that the tests and preparation for them take up far too much class time.

Over the years, the controversy became so heated that the state Board of Regents tossed the Common Core name and adopted a new set of academic benchmark marks dubbed the Next Generation Learning Standards. Test days were shortened, and the exams now are untimed. In addition, questions were created, selected and reviewed by educators in New York.

"Parents can't make it any more clear. We absolutely will not participate in a broken testing system that undermines the education of our children," Jeanette Deutermann, the founder and lead organizer of the LI Opt Out movement, said Friday. "Tweaks and minor corrections aren't enough. Parents want a complete overhaul and new leadership at the Department of Education who will finally hear us and put our children first."

The state Education Depart-



Most districts where the math exams were given this week used the traditional paper-and-pencil tests rather than computer-based tests.

This story was reported by **Michael R. Ebert, Zachary R. Dowdy, Bart Jones** and **Joie Tyrrell** and written by Tyrrell.

ment, asked for response, sent a statement from spokeswoman Emily DeSantis that has been issued throughout the test season, noting that Commissioner MaryEllen Elia and the Regents "have listened to the concerns of parents and teachers and made significant changes to the exams" over the past four years. The statement mentions changes in the exams, educators' involvement in exam questions and shortened test sessions.

Statewide, the test-refusal average last year was 18 percent, according to the department.

A breakdown of the responses compiled Friday showed 55.2 percent of eligible students opted out in 51 Suffolk districts and 39.8 percent in 44 Nassau districts. Overall, there are 68 districts in Suffolk and 56 in Nassau.

The figures primarily stemmed from administration of traditional paper-based tests, still given by most systems, with a small number of districts giving computer-based exams, or CBTs.

The test-refusal rate has been consistently strong in the Rockville Centre school district, where the opt-out movement first took hold in spring 2013. Friday, officials there reported that 665 students eligible to take the math exam, or 46.5 percent, boycotted it.

Superintendent William Johnson said the test refusals are "not going away until there is a significant change in how we test children."

The Rockville Centre district uses assessments by the Oregon-based nonprofit NWEA, which are administered three times a year — September, January and June — in kindergarten through eighth grade.

Those exams are digital and take students about 45 minutes to an hour to complete, and the

results are used by teachers to direct instruction. Johnson said not one pupil has opted out. He suggested that the state should adopt a similar assessment.

In Roosevelt, only 11 percent boycotted the exam. The Nassau County district has consistently had a low refusal rate.

"Our parents value the data generated from the . . . assessments, and our opt-out rate has been historically low," Superintendent Marnie Hazelton said.

Last year, at least 67,553 students on the Island refused to take the math exam in 94 districts that responded to Newsday's survey — 46.9 percent of pupils eligible in those systems.

As always, the math test comes a few weeks after administration of the ELA exam. More than 75,000 of the Island's students in grades three through eight opted out of that test last

month, about 47.2 percent of eligible students in 103 systems answering the newspaper's questions on participation.

The number of students who sit for the math test is lower than for the ELA because districts can waive the math exam for seventh- and eighth-graders taking accelerated math. Those students — nearly 14,000 in the districts that responded to Newsday's survey — take the Regents Geometry or Regents Algebra exam given later.

Administration of the digital math tests appeared to have gone smoothly, without the technical problems that caused temporary statewide suspension of the ELA test. Under the state-designated time frame for the computer-based tests, districts may have chosen to give it on Monday and Tuesday.

Friday, DeSantis said the math testing "has gone very well. Approximately 73,000 students have successfully completed their math assessments via computer."

**MORE  
INSIDE**

Opt-outs  
by district  
**A10**

# LONG ISLAND

## WHO OPTED OUT

Chart shows responses of 95 of Long Island's 124 school districts on the number of students in grades 3-8 eligible to take the state math test, the number who refused to take the test and the percentage of refusals. The majority of students took the traditional paper-and-pencil exam; in some districts, students in at least some grades took the computer-based test.

The chart also shows, from districts that provided it, the number of seventh- and eighth-grade students who did not take the math test because they plan to take the Regents Algebra or Regents Geometry exam, scheduled for June. The Sagaponack district did not provide figures because its data represents fewer than five students.

^Data includes students in at least some grades taking computer-based tests

\*Indicates school district submitted data on Wednesday

\*\*Indicates school district submitted data on Thursday

District	# of students eligible to take test	# who refused to take test	% who refused	# waiving test
<b>NASSAU</b>				
Baldwin	1,719	640	37.2%	333
Bellmore-Merrick**	1,241	839	67.6	533
Bethpage	1,264	616	48.7	76
Carle Place	597	212	35.5	41
East Meadow	3,123	1,552	49.7	163
East Rockaway**	535	250	46.7	29
East Williston	691	114	16.5	108
Farmingdale^	2,313	1,434	62.0	190
Floral Park-Bellerose^	842	248	29.5	
Franklin Square**	1,098	357	32.5	
Freeport**	2,986	895	30.0	129
Garden City	1,614	412	25.5	139
Glen Cove**	1,410	798	56.6	63
Great Neck	2,542	411	16.2	226
Hempstead	2,712	65	2.4	433
Herricks	1,626	169	10.4	275
Hewlett-Woodmere	1,134	605	53.4	174
Hicksville	1,986	723	36.4	423
Island Trees*	952	464	48.7	59
Jericho	1,278	216	16.9	225
Levittown	3,170	2,027	63.9	145
Locust Valley	881	523	59.4	83
Long Beach^	1,457	694	47.6	116
Lynbrook	1,175	623	53.0	95
Malverne	687	469	68.3	108
Massapequa^	2,967	1,887	63.6	185
North Merrick	689	325	47.2	
North Shore	1,006	371	36.9	181
Oceanside**	2,139	960	44.9	376
Oyster Bay-East Norwich*	615	163	26.5	80
Plainview-Old Bethpage	2,113	905	42.8	213
Port Washington**	2,401	619	25.8	112
Rockville Centre	1,429	665	46.5	256
Roosevelt*	1,481	173	11.7	215
Roslyn	1,221	299	24.5	217
Seaford	977	610	62.4	47
Sewanhaka	2,065	835	40.4	527
Syosset**	2,553	615	24.1	496
Valley Stream 13**	1,273	432	33.9	
Valley Stream 24**	653	292	44.7	
Valley Stream 30**	919	232	25.2	
Valley Stream Central	1,289	654	50.7	249
West Hempstead**	733	262	35.7	56
Westbury	1,712	1,119	65.4	305
<b>SUFFOLK</b>				
Amityville	1,126	509	45.2	197
Babylon	677	445	65.7	52
Bay Shore**	2,583	1,503	58.2	116
Bayport-Blue Point^	829	662	79.9	63
Bridgehampton^	101	67	66.3	

District	# of students eligible to take test	# who refused to take test	% who refused	# waiving test
Central Islip	3,485	450	12.9%	
Cold Spring Harbor**	662	82	12.4	80
Commack	2,450	1,614	65.9	189
Connetquot**	2,443	1,848	75.6	157
Deer Park	1,768	710	40.2	86
East Hampton	604	68	11.3	
East Islip	1,619	1,181	72.9	89
East Quogue**	237	81	34.2	
Eastport-South Manor	1,349	948	70.3	104
Elwood	541	225	41.6	94
Fire Island*	12	1	8.3	
Fishers Island^***	26	0	0.0	0
Half Hollow Hills**	3,122	1,175	37.6	280
Hampton Bays**	883	370	41.9	74
Harborfields	1,321	466	35.3	107
Hauppauge	1,438	963	67.0	79
Huntington	1,937	557	28.8	136
Islip**	1,037	656	63.3	232
Kings Park	1,251	752	60.1	98
Lindenhurst	2,204	1,514	68.7	445
Longwood^***	4,084	2,615	64.0	163
Mattituck-Cutchogue^	484	203	41.9	29
Middle Country**	3,435	2,383	69.4	701
Miller Place**	1,090	761	69.8	75
Montauk	197	66	33.5	14
New Suffolk	11	2	18.2	
North Babylon	2,188	1,293	59.1	
Oysterponds**	50	18	36.0	
Patchogue-Medford	3,219	2,469	76.7	143
Quogue	51	6	11.8	
Remsenburg-Speonk^***	86	31	36.0	0
Riverhead^	2,386	633	26.5	152
Rocky Point	1,284	1,034	80.5	49
Sachem	5,452	3,857	70.7	269
Sayville^	1,225	886	72.3	97
Shelter Island	73	19	26.0	11
Shoreham-Wading River	796	614	77.1	137
Smithtown	3,596	2,027	56.4	322
South Country	1,820	903	49.6	69
South Huntington^***	2,546	1,193	46.9	109
Springs**	430	85	19.8	21
Three Village	2,389	1,544	64.6	225
Tuckahoe^***	148	21	14.2	15
Wainscott	5	1	20.0	
Westhampton Beach^***	466	165	35.4	141
William Floyd^	3,437	1,506	43.8	691
<b>Nassau</b>	<b>67,268</b>	<b>26,774</b>	<b>39.8</b>	<b>7,681</b>
<b>Suffolk</b>	<b>74,653</b>	<b>41,182</b>	<b>55.2</b>	<b>6,111</b>
<b>Long Island</b>	<b>141,921</b>	<b>67,956</b>	<b>47.9</b>	<b>13,792</b>

## DID NOT RESPOND / GAVE INCOMPLETE DATA

- Amagansett
- Center Moriches
- East Moriches
- Island Park
- Bellmore
- Comsewogue
- Elmont
- Lawrence
- Brentwood
- Copiague
- Greenport
- Manhasset
- North Bellmore
- Northport
- Sag Harbor
- West Babylon
- East Northport
- Southampton
- West Islip
- Plainedge
- Southold
- Wyandanch
- Port Jefferson
- Uniondale
- Wantagh