

Chancellor Betty Rosa &
NYS Board of Regents Members
New York State Education Department
89 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12234

Dear Chancellor Rosa and Members of the Board of Regents:

As a response to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), public schools around the country are adjusting their policies with regard to classroom learning and testing practices. We understand that some states have already acted to cancel high stakes tests this year, given the impossibility of administering them safely, and the undue pressure they put on children and families. [Most recently, in Texas, Governor Greg Abbott announced that the STAAR exam would be eliminated statewide, providing much relief to students, parents and teachers.](#) Likewise, the SAT has been canceled.



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Donna Lieberman
Executive Director

Robin Willner
President

We thank you for your longer-term research and planning to improve pathways to graduation for New York students, and hope to rejoin that conversation with you in the future. This year, high stakes tests given in grades 3-8 and high school Regents exams are more impractical and less fair than ever. Given the dramatic shift in the way students will be learning, the wide spectrum of quality of remote instruction, and limited access to resources to prepare for exams, we urge the Board of Regents to eliminate these exams for the current school year.

Instead of using a high stakes test to determine graduation or grade promotion, the Board of Regents should allow students' progress to be determined by those who know them best: their teachers, counselors, and other educators. To ensure that every student is prepared for graduation and a possible higher education, districts can rely on coursework, successful internship participation, and demonstration of learning through projects and practical application.

We thank you for your prompt action on this important issue.

Sincerely,

New York Civil Liberties Union