

# PS Backpack87News

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The Weekly Newsletter of the PS 87 Community | www.ps87.info

March 24, 2016

## From the Desk of the Principal

Dear Families,

Last week members of my staff gave a presentation to 3rd through 5th grade parents about testing. While we had quite a few people in attendance, we felt it was important to share some information for those who don't have children in grades 3-5 and for those who were not able to make the meeting. I am going to list some questions below taken from New York State's testing page as well as some questions that the administration has been asked over the years here at PS 87.

### **Q: Why do we need an annual statewide test?**

A: New York's annual Grades 3-8 English Language Arts (ELA) and Math tests are designed to measure the rigorous, college and career readiness learning standards that guide classroom instruction and focus on the critical thinking, problem solving, and reasoning skills that students need in today's world. The federal government requires that students in grades 3-8 be tested once a year in ELA and math. The annual tests are only one of several measures used to understand whether your child is on track to succeed in the next grade.

### **Q: How will my child's score be used?**

A: Scores are used to measure how well schools, districts, and the state are progressing with the higher learning standards. State law and Commissioner's regulations prohibit school districts from making promotion or placement decisions based solely or primarily on student performance on the grades 3-8 ELA and Math tests. While many schools use test scores to inform instruction, here at PS 87 we use the information we collect in class to inform how we will work with students.

### **Q: What if my child did well on his or her report card, but not as well on the tests?**

A: The annual tests are only one of several measures that are used to gauge your child's academic performance. Report card grades include multiple indicators of a student's performance, such as participation, work habits, group projects and homework — all of which are important in determining a child's academic achievement but are not reflected in the annual test results. To learn about your child's academic achievement, talk with his or her teacher.

### **Q: What should I do if I don't want my child to take the state exams?**

A: As stated in the previous question, states have a federal mandate that requires them to administer an exam to children

<b>PS 87 CALENDAR</b>	
<b>MARCH 2016</b>	
25	<b>NO SCHOOL</b> , Good Friday
28	SLT meeting, 4:15 p.m., location to be announced
30	Presidents Council/CEC, 6:30 p.m.
<b>APRIL 2016</b>	
5-7	NY State English Language Arts testing, makeup exams April 8 – 12
6	<b>PA EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING</b> , 6:10 – 8 p.m., library
13-15	NY State Mathematics testing, makeups April 18 - 20
18-22	Everybody Reads Week.
21	No school for Pre-K students
21	<b>PA GENERAL MEETING</b> , 8:35 a.m., cafeteria
22	Earth Day
25-29	<b>NO SCHOOL</b> , Spring Break. 87Afterschool will be offering Spring Camp this week. <i>Details on Page 2.</i>
<b>MAY 2016</b>	
3	Dual Language Breakfast Meeting, 8 – 8:40 a.m., library
3	Teacher Appreciation Day. <i>Details on Page 2.</i>
5	Cinco de Mayo
5	Fiesta Latina Rehearsal, 5:30 p.m., auditorium
6	Fiesta Latina, 6 p.m.

in grades 3-8. Because of this, there is no official "Opt-Out" option for parents. However, if parents do not want their children to take the state exams, they should write a letter to me stating that they refuse to have their children tested.

### **Q. Why do children in the lower grades miss out on their specials during testing?**

A. When we administer tests in the school, we have to test some students who receive testing accommodations that require the use of extra rooms and extra staff. Because of this, we have to modify the school schedule so that we have the proper number of rooms and teachers for the testing.

If there are any other questions that you may have about the testing, please do not hesitate to reach out to the administration.

— Monica Berry, PS 87 principal

## Spend Spring Break with 87Afterschool

87Afterschool's Spring Break Camp offers full days of activities April 25 through April 29. Registration opened March 23. This spring's programs are:

**Monday, April 25: Bricks 4 Kidz** — Children will discover the inner workings of robots using model designs with Lego Bricks & EV3 Mindstorm for programming. This exciting workshop will take place at the STEM Learning Center in the Fashion District, run by Bricks 4 Kidz. The day's activities run from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**Tuesday, April 26: LEGOLAND** — The amazing world of LEGOLAND in Westchester awaits. Children will get to explore entire LEGO towns, go on exciting rides, and even build their own structures. Kids will be transported by private school bus, leaving at 9 a.m. and returning to PS 87 by 5 p.m.

**Wednesday, April 27: Pirate Adventure at Jersey Shore Pirates** — Take to the seas on this thrilling pirate adventure with the Jersey Shore Pirates. Children will dress up as a crew of swashbuckling buccaneers, search for hidden treasure and defend their ship against enemy pirates. Kids will be transported by private school bus, departing at 9 a.m. and returning to PS 87 by 5 p.m.

**Thursday, April 28: Ferry to History! Staten Island Ferry Trip and Historic Richmond Town** — Take a ride on the Staten Island Ferry, then continue on to Historic Richmond Town to discover 17th-century life and traditions. Kids will travel to South Ferry by subway, then by bus to Richmond Town. They'll return to PS 87 by bus, ferry and subway.

**Friday, April 29: Dynamic Duo / Sports Day** — Join us for a fun-packed day beginning with amazing BSNY All Stars sports instructors leading children through a variety of physical activities on the Great Lawn in Central Park (or, if it rains, the PS 87 gym). In the afternoon, we'll visit the New Victory Theater to see "Bello Mania," in which daredevil Bello Nock provides hilarious high-flying action. Lunch will be provided. BSNY All Stars 9:30 a.m. to noon. New Victory Theater from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Each day runs from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Cost is \$100 a day. For more information, go to [www.87afterschool.org](http://www.87afterschool.org).

## Save the date for Rock Night 2016

The forms have been submitted and the rockers are getting ready to sing their hearts out for PS 87 students, friends and family. Start practicing your cheers and mark your calendars — we're rocking out on May 13. If you have any questions or want to volunteer, please e-mail [rocknight16@ps87.info](mailto:rocknight16@ps87.info).

## Opting out of state ELA and math tests

The NY State ELA and math tests will soon be upon us! They will take place the first and second weeks in April.

Any parents who are interested in information about opting out of the tests and its ramifications should feel free to contact Arlene Hellerman at [pa-communityaffairs@ps87.info](mailto:pa-communityaffairs@ps87.info). Please write either "opting-out" or "test info" in the subject line.

## Help out on Teacher Appreciation Day

The Parents Association is planning another Teacher Appreciation Day celebration for Tuesday, May 3, complete with breakfast and flowers! We are looking for parent volunteers to join the effort. Please reach out to Jaime and Wendy at [pa-president@ps87.info](mailto:pa-president@ps87.info) if you would like to help.

## Take in a ballgame June 11 with PS 87

Calling all baseball fans! Come join PS 87 families to see the Yankees take on the Detroit Tigers on Saturday, June 11, at Yankee Stadium at 7:15 pm. Gates open at 5:15 pm. Tickets cost \$65, and with every ticket you will receive unlimited hot dogs, sausage and peppers, pretzels, and Pepsi products and water until the fifth inning. Each student who attends will receive a New Era Yankees Pinch Hitter hat. The seats are in Sections 305 and 306. A portion of the proceeds of each ticket will raise money for PS 87. This is a great way to celebrate the end of the school year with family and friends while raising funds for our school. Come out and join the fun. To purchase tickets go the PS 87 website, [www.ps87.info](http://www.ps87.info).

## PA Executive Board elections are upon us

Elections for the 2016-2017 PA Executive Board are around the corner and will take place at the May 12 Parents Association General Meeting. Our nominating committee is now taking nominations for those interested in running for positions.

Please contact Nominating Committee Chair Michelle Cave at [pa-election@ps87.info](mailto:pa-election@ps87.info) if you are interested in running in the elections or if you would like more information about Board positions. A full list of Board positions is available at the PS 87 website, [www.ps87.info](http://www.ps87.info).

Being a part of the Executive Board is the ultimate way to impact our school. Serving on the Board is a great way to learn firsthand how the PA and school operate. You can have a voice in how decisions are made, and if you have an idea that you are passionate about, you can turn that idea into a reality! It's also a great way to meet new people and create long-lasting friendships for you and your children. There are a variety of positions that speak to all kinds of interests.

Nominations will be announced at the April 21 PA General Meeting, and elections will be held at the May 12 PA General Meeting. Both meetings begin at 8:35 a.m.

We encourage you to throw your hat in the ring! Your voice will make a difference.

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<b>Deadline for March 31 issue:</b> Sunday, March 27, at midnight	
<b>Editor this week:</b> Angela Freedman	