

# NEWS



NEW YORK STATE BOARD OF REGENTS

THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234

Office of Communications / (518) 474-1201

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, AUGUST 26, 2003

For More Information, Contact  
Jonathan Burman, Tom Dunn or Alan Ray at (518) 474-1201  
Internet: <http://www.nysed.gov>

## **COMMISSIONER MILLS ISSUES ORDER TO RESCORE JUNE MATH A REGENTS EXAM, BASED ON PANEL'S RECOMMENDATION**

State Education Commissioner Richard Mills directed the State Education Department today to create and issue a new scoring chart for the June 2003 Math A Regents Exam. He made his decision based on the recommendation of the independent panel appointed by the Board of Regents to review the exam.

The new scoring chart will be available before the start of school. This means the June Math A Regents scores will improve.

The Regents and the Commissioner gave a broad charge to the panel, which included this question and eight others: "If the June 2003 Regents Math A Exam was not of the same level of difficulty as previous Math A Exams, can the results be re-scaled appropriately and used to measure student achievement, and if so how?"

In their interim report, the Panel on Regents Math A concluded, "the June, 2003 exam was harder than the June, 2002 exam. In short, students in June, 2003 were held to a higher standard than their counterparts a year earlier." The Panel recommended "that the scores on the June, 2003 exam be statistically adjusted, using the 9<sup>th</sup> graders as a basis, so that the June, 2003 students will receive a score similar to what they would have received had they taken the June, 2002 exam." The Panel described how this would be done.

In keeping with the Regents commitment to publish the panel's report exactly as written, the panel's interim report is attached.

Regents Chancellor Robert M. Bennett said, "The panel noted the urgency of responding to local school districts and their students. We appreciate this first recommendation and support the panel's good work in such a short period of time."

Commissioner Mills said, "This decision resolves a major uncertainty facing last year's ninth and tenth graders. I thank the panel for its work. They worked hard on their charge and rightly concentrated on the question that had to be resolved before the start of school: the status of last year's ninth and tenth graders. I agree with their recommendation to re-scale the Regents Math A exam, and we are creating that new

(more)

scale now. I look forward to the panel's final report in October as a source of further good advice on how to ensure a sound Regents Math A exam in January."

On June 24, Commissioner Mills announced that the panel would be appointed to study the June Math A Regents Exam after preliminary data indicated a very low success rate in comparison with previous Math A exams. The June exam should have been comparable in difficulty with the January exam and previous Math A exams. Therefore, success rates should have been generally consistent, but they were not. As Commissioner Mills said at the time, "That inconsistency indicates there was a problem in the process of creating this June exam."

Commissioner Mills had already directed that juniors and seniors could count their local course grade in the place of an exam score. The test counts for freshmen and sophomores, and they will now get a higher score. Juniors and seniors still have the option to use this higher test score or their class grade.

The panel, which was appointed by the Board of Regents on July 18, will continue to work on the rest of its charge (see attached) and will make more recommendations this fall.