

Plainview-Old Bethpage Central School District
Board of Education Statement
April 4, 2016

We, the members of the Board of Education, want to re-affirm our belief and the District's position that the decision as to whether a child should take this year's state administered standardized tests or whether a child should opt-out is a decision left solely to each family.

Our District has made it clear that for those students who are taking the exams, we will provide a testing environment free from distractions. Similarly, we have also made it clear that for those students whose parents or guardians are having them opt out, we will NOT require they sit and stare. And the District recently sent out a letter which provides when tests are being given, what those tests are, and the protocol that should be followed to notify the schools if a family is having its child refuse to take a given test.

POB is a community comprised of engaged parents and guardians, who look out for what they believe to be in the best interests of their children. This Board appreciates and respects the important role that parents play in the education of their children – academically, politically, socially, and emotionally. We know that your involvement in POB schools, with POB students, and on educational issues is heartfelt and with the best of intentions. We look forward to your continued engagement on all matters of importance to you.

This Board is comprised of 7 individuals with varying opinions on varying issues, including on the value of the so-called "Opt-Out Movement." Despite our different views, we have been able to reach common ground and created an environment that we believe respects and obeys the wishes of each family on this issue.

It is worth reminding the community that, in addition to what we've done at a local, District level, we have also been able to reach common ground in advocating for improvement in standardized tests, the inclusion of teachers in the test creation process, and the sharing of greater test data to better inform instruction. We have also opposed high stakes testing and the linking of student test scores to teacher evaluations. We've expressed all of these positions in local resolutions, through written and verbal communications with legislators and other government officials, and through our participation in the New York State School Boards Association, in which POB took the lead in changing that Association's state-wide legislative agenda at the most recent Annual Meeting last fall.

Honest disagreement is important so long as differing views are treated in a respectful manner. It forces each of us to question our own opinions, consider why we feel a certain way, and gain a greater understanding about what our decisions are all about. Let us be thoughtful and considerate when expressing our individual viewpoints, so we can keep our collective focus on what is truly important to all of us – to enable our students "to realize their full potential to be happy, ethical, and analytical citizens of the world." That is, after all, central to the mission of the Plainview – Old Bethpage School District.