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NY state's grade 3-8 tests fail to measure college readiness, Benjamin Center report says

By Freeman staff

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NEW PALTZ, N.Y. >> A report by The Benjamin Center for Public Policy Initiatives at SUNY New Paltz concludes the New York state testing regimen for grades 3 through 8 does not measure likely readiness for college upon high school graduation, as the state has claimed.

The report, "[NY State Assessments: Faulty Predictions, Real Consequences](#)," was authored by Michael O'Donnell.

"This carefully researched analysis adds a serious dimension to the current debate in New York state on the value of testing in our elementary and middle schools," Benjamin Center Director Gerald Benjamin said in a press release announcing the report. "The center looks forward to reactions to this work, and consideration by policy makers of its implications."

College readiness was identified as a fundamental purpose of the testing programs for grades 3 through 8 following the adoption of Common Core state standards, according to the report, with an eye toward intervening with students when necessary.

O'Donnell argues the failure to identify college readiness poorly serves students, teachers and the education system.

"Measurement is dependent on tools that give a useful result," O'Donnell writes. "A sprinter has no use for a broken stopwatch; a tailor needs a tape measure that is not torn. If the current ... assessments cannot accurately measure college-readiness — their stated intention — we must ask: What's the point?"

The Benjamin Center was established in 2007 to help SUNY New Paltz engage with communities, governments, not-for-profits and businesses across our region. The center conducts and publicizes research on important policies and topics.

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