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Catholic schools are passing the test

Diocesan school students continue to meet, exceed New York state standards

Parents, students and educators around New York state protested this June when 63 percent of high-school students taking the Math A Regents exam failed. The widespread failure rate put the graduations of several hundred New York seniors in jeopardy.

"This exam doesn't seem fair," New York State Education Commissioner Richard Mills acknowledged in a statement issued after the protests began. "I think we made some mistakes with this exam, and it's up to us to identify and correct them."

The state gave schools the option of using local course grades in place of Regents-exam scores to determine whether juniors and seniors passed math. Students who failed the exam and will be sophomores or juniors this fall must retake the exam.

Catholic-school educators and parents complained to the state about the Math A Regents exam along with their public-school counterparts, but their reaction to the exam was mixed.

Karen Juliano, principal at Geneva's DeSales High School, observed that "we didn't have everybody pass, but there weren't major surprises." She noted that the school had instituted extra math preparatory sessions for students this year.

"If we hadn't had some of the extra preparation time, we may have had the same experience (as other schools)," Juliano said.

At Bishop Kearney High School in Irondequoit, "we certainly had a performance which was not the usual performance," according to Principal Louis D'Angelo.

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Story by Rob Cullivan

