



March 18, 2019

Spring 2019 Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA)

English/Language Arts (ELA) Assessment for	Grades 3 through 8	<i>April 15-17, 2019</i>
Math Assessment for	Grades 3 through 8	<i>April 24-25, 2019*</i>
Science Assessment for	Grade 4	<i>April 29-30, 2019</i>
<i>Science Assessment for</i>	Grade 8	<i>April 30-May 1, 2019</i>

Dear Families of Students in Grades 3-8:

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) has established windows during which the PSSA testing will occur. These assessments are administered in all 500 public school districts in Pennsylvania and with the exception of a very few students who meet specific criteria for participation in an alternate assessment, all district students are expected to participate in the state assessments as shown above, which includes a PDE-approved early window for the math assessment. *

All assessment items are written to align with Pennsylvania's Academic Standards for the specific subject being assessed. The results of each assessment provide valuable data to the school district, which are used for program planning and improvement purposes. Each assessment is made up of multiple-choice, selected response, and constructed response items. For more information about the different types of items on the ELA, Math, and Science PSSAs, please see the attached Parent/Guardian FAQ document provided by the State noting that the math window the Hempfield School District will be using falls ahead of that listed for the state in the header of this document.

Individual student reports for all assessments will be sent to the school district early in the fall for distribution. As soon as individual student results are received, a copy will be provided to parents.

On the reverse side of this letter you will find some important information regarding electronic devices as well as the State's Code of Conduct for Test Takers – please review this information with your child prior to the first testing window. Also, we have provided you with a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document prepared by the PA Department of Education that provides more detailed PSSA-related information. If you have any additional questions about the purpose, contents, or assessment process related to the PSSA testing that will occur in April and May, please contact your child's principal.

Sincerely,

Tab J. Musser, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent

Use of Electronic Devices During PSSA or Keystone Exam Testing

In an era of cell phones, smartphones, and other electronic devices which can easily photograph and instantly share photographs, confidential, and secure test materials can be easily compromised. The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) has requested that districts make clear to students and families that the material contained in the PSSA and Keystone Exams is copyrighted property of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Copying or duplicating the material from an assessment, including the taking of a photograph of secure assessment material, is a violation of the federal Copyright Act. Penalties for violations of the Copyright Act may include the cost of replacing the compromised test item(s) or fines of no less than \$750 up to \$30,000 for a single violation (17 U.S.C. § 101 *et seq.*).

In order to ensure reliable test results and to avoid the cost of replacing test items, the PDE requires schools to set rules and take certain steps to protect test materials. Electronic devices such as but not limited to cell phones, smartphones, smartwatches, E-readers, Nooks, Kindles, iPods, tablets, camera-ready devices, and any other electronic device which can be used to photograph or duplicate test materials, access the internet and/or communicate with others during the administration of the PSSA or Keystone Exams are not permitted in any testing site. ***Please speak with and remind your child that the possession and/or use of a cell phone or any other electronic device during the administration of the PSSA or Keystone Exams is strictly prohibited and will result in the assignment of consequences at both the school and State levels.***

Test administrators follow protocols in the testing rooms to do everything possible to make sure students are not in possession of devices that could be used to capture or record content from the state assessment. If a student is discovered using and/or having a cell phone or other electronic device in his or her possession during the testing, the school will contact the parent/guardian. Students will be subjected to school disciplinary consequences that could include suspension. Additionally, per the requirements of the PDE, the student's test will not be scored and the student will be required to retake the entire exam. The school will hold the electronic device until the parents are contacted to come in and review together with administration the photographic content on the electronic device to ensure that no photographs or duplications of state test materials have been created. If a photograph of state test items is found on the electronic device or if the permission to search the device is refused, the district will contact the PDE and further action may be taken, as the State holds the copyright to all materials contained within the PSSA and Keystone Exams.

If after testing is complete and test materials have been returned, it is discovered that a student used and/or had a cell phone or other electronic device in his or her possession during the administration of the test, the school's discipline policy will be followed and the student's scores will be invalidated.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR TEST TAKERS

DO...

- Listen to, read, and follow all directions given.
- Ask questions if you do not understand the directions.
- Read each question carefully, especially multiple-choice items that ask for the "best answer." Also, be sure to read any open-ended items and writing prompts carefully before responding.
- Be careful when marking your answers so that you do not skip spaces or fill in the wrong sections.
- Make sure to completely fill in the bubble for the answer(s) you select and erase completely answers you change.
- Keep your eyes on your own test.
- Try to answer each test item.
- Check that you have completed all the test items in the test section before closing your test booklet or submitting your final responses online.
- Report any suspected cheating to your teacher or principal.

DO NOT...

- Have notes in your possession during the test.
- Have any unapproved electronic devices (e.g., cell phones, smart phones, smartwatches, etc.) other than an approved calculator, in your possession during the test.
- Share a calculator with others.
- Use the bubbles in the answer booklet to either eliminate possible incorrect answers or possible correct answers by making multiple bubbles and erasing. Mark only the bubble for the correct answer(s) you have chosen.
- Talk with others about questions on the test during or after the test. (Students should be assured that they may discuss the testing process or issues of concern with their parents/guardians.)
- Take notes about the test to share with others.
- Leave an online test session until the session is complete or until instructed to do so.
- Use social media to post information about the test and/or test items.