



PHOENIXVILLE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

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March 13, 2018

Dear Parents/Guardians of Elementary & Middle School Students,

Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) testing dates are as follows:

Elementary

English Language Arts—April 10, 11, 12
Mathematics—April 17, 18
Science—April 24, 25

Middle School

English Language Arts—April 10, 11, 12
Mathematics—April 16, 17
Science—April 24, 25

We want to take this opportunity to inform parents of some changes with PSSA testing this year. First, one major change is that there are 20% fewer questions on the new PSSA format, which in essence shortens testing time required. This change is a positive step. As parents you will be receiving information from your school's principal regarding specific directions/requirements in terms of test taking and test-security protocols. This year however, there are important changes that have occurred regarding how parental "opt-outs" will affect our school district. In the past, students who chose to opt out of PSSA's were not factored into the school district's overall "proficiency calculation". However, under the new guidelines required by the Pennsylvania Department of Education some students who opt out will now be counted as non-proficient. Schools must have a 95% participation rate or their overall score will be lowered. **Opting out will now potentially lower a school's overall score.** This in turn could impact a district's overall ranking as compared to other districts and not paint an accurate picture of a district's true academic potential or progress.

The district is required to follow a specific protocol for those parents who choose (based on religious reasons) to opt their child out of PSSA testing. This protocol remains unchanged under the new guidelines. This district will not encourage nor impede any parent's personal decisions regarding opting out. However, we wanted to make all parents aware of the new state guidelines, and how PSSA participation could negatively impact a school district's overall academic performance calculation.

Should you have any specific questions or concerns, please feel free to contact my office.

Sincerely,

Le Roy G. Whitehead, Ed. D.
Assistant Superintendent
Phoenixville Area School District