



We Build Futures

Neshaminy School District

Administrative Offices • 2250 Langhorne-Yardley Road • Langhorne, PA 19047

February 2017

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Pennsylvania public school students are required to participate in the 2016-17 Pennsylvania System of School Assessments (PSSA) and/or Keystone Exam. The PSSAs are administered to students in grades 3 through 8 in English Language Arts and Mathematics. Science PSSAs are administered in grades 4 and 8. The Keystone Exams are end of course assessments administered to students currently enrolled in Biology, Literature and Algebra I.

Assessment scores represent a snapshot in time of student performance, and should not be considered the sole indicator of student achievement. Standardized assessments, like the PSSA and Keystone exams, help Pennsylvania meet federal and state requirements, as well as provide educators, stakeholders, and policymakers with important information about the commonwealth's students and schools. Individual student scores can be used to assist teachers in identifying students who may be in need of additional educational opportunities and school scores provide information to schools and districts for curriculum and instruction improvement discussions and planning. The specific assessment, pertinent grade level, and testing window are:

PSSA Assessment	Grade Levels	Testing Window
English Language Arts	3,4,5,6,7,8	April 3 rd through April 7 th
Mathematics	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	April 24 th through April 28 nd
Science	4 and 8	May 1 st through May 5 th
Keystone Exam	High School & Middle School: End of course assessment for Algebra I, Biology and Literature	May 15 th through May 26 th

School districts are required by Pennsylvania Department of Education to notify parents of the following:

- Copying or duplicating the material from the assessment, including the taking of a photograph, 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.
- Electronic devices are not permitted. Electronic devices include cell phones, smartphones, E-readers, Nooks, Kindles, iPads, iPods, tablets, camera-ready devices, and any other electronic devices which can be used to photograph or duplicate test materials, access the internet and/or communicate with others during the administration of the assessment. Please speak with your child and let him or her know that the possession and/or use of a cell phone or other electronic device during the administration of the assessment will result in certain consequences.
- If a student is discovered using and/or having a cellphone or other electronic device in his or her possession during the administration of the assessment, you will be contacted by the school. A student who ignores this directive will be subject to the school's discipline policy and the Department of Education's requirement that the student's test will not be scored and the student will be required to retake the entire test.
- In addition, the electronic device will be held by school staff and the device's stored photographs will be searched. School staff will also ask for permission to search other functions of the electronic device. If a photo of the assessment is discovered or if permission to search other functions of the electronic device is refused, the device will be held by the school staff and, because the Pennsylvania Department of Education holds the copyright to all material contained within the assessment, the Pennsylvania Department of Education will be contacted.
- 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.

We respectfully ask that you join us in impressing upon your child that these assessments need to be taken seriously. The highest possible level of individual student performance is important for our students, their future and the future of our schools and programs.

A copy of **Information for Parents or Guardians**, regarding the assessments, will be posted on the district's website. A copy will also be available in your child's school office. If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact your child's guidance counselor.

Sincerely,

Gloria Hancock, Ed. D.
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
Neshaminy School District - We Build Futures