



February 2019

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Our PSSA spring testing schedule will begin in April. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania requires all school districts to administer the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) in English Language Arts, mathematics, and science. All students in grades 3-8 will take the math test and the English Language Arts test, which includes skills in reading and in writing. Students in grades 4 and 8 will also take the science PSSA. For more information on the PSSA, please visit the Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment website, under “District Offices” on Methacton’s homepage.

The dates of the testing windows established by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) are listed here so that you are aware of the upcoming testing.

Test	Grade Level(s)	Testing Window Dates
PSSA English Language Arts	Grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	April 15 – April 26, 2019
PSSA Mathematics	Grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	April 29 – April 30, 2019
PSSA Science	Grades 4, 8	May 1– May 2, 2019

Note that testing does not occur on all days of the windows. In 2019, ELA testing days will occur both before and after our district’s Spring break. Additionally, there is only one week for the administration of the math and science tests. Please refer to the schedule specifically published for your child’s school as dates and times may vary slightly across buildings based on daily schedules and events that might impact a quiet and uninterrupted testing environment for students in each respective building.

As we work toward ensuring an appropriate testing environment for our students, we ask families to:

- Avoid scheduling appointments or making vacation plans during the testing windows that would require your child’s absence from school.
- Make sure your child has adequate rest on the nights before testing and a good breakfast on testing days.
- Encourage your child to dress comfortably on testing days.
- Make sure your child arrives at school on time so any preparations or instructions will not be missed.
- Encourage your child to have a confident and positive attitude toward this testing, and do not over-stress the importance of test results.

Additionally, please review this information regarding the use of cell phones/electronic devices and calculators: [Use of Electronic Devices During PSSA Tests](#).

The PSSA results provide our district with one objective measure of its educational program. Along with information from district-based assessments, the PSSA may assist you in gaining a more complete understanding of your child’s performance and growth toward acquiring academic skills.

Thank you in advance, for your support. Please call your child’s principal or me if you have further questions or concerns.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary M. Katona".

Mary M. Katona, Ed.D.

Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

In order to assist us in providing the best possible environment for test-taking, please review these PDE policies and share them with your child.

PDE GUIDELINES FOR STATE ASSESSMENT ADMINISTRATION POSSESSION AND/OR USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The Pennsylvania Department of Education would like to remind parents/guardians and students of PDE's cell phone policy during testing, and what should be done if a student is caught using a cell phone or other electronic device during testing.

- Cell phones and other electronic devices are not allowed during the test administration;
- All cell phones, smart phones, and other prohibited electronic devices will be collected as students enter the testing site;
- Using and/or having a cell phone or other electronic device during the test administration will result in the application of a "Do Not Score" label on the student's test booklet and the student will be required to retake the entire exam;
- If a student uses a cell phone or electronic device in any manner during the administration of the test, the phone or electronic device will be confiscated until such time that the parent or guardian can come to the school, and in the presence of the parent or guardian, an administrator will view the cell phone or other electronic device to ensure that no information or material regarding the assessment is present;
- Violation of the no cell phone or other electronic device rule will result in discipline and that discipline will vary depending on whether test material has been compromised; and
- Any items on an assessment that have been compromised, and can no longer be used will have to be replaced, and the parents/guardians and students may be responsible for the cost of replacement. PDE advises that fines may range from \$750 - \$30,000 for a single violation.

PENNSYLVANIA CALCULATOR POLICY

If a student chooses to use a calculator on the PSSA in sections where the calculator is permitted, the student must adhere to the guidelines listed below. The School Assessment Coordinator is required to ensure that all calculator policies are implemented and followed, including making sure calculators have no programs stored in their memory other than those that are factory installed. Please note that if a student wants to restore the deleted programs, the student will need to back up these programs prior to the assessment. In addition, the memory must be cleared on the calculator following each test session of the assessment.

The following are **not** permitted for the PSSA:

- Non-calculators such as cell phones, smart phones, PDAs, laptops, tablets, pocket organizers, etc.
- Calculators with infrared, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, or other beaming or wireless capabilities, unless the beaming or wireless capabilities are disabled
- Calculators with QWERTY keyboards, typewriter-like keyboards, or keypads (e.g., Dvorak)
- Calculators with built-in Computer Algebra Systems (CAS)
- Calculators that make noise, have paper tape, need to be plugged in, or talk; these specific calculators can only be used as a required accommodation as stated in the *Accommodations Guidelines*
- Calculators shared by students during a test session
- Any and all non-factory programs or information stored in the calculator

This calculator policy is intended to be a general description of what is not allowed. It is not meant to be an exhaustive list of specific calculators, devices, or technologies that cannot be used on the PSSA. Please note that as technology changes, this policy may also change.