



# CUMBERLAND VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

## DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

Mark A. Blanchard, Ed.D.  
Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education

April 12, 2023

To: The Parents/Guardians of Eagle View/Mountain View Middle School Students,

All public school students are required to participate this year in the annual Pennsylvania System of School Assessments (PSSA) as well as the Keystone Exam in Algebra (if applicable). Included with this letter is specific information that addresses questions you might have about the PSSA/Keystone testing program. Please read this information carefully. Middle School students will be tested on the following dates:

**6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> Grade English Language Arts**  
**April 25 - 27**

**6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Math**  
**May 2 – 3, Eagle View**  
**May 3 – 4, Mountain View**

**8<sup>th</sup> Grade Science**  
**May 9, Eagle View**  
**May 10 - 11, Mountain View**

**Algebra I Keystone (if applicable)**  
**May 16 – 17, Eagle View**  
**May 17 – 18, Mountain View**

**Please do NOT schedule Educational Trips during testing windows. Per district policy, these trips may not be approved as excused absences.**

Please encourage your student(s) to give his/her best effort on the tests. Thank you for your cooperation and support!

If you have any questions, please contact your building principal:

School	Principal	Phone Number	Email
Eagle View	John Gallagher	717.506.3955	jgallagher@cvschools.org
Mountain View	Jeff Hosenfeld	717.697.1960	jhosenfeld@cvschools.org

## Opt-Out Procedure

Chapter 4 of Title 22 of the Pa. Code (22 Pa. code 4.4) provides for the right of any parent/guardian to excuse his/her child from the state assessment if, upon inspection of the testing materials, he/she finds the assessment to be in conflict with his/her religious beliefs. This is the only basis for which a parent/guardian may request excuse for the student from the assessment(s). **Parents/guardians seeking to make this determination must contact their student's principal to set up an appointment to review the assessment. A parent must be available to review the material with the principal the week of April 17 – 21, 2023.**

If after reviewing the test, parents/guardians find the test to be in conflict with their religious beliefs and wish their student to be excused, the parents/guardians must submit a written request to the principal **no later than 3:00 P.M., Friday, April 21, 2023**, stating they do not wish their student tested because the test conflicts with their religious beliefs.

## PSSA/Keystone Testing and Electronic Devices Statement

Please remind your student that the possession or use of a cell phone/electronic device during the administration of the PSSA or Keystone Exams will result in consequences including the negation of test results. Specifically, the Department of Education's assessment handbook states:

*"In order to ensure reliable test results and to avoid the cost of replacing test items, the Department of Education requires schools to set rules and take certain steps to protect test materials. One step or rule required in all schools is that electronic devices are not permitted at test sites. Electronic devices include cell phones, smartphones, E-readers, Nooks, Kindles, iPads, 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 ..."*

We understand that many middle school students have their own cell phone and bring it to school. As part of our testing protocols, we will ask students to turn off their phones and place them on a table or general collection area at the front of the classroom to ensure compliance with the above policy and to avoid the possibility and/or appearance of prohibited behavior.

## Pennsylvania Calculator Policy

If a student chooses to use a calculator on an assessment section where a calculator is permitted, the student must adhere to the following guidelines. The following are not permitted:

- Devices that have a primary purpose other than as a calculator (such as a cellphone)
- Calculators with Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, or other beaming/wireless capabilities unless disabled
- Calculators with build in Computer Algebra Systems (CAS)
- Calculators that make noise, need to be plugged in, or talk
- Sharing of calculators during a test session



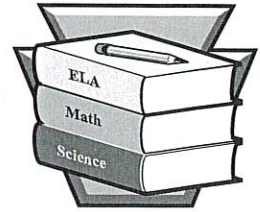
## Frequently Asked Questions

# Information for Parents or Guardians

## Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA)

English Language Arts Assessment, April 24–28, 2023

Mathematics and Science Assessment, May 1–12, 2023



### GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE PSSA

#### Which schools participate?

All school districts and charter schools participate in the assessments. Nonpublic and private schools may also participate on a voluntary basis.

#### Which students take the assessments?

Except for a very few students who meet specific criteria for participation in an alternate assessment, all students are included in the assessments as outlined below:

ELA & Mathematics—Grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8

Science—Grades 4 and 8

#### Who decided what the assessments should measure?

Groups of educators from all levels of education in Pennsylvania chose the areas of knowledge and skills upon which the assessments are based. The groups included teachers, supervisors, curriculum directors, and college specialists. They also reviewed, edited, and approved the test items.

#### Who administers the assessments?

Each school chooses the person(s) who will administer the assessments. In most cases, these are teachers in the students' building.

#### How are the results reported?

Two copies of the individual student report for all assessments will be sent to all schools and districts that participate for distribution to parents, teachers, school counselors, and/or principals. The state will not receive any report with individual names included.

School-level reports will be used for curricular and planning purposes. School districts and charter schools may publish the results of PSSA testing for each school. The state will also release school-by-school assessment data.

#### May parents see the assessments?

Yes, under one circumstance. School entities are required to have policies to ensure that parents or guardians have the right to review a state assessment in the school entity during convenient hours for parents or guardians from the time testing materials are received to the end of the make-up schedule in order to determine whether a state assessment conflicts with their religious belief. This is the only reason allowable under regulation.

Confidentiality agreements must be signed, and no copies of the assessments or notes about assessment items will be permitted to leave the school. If after reviewing the test, parents or guardians find the test to be in conflict with their religious belief and wish their student(s) to be excused from the test, the right of the parents or guardians will not be denied upon written request to the applicable school district Superintendent, charter school Chief Executive Officer, or AVTS Director. Parents or guardians should contact their child's school to make arrangements to review the test.

#### Report Testing Irregularities

Parents/guardians who believe that a testing irregularity may have occurred may email [ra-edirregularities@pa.gov](mailto:ra-edirregularities@pa.gov) or call 844-418-1651 to report the incident.

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS ASSESSMENT (grades 3 through 8)

#### How long does the assessment take?

The entire English Language Arts assessment takes approximately three to four hours to complete. Your school district will inform you about the assessment schedule.

#### What does the assessment include?

Each student completes three sections of questions for the English Language Arts assessment. Some portions will be the same for all students, and some will consist of different groups of questions.

#### What types of questions are on the assessment?

Students respond to multiple-choice, evidence-based selected-response, and constructed-response questions. In a multiple-choice question, the correct answer(s) is chosen from four options. Evidence-based selected-response questions have two parts, and students select one or more answers for each part. Constructed-response questions may include a short-answer (grade 3) or text dependent analysis (grades 4 through 8). Short-answer questions require students to compose a brief response to support their answer. For the text dependent analysis question, students analyze a text and use evidence from the reading passage to compose an essay.



### **How are written responses to constructed-response items scored?**

The written responses for English Language Arts are scored by evaluators trained in applying an ELA-specific scoring guideline. For short-answer questions, scores are based on content only. Spelling and punctuation are not included as part of the scoring process. Responses to text dependent analysis questions are scored based on both content and writing skills.

### **What is assessed in English Language Arts?**

The English Language Arts assessment addresses six major reporting categories as well as two text types. Students respond to standalone multiple-choice items assessing language. Additionally, students read a number of passages from literature and informational genres and respond to questions about these passages that indicate both comprehension and reading skills and the students' analysis and interpretation of different types of texts.

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE MATHEMATICS ASSESSMENT (grades 3 through 8)**

#### **How long does the assessment take?**

The entire mathematics assessment takes approximately two to three hours to complete. Your school district will inform you about the assessment schedule.

#### **What does the assessment include?**

Each student completes two sections of questions for the mathematics assessment. Some portions will be the same for all students, and some will consist of different groups of questions.

#### **What types of questions are on the assessment?**

Students respond to two types of questions: multiple-choice and open-ended. In a multiple-choice question, the correct answer is chosen from the four presented options, while open-ended questions require students to compose their responses. Open-ended questions generally require students to provide detail in support of their answers (such as showing or describing the steps performed to complete a calculation).

#### **How are written responses to open-ended items scored?**

The written responses for mathematics open-ended items are scored by evaluators trained in applying a mathematics-specific scoring guideline. In mathematics, scores are based on content only. Spelling and punctuation are not included as part of the scoring process.

### **What is assessed in Mathematics?**

The mathematics assessment addresses five major reporting categories across four clusters. The reporting categories assessed and the proportion of questions in each reporting category vary by grade level. As a part of the assessment of Cluster A, Numbers and Operations, students in grades 4 through 8 respond to a set of questions without a calculator. Constructed-response items may require the students to show all of their work (e.g., calculations, graphs, drawings) and/or to explain in writing how they solved the problems.

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCIENCE ASSESSMENT (grades 4 and 8)**

#### **How long does the assessment take?**

The entire science assessment takes approximately one to two hours to complete. Your school district will inform you about the assessment schedule.

#### **What does the assessment include?**

Students in grades 4 and 8 complete two sections of questions for the science assessment. Some portions will be the same for all students, and some will consist of different groups of questions.

#### **What types of questions are on the assessment?**

Students respond to two types of questions: multiple-choice and open-ended. In a multiple-choice question, the correct answer is chosen from the four presented options, while open-ended questions require students to compose their responses. At grade 8, the science assessment also includes science scenarios.

#### **What is a science scenario?**

A science scenario contains text, graphics, charts, and/or tables and uses these elements to describe the results of a class project, an experiment, or other similar research. Students use the information found in a science scenario to answer multiple-choice questions.

#### **How are written responses to open-ended items scored?**

The written responses for science open-ended items are scored by evaluators trained in applying a science-specific scoring guideline. In science, scores are based on content only. Spelling and punctuation are not included as part of the scoring process.

#### **What is assessed in science?**

The science assessment addresses the four major reporting categories: The Nature of Science, Biological Sciences, Physical Sciences, and Earth and Space Sciences. The proportion of items in each reporting category varies by grade level.