



**DOWNINGTOWN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
540 Trestle Place, Downingtown, Pennsylvania 19335  
610-269-8460

March 2019

Dear Parents and Guardians:

State and federal statutory law instructs that all public school children in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania shall be assessed in grades 3 through 8 on their understanding of grade-level English Language Arts and Mathematics standards and all grade 4 and 8 students will be tested on their mastery of grade-level Science standards. The purpose of these assessments is to better gauge the district's curriculum, its grade level programs, the strength of its 3 through 8 schools' instruction, and to assist our teachers in preparing for the next school year. As a parent, the results of the PSSA help you gauge your child's on-grade-level achievement. These assessments will have no bearing on your child's class grade or report card grades. However, such state testing is very important to our District and your child's school as a measuring and learning tool.

Kindly ensure your child is in attendance for these assessments. If an appointment during testing dates is unavoidable, please do your best to schedule it during the afternoon since most testing happens in the morning. Children who are absent will make up the test at another time during the testing window. All makeup testing for absent students will occur no later than May 10, 2019.

Below is a schedule of the upcoming PSSA testing dates. Your principal will inform you of specific times testing will occur in your child's school and grade-level.

**PSSA testing dates in DASD:**

1. **English Language Arts - Grades 3-8:** Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>
2. **Mathematics - Grades 3-8:** Monday, April 29<sup>th</sup>, and Tuesday, April 30<sup>th</sup>
3. **Science - Grades 4 and 8:** Thursday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, and Friday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>

Also included in this communication is a letter about the possession of cellphones during testing. Please read the information carefully so you are aware of the restrictions and consequences in place for cellphone possession during test sessions.

The School Board, administrators, teachers, and staff of the Downingtown Area School District are committed to providing a meaningful and positive testing experience for your child. We earnestly hope you will find this to be yours and your child's experience.

Sincerely,

Emilie M. Lonardi, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools

Matthew Friedman, Chief Academic Officer

Kelly A. Byrne, Coordinator of Assessment and Accountability



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### **Cellphones and the Testing Environment**

There are regulations imposed by the state of PA regarding the possession of cellphones by students during the administration of both the PSSA and Keystone Exams. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), it has received an unprecedented number of communications from schools/districts concerning student possession and actual use of cell phones during testing. DASD and all districts are bound to comply with PDE's policy in order to ensure that the integrity of state tests is not compromised. Additionally, most of the reports, which PDE references, are coming from Keystone test-takers. However, PDE requires we inform all parents of the cellphone policy whether their children are taking the PSSA or the Keystone Exams.

The bulleted points in this communication outline the rules we must follow during testing and what we must do if a student chooses to possess or use a cell phone or other electronic device during testing. These rules and policies apply to the administration of both the Keystone Exams and the PSSA. We share this information not to intimidate or threaten, but so that you understand the mandates PDE has imposed on school districts in Pennsylvania. Thank you, in advance, for your support of our compliance with this regulation.

- Possession of cell phones is not allowed during the test administration.
- At the secondary level, all cell phones, smart phones, and other prohibited electronic devices are to be collected as students enter the testing site. In DASD, a student entering the testing room carrying a cellphone will be asked to place it in an envelope. The student will mark the envelope with his/her name. The teacher will collect the envelope. The phone will be returned when the student exits the test session.
- Consequences to students for failure to adhere to this requirement:
  - The consequence for 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 his/her test booklet or appropriate notification to not score on the online version, and the student will retake the entire test;
  - If the student uses or possess 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, the cell phone or other electronic device will be viewed 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 or not; and
  - Any items on an assessment that have been compromised and can no longer be used will have to be replaced, and the parents and students may be responsible for the cost of replacement as per PDE.