

PHOENIXVILLE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION OFFICE 386 CITY LINE AVENUE PHOENIXVILLE, PA 19460 484-927-5000 FAX 610-933-3189 BUSINESS OFFICE FAX 610-933-3707

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

Phoenixville Area School District is an equal opportunity education institution and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religious affiliation, national origin, sex, age, marital status or non-relevant disabilities in its activities programs or employment practices as required by Title VI, Title IX and Section 504. The District's commitment to non-discrimination extends to students, employees, prospective employees and the community. For information regarding civil rights or grievance procedures or for information regarding services, activities and facilities that are accessible to and useable by disabled persons, contact the Director of Human Resources, Phoenixville Area School District, 386 City Line Avenue, Phoenixville, Pennsylvania, 19460, 484-927-5000.