

April 19, 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As the District invites more students back into buildings for in-person instruction, we realize this brings up questions about standardized testing for the remainder of the 2020-21 school year. Here is the latest information, which we hope will provide some clarity for families.

- ❖ **Each school year, students participate in one or more state assessments**, including ACCESS for English Learner students, PSSA for all students in grades 3-8, Keystone Exams for students in Algebra I, Biology, and English II courses, and PASA, an alternate replacement for PSSA and Keystone Exams for severely cognitively impaired students.
- ❖ **Testing is not cancelled for the 2020-21 school year.** Administering the ACCESS, PASA, PSSA, and Keystone Exams is still required by the federal and state government and is tied to District funding. Schools are required to make a “good faith effort” to assess as many students as possible given health and safety protocols and available testing dates.
- ❖ **Testing for 2020-21 will be limited to students who have opted into the hybrid learning model.** Students who remain fully virtual will *not* take the 2020-21 state tests.
- ❖ **While schools are expected to administer state-mandated assessments, they will *not* be held accountable for scores.** Families and schools will receive student scores to inform them of student achievement and guide them on preparations for the next school year. **Students who are not tested will not be penalized.** For students who do not have state testing scores, schools will use data from their District tests and classroom assignments to report on student achievement and guide support for next year. PSSA scores from 2020-21 will not be used by any school to make admission decisions during the next round of school selection.
- ❖ **In-person students who opt out of testing and students who remain fully virtual will be given alternate assignments determined by the school** while in-person students are completing state tests.
- ❖ **Schools have flexibility to choose which dates and times they will test within the District windows in the chart below.** The amount of time students will spend on testing will depend on which test(s) they are expected to take and how the school schedules the tests. State tests all have multiple sections which are typically administered over multiple school days. Schools will provide information on which test(s) each student will take as well as school-specific testing schedules.
- ❖ **Keystone Exams will take place at the beginning of next school year.** There will not be any testing window for Keystone Exams this school year.

District Testing Schedule

Test	Eligible Students (in-person only)	Testing Window
ACCESS	English Learners in grades K-9	April 8 - June 4 (as students return to buildings)
PASA	Students with complex needs in grades 3-8	April 8 - June 4 (as students return to buildings)
PSSA	Students without complex needs in grades 3-8	May 3 - June 4 (as students return to buildings)
Make-up testing: ACCESS, PASA, PSSA	Eligible students who do not complete testing by June 4	June 7 - 11
Keystones	Students who complete an Algebra I, Biology, or English II course in 2020-21	September 20 - 30, 2021 (beginning of next school year)

- ❖ **Please note that the District has administered other brief assessments to inform instruction throughout the year.** These assessments will continue through the remainder of the school year on days when students are participating in virtual learning. Those assessments are aimswebPLUS (grades K-5) and Star (grades 6-12).
- ❖ **Parents/guardians of students who have selected to remain fully virtual do not have to submit requests to opt-out of state-mandated testing.** While we do not encourage it, families of students who have selected hybrid instruction and who want to opt-out of the state-mandated tests should submit their request in writing to their school.

For a full calendar and more information about all assessments administered throughout the year, visit the Office of Assessment's website: <https://www.philasd.org/era/assessment/>. This website is continually updated as new information becomes available.

We know this year has been challenging, and we thank you for your patience and understanding as we respond to a situation that has been rapidly changing throughout the year.

For more information, please contact your school.