

Gateway School District



Dear Parents:

This letter is to inform you that Ramsey Elementary School students in Grades 3 and 4 will be taking the state mandated Pennsylvania System of School Assessments (PSSA's) beginning Tuesday, April 25, 2023. This assessment consists of both multiple choice and open ended responses. The testing sessions will run from about 9:15-9:30 AM to 11:15 AM each day. Students will have the option for extended time if necessary. The following information will help you best support your child during the testing window.

Date	Assessment	Grades
April 25th	ELA Section 1	3-8
April 26th	ELA Section 2	3-8
April 27th	ELA Section 3	3-8
May 2nd	Math Section 1	3-8
May 3rd	Math Section 2	3-8
May 9th	Science Section 1	4 & 8
May 10th	Science Section 2	4 & 8

These tests are designed to measure student progress toward achievement of the Pennsylvania standards and assessment anchors. The results will not be used to grade students. Individual student reports, school, district, and state data will be obtained from the ELA, math, and science assessments. Information derived from these assessments will also help to plan future school programs. The results will be available in the fall of 2023.

Please make every attempt not to schedule appointments and/or vacations for your child during this time period. It is in the best interest of every student to administer the test in the most natural environment possible versus a make-up session. Prior to the assessment, please ensure that your student has a good night's sleep and eats a healthy breakfast, and receives words of encouragement.

Please make every effort for your student to be on time for school to begin the tests between 9:15-9:30 AM. Students arriving at school after 9:15 AM are not permitted to enter the classroom once the test has started. They will need to sit in the office and wait until the testing session is over.

You can help your child prepare for the PSSAs by seeing that he/she obtains a good night's sleep and eats a nutritious breakfast each morning. Explain the importance of the tests and encourage your child to do his/her best. Your continued support in helping your child be successful is greatly appreciated.

Attached to this notice, you will find an information guide provided by the state. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions at kfriend@gatewayk12.org

Sincerely,

Katie Friend

Important Information for Parents:

(Includes test design information and Item & Scoring Samplers)

[ELA Resources](#)

[Mathematics Resources](#)

[Science Resources](#)

FAQ for Families

<https://www.education.pa.gov/Documents/K-12/Assessment%20and%20Accountability/PSSA/Test%20Administration%20Materials/2021PSSAFAQ.pdf>

PARENT INFORMATION

The PA Department of Education (PDE) has issued guidelines regarding a student Code of Conduct for PSSA and Keystone Exam testing. Furthermore, PDE requires that school personnel confiscate cell phones and other electronic devices at the testing site. In an era of cell phones, smart phones, and other electronic devices which can easily photograph and instantly share photographs, confidential and secure test materials can be easily compromised.

Elementary students are not allowed to have cell phones or other electronic devices in their possession or at their desk during the school day. This same rule will be followed during PSSA test administration. Principals and test administrators will review the Code of Conduct with students prior to the first test administration.

Frequently
Asked
Questions

Information for Parents or Guardians

Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA)

English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science
Assessment - April 19-May 28, 2021



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 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.