



YOUGH INTERMEDIATE MIDDLE SCHOOL
171 STATE ROUTE 31
RUFFS DALE, PA 15679
724-872-5164

Dear Parents/Guardians:

March 26, 2024

It is a very exciting time of year for our students to show everything they have been learning for the past couple of months and shine on the PSSA tests. The Commonwealth continues to require that all of our students must take the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment for the 2023-2024 school year. As a staff, we have enjoyed working with all our students every day in all content areas. We are **passionate** about our students' learning, hope to **inspire** them to be **better** every day, and **believe** the education of our students is a *shared responsibility* of parents, staff, and students. So, as we move into PSSA "season" we hope for your **support** and **encouragement** with your child to not be fearful of a test but to do their best. And with that best, we know all students will perform at a high level and will excel.

What are the benefits of taking the PSSAs and doing our very best?

- The test provides parents, staff, and the community on the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction.
- The test allows us to find our strengths and areas to improve upon when delivering instruction.
- The test gives us an opportunity to measure student growth in core subjects from year to year.
- The test provides an opportunity for students to familiarize themselves with test formats that will be tied into graduation and career pathways.

Here is our testing schedule for the Spring of 2024:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| • English Language Arts | April 22, 23, 24 |
| • Math | April 30 and May 1 |
| • Science (Grade 8 Only) | May 2 |

As we enter this exciting time of the year, please note the following:

1. The test is paper and pencil and not online so student Chromebooks will be in student lockers during the testing times.
2. They should bring a pencil to assist with work.
3. They may bring reading materials upon completion of the test and a water bottle to drink.
4. Please review the code of conduct, cell phone policy, and information for parents.

In order for your child to do their best on this assessment, we are recommending plenty of sleep, a good breakfast, and a positive attitude. Please try not to schedule any appointments or trips for your child during these test dates. It is important that they be in school and on time to ensure their best test performance.

There will be daily incentives for all students to participate in the PSSAs. We will have gift card drawings for those students who attend all sessions on their scheduled days. There will be various other incentives that will be shared before testing. We also will have color days to show our school pride and our commitment to doing our very best each day of the testing cycle.

April 22- Red- For power and energy

April 23- Orange- A color of intelligence, happiness, and friendliness

April 24- Yellow- An attention-getter color to stimulate concentration

April 30 Green- For luck

May 1- Blue- A color that is peaceful, calming, relaxing, and brings confidence

May 2- Purple- For wisdom and power

Please keep in mind students are required to test. Chapter 4 of Title 22 of the Pa. School Code provides for the right of any parent/guardian to excuse a student from testing if the assessment is in conflict with his/her religious beliefs. If this is the case, parents must schedule to review the assessments to determine whether the assessment conflicts with their religious beliefs. *This is the only reason the state allows students to opt out of an assessment.* To view the assessment, you must contact your building administrator **in writing no later than Friday, April 5, 2024.** Arrangements will be made for interested parents to review the assessment(s) on Thursday, April 11, 2024, between the hours of 10:00 AM and 2:00 PM.

The Yough School District and community take a great amount of pride in our students' performance. The students have worked very hard to prepare for these moments and please encourage them to come to school excited about the ability to show what they have learned over the past couple of months. We thank you for your support and if you have any questions or need further information, feel free to contact me at your earliest convenience.

Together as a learning community of parents, staff, and students, we achieve greatness!

Mr. Kevin Smetak
YIMS Principal
Yough School District
724-872-5164 x 3021

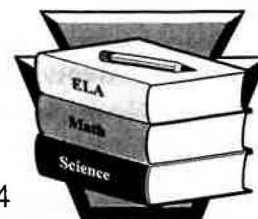
Mr. Anthony Natale
Assistant Principal
724-872-5164 x 3022

Frequently Asked Questions

Information for Parents or Guardians

Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA)

English Language Arts Assessment, April 22–26, 2024
Mathematics and Science Assessment, April 29–May 10, 2024



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.



Dear Parent/Guardian:

In an era of cell phones, smartphones and other electronic devices which can easily photograph and instantly share photographs, confidential and secure test materials can be easily compromised. Not only is it expensive to replace a compromised test item, the material contained in the PSSA and Keystone Exams is copyrighted property of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Copying or duplicating the material from the assessment, including the taking of a photograph of secure assessment material, is a violation of the federal Copyright Act. Penalties for violations of the Copyright Act may include the cost of replacing the compromised test item(s) or fines of no less than \$750 up to \$30,000 for a single violation (17 U.S.C. § 101 et seq.).

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. Electronic devices such as but not limited to cell phones, smartphones, smartwatches, E-readers, Nooks, Kindles, 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 or Keystone Exams are not permitted in any testing site. Please speak with your child and let your child know that the possession and/or use of a cell phone or other electronic device during the administration of the PSSA or Keystone Exams will result in consequences.

You will be contacted by the school if your child is discovered using and/or having a cell phone or other unapproved electronic device during the administration of the PSSA or Keystone Exams. Students who ignore this directive will be subject to the school's discipline policy and the Department of Education's requirement that the student's test will not be scored and the student will be required to retake the entire exam. The electronic device will be held by school staff, and the device's stored photographs and other functions will be examined with your permission. You may request to be present when the electronic device is examined. If a photograph of the PSSA or Keystone Exam is discovered or if permission to search other functions of the electronic device is refused, the device will be held by the school staff. The Pennsylvania Department of Education holds the copyright to all material contained within the PSSA and Keystone Exams, the Pennsylvania Department of Education will be contacted and further action may be taken.

If, after testing is complete and test materials have been returned, it is discovered that a student used and/or had a cell phone or other unapproved electronic device during the administration of the test, the school's discipline policy will be followed and the student's test will not be scored.