PREPARING FOR 2016 PSSA

Parent Resource Packet for Success

WEST SHORE SCHOOL DISTRICT

FAIRVIEW ELEMENTARY

Todd B. Stoltz, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Stephanie A. Eldridge
Principal

March 21, 2016

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

It is time to begin another PSSA Spring testing schedule. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania requires all school districts to administer the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science every school year.

At Fairview we will be testing according to the schedule below:

Test	Grade Level(s)	Testing Dates at Fairview
PSSA English Language Arts	Grades 3,4, and 5	April 11th, 12th, 13th, and 14th
PSSA Mathematics	Grades 3,4, and 5	April 19th, 20th, and 21st
PSSA Science	Grade 4	April 26th and 27th

In order to help your child complete his or her PSSA more accurately, we ask you to:

- Avoid making any appointments or vacation plans during the testing windows that would require your child's absence from school.
- Make sure your child has adequate rest on the nights before testing and a good breakfast on testing days.
- Encourage your child to dress comfortably on testing days.
- Make sure that your child arrives at school on time so that any preparations or instructions will not be missed.
- Encourage your child to have a confident and positive attitude toward this testing. Please do not over-stress the importance of test results; students who are tense often do not perform at their true ability level.

Additionally, please review the information on the back page about cell phones/electronic devices.

The PSSA results provide our school district with an objective measure of its educational program. In addition to district-based assessments, the PSSA also assists you in gaining a better understanding of your child's ability and performance based on state standards.

Thank you in advance, for your support. Please call your child's teacher or the office if you have further questions or concerns.

Respectfully,
Stephanie Eldridge
Stephanie Eldridge

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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, 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. One step or rule required in all schools is that electronic devices are not permitted at test sites. Electronic devices include cell phones, smartphones, 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. Please speak with your child and let him or her 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 certain consequences.

If a student is discovered using and/or having a cell phone or other electronic device in his or her possession during the administration of the PSSA or Keystone Exams, you will be contacted by the school. Students that 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. In addition, the electronic device will be held by school staff and the device's stored photographs will be searched. School staff will also ask for permission to search other functions of the electronic device. 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 and, because 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.

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 electronic device in his or her possession during the administration of the test, the school's discipline policy will be followed and the student's scores will be invalidated.

Bureau of Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction
Department of Education | 333 Market Street | Harrisburg, PA 17126 | 717-787-4234 | www.education.pa.gov

Frequently Asked Questions

Information for Parents or Guardians

Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA)

English Language Arts Assessment, April 11–15, 2016
Mathematics Assessment, April 18–22, 2016
Science Assessment, April 25–29, 2016

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE PSSA

Which schools participate?

All school districts and charter schools participate in the assessments. Nonpublic 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 assessment should measure?

Groups of educators from all levels of education in Pennsylvania chose the areas of knowledge and skills upon which the assessment is based. The groups included teachers, supervisors, curriculum directors, and college specialists. They also reviewed, edited, and approved the test items.

Who administers the assessment?

Each school chooses the person(s) who will administer the assessment. 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 assure that parents or guardians have the right to review a state assessment in the school entity during convenient hours for parents or guardians at least two weeks prior to their administration 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.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS ASSESSMENTS (grades 3–8)

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 four 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 three types of questions: multiple-choice, evidence-based selected response, and constructed-response. In a multiple-choice question, the correct answer 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 require students to compose their responses. These include a writing prompt, short-answer questions (grade 3 only), and text-dependent analysis questions (grades 4–8 only). The writing prompt requires students to compose a response using one of three modes (narrative, informative/explanatory, or opinion in grades 3–5 and narrative, informative/explanatory, or argumentative in grades 6–8). 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. For writing prompts, scores are determined using a holistic scoring guideline that includes composition skills as well as conventions. 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 and a writing prompt. 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 3–8)

How long does the assessment take?

The entire mathematics assessment takes approximately three to four hours to complete. Your school district will inform you about the assessment schedule.

What do the assessments include?

Each student completes three 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 assessments?

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 items in each reporting category vary by grade level. As a part of the assessment of Cluster A, Numbers and Operations, students in grades 4–8 respond to a section of items in which a calculator is not permitted. Constructed-response items may require the students to show all of their work (calculations, graphs, drawings, etc.) 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 two to four 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 the 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 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.

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CODE OF CONDUCT FOR TEST TAKERS

DO...

- Listen to, read, and follow all directions given.
- Ask questions if you do not understand the directions.
- Read each question carefully, especially multiple-choice items that ask for the "best answer." Also, be sure to read any open-ended items and writing prompts carefully before responding.
- Be careful when marking your answers so that you do not skip spaces or fill in the wrong sections.
- Make sure to completely fill in the bubble for the answer you select and erase completely any answers you change.
- Keep your eyes on your own test.
- Try to answer each test item.
- Check that you have completed all the test items in the test section before closing your test booklet or submitting your final responses online.
- Report any suspected cheating to your teacher or principal.

DO NOT...

- Bring notes with you to the test.
- Bring any electronic devices (e.g., cell phones, smart phones, etc.) other than an approved calculator, if applicable, to the test.
- Share a calculator with others.
- Use the bubbles in the answer booklet to either eliminate possible incorrect answers or possible correct answers. Mark only the bubble for the one correct answer you have chosen.
- Talk with others about questions on the test during or after the test.
- Take notes about the test to share with others.
- Leave an online test session until the session is complete or until instructed to do so.

PSSA Test Taking Strategies

The PSSA testing window this year is April 11th to April 14th for Reading, April 19th to April 21st for Math, and April 26th and 27th for Science.

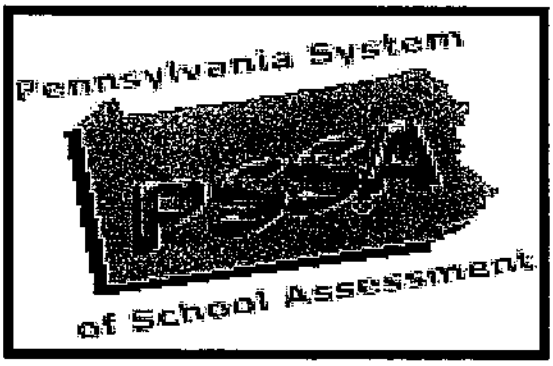
Our building theme this year for PSSAs is:

The Power of ONE

At Fairview teachers are using some cute phrases to help students remember important strategies to help them on the PA State Assessment. Posters with these phrases are posted all through the building to motivate students to use their strategies and do their best!

Below are the test taking strategies that you can reinforce at home as well:

1. "Jail" the Detail! - Highlight, underline, or circle the details in the questions. This helps you focus on exactly what the question is asking you to do.
2. Slash the Trash! - Read ALL of the answer choices! Eliminate any choice(s) that you know are not the correct answer. The choice is obviously "trash!"
3. Plug it in, Plug it in! - Once you have chosen your answer, plug it in and make sure that is makes sense! (this works really well with vocabulary questions).
4. Extra! Extra! Read All About It! - If the directions say read....READ! Pay close attention to signal words in the directions, such as explain, interpret, and compare.
5. Keep On Keeping On! - If you get to a couple of questions that you just don't know, don't give up! Keep trying your best!
6. If you SNOOZE, You will LOSE! - Don't leave a question unanswered. You will not have ANY chance of getting it right.
7. "UNPACK" the Question! -
   Underline key words
   Number the parts of the ?
   Plan how you will answer
   Answer using specific details
   Check off each part as you do it
   Keep up the great work



8. Check it Out! - When you have completed the test, go back and check your work!

- Two additional reminders for every day of school is to Be PHYSICALLY Ready and Be MENTALLY Prepared.

PSSA General Strategies for Students

- Right before you begin the PSSA, relax and think positive thoughts.
- Don't work too fast - take your time and think carefully.
- Remember, you can write whatever you want in your test booklet.
- Be sure that you fill in your answers on the answer sheet ("bubble sheet"), and do not write anything extra on that answer sheet,
- Reread all the answer choices before you select an answer
- watch out for trick answers - there may be a better answer choice.
- Watch out for words like never, always, all, and only
- try to put the question in your own words.
- In your test booklet, cross out any answer choices that you know are wrong.
- Answer all the questions, do not leave any blank
- Try not to waste too much time on a question - you can skip a question, and move on to the next one, but remember to go back later and answer questions you skipped.
- In your test book, if you skip a question, circle the number so you can go back to it later.
- If you skip a question, also skip that number on your answer sheet so you are still on the right question number
- if you answered a question but you are not sure about it or you guessed, circle that number in your test book so you can go back later to try again.
- When you answer a question, circle the answer choice in your test book and fill in the bubble or circle on the answer sheet - then when you are finished, you can go back to make sure you filled in the right circle for each question
- carefully fill in the circles on the answer sheet, so the circles are completely filled and dark.
- On the answer sheet, be careful not to fill in two circles for a single question.
- Do not make any extra pencil marks on your answer sheet - extra marks can be counted like wrong answers.
- When you're finished, go back and check your answers - answer any questions you skipped and check ones you weren't sure about.
- Don't be afraid to change your answer when you go back, if you find a better answer.

PSSA Test Tips for Parents:

To help your child prepare adequately for the PSSA tests, you can do several things to encourage your child to do his/her best.

- Make sure your child is in school during the testing sessions.
- Encourage your child to listen carefully to all of the directions and ask questions about anything that is not clear.
- See that your child gets an adequate amount of sleep before the test.
- Make sure that your child eats his/her usual breakfast on the day of the test.
- Encourage your child to do his/her best!

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Final Recommended Scale Score Ranges: English Language Arts

Grade	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced
3	600 – 904	905 – 999	1000 – 1142	1143 and above
4	600 – 886	887 – 999	1000 – 1106	1107 and above
5	600 – 892	893 – 999	1000 – 1138	1139 and above
6	600 – 874	875 – 999	1000 – 1114	1115 and above
7	600 – 844	845 – 999	1000 – 1129	1130 and above
8	600 – 885	886 – 999	1000 – 1129	1130 and above

Prepared by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and Data Recognition Corporation

Grade 3 Advanced

A student performing at the advanced level demonstrates thorough comprehension of literary and informational texts by referring explicitly to the text to recount and describe key ideas and details. The student thoroughly describes, explains, compares, and contrasts elements of literary texts, including theme and how characters' actions contribute to the sequence of events. The student skillfully describes, explains, compares, and contrasts informational texts using informational elements, including central message and text features. The student thoroughly explains point of view, compares key ideas, and makes connections within or between texts. The student thoroughly describes the relationship between a series of historic events, between scientific concepts, or between steps in technical procedures. The student uses information gained from illustrations, maps, and photographs in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text. The student uses context and knowledge of word structure consistently to determine meanings or shades of meaning of unknown words or phrases. The student consistently demonstrates understanding of literal and nonliteral meanings of words. The student writes opinion, informative/explanatory, and/or narrative responses using effective reasons, information, and details with thorough organization to convey ideas. The student demonstrates a skillful and consistent command of standard English grammar, usage, and mechanics to convey ideas for effect.

Grade 3 Proficient

A student performing at the proficient level demonstrates comprehension of literary and informational texts by referring explicitly to the text to recount and describe key ideas and details. The student describes, explains, compares, and contrasts elements of literary texts, including theme and how characters' actions contribute to the sequence of events. The student describes, explains, compares, and contrasts informational texts using informational elements, including central message and text features. The student explains point of view, compares key ideas, and makes connections within or between texts. The student describes the relationship between a series of historic events, between scientific concepts, or between steps in technical procedures. The student uses information gained from illustrations, maps, and photographs in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text. The student uses context and knowledge of word structure to determine meanings or shades of meaning of

unknown words or phrases. The student demonstrates understanding of literal and nonliteral meanings of words. The student writes opinion, informative/explanatory, and/or narrative responses using reasons, information, and details with clear organization to convey ideas. The student demonstrates a command of standard English grammar, usage, and mechanics to convey ideas for effect.

Grade 3 Basic

A student performing at the basic level demonstrates limited comprehension of literary and informational texts. The student insufficiently describes, explains, compares, and contrasts literary texts and demonstrates limited understanding of theme and characterization. The student insufficiently describes, explains, compares, and contrasts informational texts and demonstrates limited understanding of informational elements, including central message and text features. The student demonstrates partial understanding of point of view, key ideas, and connections within or between texts. The student inconsistently describes the relationship between a series of historic events, between scientific concepts, or between steps in technical procedures. The student inconsistently uses information gained from illustrations, maps, and photographs in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text. The student inconsistently uses context and knowledge of word structure to determine meanings or shades of meaning of unknown words or phrases. The student inconsistently demonstrates understanding of literal and nonliteral meanings of words. The student writes opinion, informative/explanatory, and/or narrative responses with inadequate content and weak organization. The student demonstrates a limited command of standard English grammar, usage, and mechanics to convey ideas.

Grade 3 Below Basic

A student performing at the below basic level demonstrates inadequate understanding of literary and informational texts. The student demonstrates minimal or no understanding of vocabulary, word meaning, and conventions of language. The student demonstrates minimal or no understanding of writing skills.

Grade 4 Advanced

A student performing at the advanced level demonstrates thorough comprehension of literary and informational texts by referring explicitly to the text to draw inferences, summarize, and/or explain. The student thoroughly describes, explains, compares, contrasts, and/or determines literary and/or informational elements, using accurate details from the text. The student skillfully compares and contrasts the point of view in different texts and the treatment of theme in literary texts. The student thoroughly explains events, procedures, ideas, steps, or concepts in a text, including what happened and why based on information from the text. The student thoroughly compares and contrasts firsthand and secondhand accounts of the same event or topic, integrates information from texts, interprets text features, and describes overall structure within and/or between informational texts. The student consistently uses context and word structure to determine meanings of words or phrases. The student consistently demonstrates understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. The student writes opinion, informative/explanatory, and/or narrative responses using effective reasons, relevant facts/ideas, precise word choice, and thorough organization to convey meaning. The student writes a text-dependent analysis essay that responds to a text or texts and demonstrates an organized and thorough analysis that cites substantial relevant evidence to support its intended purpose. The student demonstrates a skillful and consistent command of standard English grammar, usage, and mechanics to convey ideas precisely and for effect.

Grade 4 Proficient

A student performing at the proficient level demonstrates comprehension of literary and informational texts by referring explicitly to the text to draw inferences, summarize, and/or explain. The student describes, explains, compares, contrasts, and/or determines literary and/or informational elements, using details from the text. The student compares and contrasts the point of view in different texts and the treatment of theme in literary texts. The student explains events, procedures, ideas, steps, or concepts in a text, including what happened and why based on information from the text. The student compares and contrasts firsthand and secondhand accounts of the same event or topic, integrates information from texts, interprets text features, and describes overall structure within and/or between informational texts. The student uses context and word structure to determine meanings of words or

phrases. The student demonstrates understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. The student writes opinion, informative/explanatory, and/or narrative responses using reasons, relevant facts/ideas, clear word choice, and appropriate organization to convey meaning. The student writes a text-dependent analysis essay that responds to a text or texts and demonstrates an organized analysis that cites textual evidence to support its intended purpose. The student demonstrates a command of standard English grammar, usage, and mechanics to convey ideas precisely and for effect.

Grade 4 Basic

A student performing at the basic level demonstrates limited comprehension of literary and informational texts. The student insufficiently describes, explains, compares, contrasts, and/or determines literary and/or informational elements. The student insufficiently compares and contrasts the point of view or theme in different texts. The student inconsistently explains events, procedures, ideas, steps, or concepts in a text, including what happened and why based on information from the text. The student insufficiently compares and contrasts firsthand and secondhand accounts of the same event or topic, integrates information from texts, interprets text features, and describes overall structure within and/or between informational texts. The student inconsistently uses context and word structure to determine meanings of words or phrases. The student inconsistently demonstrates understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. The student writes opinion, informative/explanatory, and/or narrative responses with inadequate content and weak organization. The student writes a text-dependent analysis essay that responds to a text or texts and demonstrates a weak analysis that uses inadequate evidence to support its intended purpose. The student demonstrates a limited command of standard English grammar, usage, and mechanics.

Grade 4 Below Basic

A student performing at the below basic level demonstrates inadequate understanding of literary and informational texts. The student demonstrates minimal or no understanding of vocabulary, word meaning, and conventions of language. The student demonstrates minimal or no understanding of writing skills.

Grade 5 Advanced

A student performing at the advanced level demonstrates thorough comprehension of literary and informational texts by using accurate textual evidence to draw inferences; make generalizations; and summarize, explain, and/or interpret a text. The student thoroughly describes, compares, contrasts, and interprets two or more literary and/or informational elements such as main ideas, characters, settings, events, ideas, and the relationships and interactions between them. The student demonstrates thorough comprehension of, between, and/or among texts through comparisons of overall structure, text features, points of view, key ideas, and relevant details. The student consistently uses context, word structure, and word relationships to determine meanings of words or phrases and interprets figurative language and nuances of word meanings. The student writes opinion, informative/explanatory, and/or narrative responses with a comprehensive awareness of purpose and/or audience, using thorough organizational techniques or structure, pertinent information, relevant facts/ideas, and precise language to convey meaning. The student writes a text-dependent analysis essay that responds to a text or texts and demonstrates an organized and thorough analysis that cites substantial relevant evidence to support its intended purpose. The student demonstrates a skillful and consistent command of standard English grammar, usage, and mechanics to convey ideas precisely and for effect.

Grade 5 Proficient

A student performing at the proficient level demonstrates comprehension of literary and informational texts by using textual evidence to draw inferences; make generalizations; and summarize, explain, and/or interpret a text. The student describes, compares, contrasts, and interprets two or more literary and/or informational elements such as main ideas, characters, settings, events, ideas, and the relationships and interactions between them. The student demonstrates comprehension of, between, and/or among texts through comparisons of overall structure, text features, points of view, key ideas, and relevant details. The student uses context, word structure, and word relationships to determine meanings of words or phrases and interprets figurative language and nuances of word meanings. The student writes opinion, informative/explanatory, and/or narrative responses with an awareness of purpose and/or audience, using organizational techniques or structure, pertinent information, relevant facts/ideas, and clear language to convey meaning. The student writes a text-dependent analysis essay

that responds to a text or texts and demonstrates an organized analysis that cites textual evidence to support its intended purpose. The student demonstrates a command of standard English grammar, usage, and mechanics to convey ideas precisely and for effect.

Grade 5 Basic

A student performing at the basic level demonstrates limited comprehension of literary and informational texts. The student insufficiently describes, compares, contrasts, and interprets two or more literary and/or informational elements. The student demonstrates limited comprehension of text through vague comparisons of overall structure, text features, points of view, and key ideas. The student inconsistently uses context, word structure, and word relationships to determine meanings of words or phrases and insufficiently interprets figurative language and nuances of word meanings. The student writes opinion, informative/explanatory, and/or narrative responses with some awareness of purpose and/or audience, insufficient organization, limited word choice, and inadequate detail. The student writes a text-dependent analysis essay that responds to a text or texts and demonstrates a weak analysis that uses inadequate evidence to support its intended purpose. The student demonstrates a limited command of standard English grammar, usage, and mechanics.

Grade 5 Below Basic

A student performing at the below basic level demonstrates inadequate understanding of literary and informational texts. The student demonstrates minimal or no understanding of vocabulary, word meaning, and conventions of language. The student demonstrates minimal or no understanding of writing skills.

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Final Recommended Scale Score Ranges: Mathematics

Grade	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced
3	600 – 922	923 – 999	1000 – 1109	1110 and above
4	600 – 907	908 – 999	1000 – 1106	1107 and above
5	600 – 900	901 – 999	1000 – 1112	1113 and above
6	600 – 896	897 – 999	1000 – 1104	1105 and above
7	600 – 903	904 – 999	1000 – 1108	1109 and above
8	600 – 905	906 – 999	1000 – 1107	1108 and above

Pennsylvania Mathematics Performance Level Descriptors

Grade 3 Advanced

A third-grade student performing at the Advanced Level solves complex problems and demonstrates in-depth understanding of the skills, concepts, and procedures in the five Pennsylvania Mathematics Reporting Categories.

In addition to the skills demonstrated by students performing at the Basic and Proficient Levels, students performing at this level demonstrate these abilities by using the four operations to represent and solve multistep word problems. Students represent fractions on a number line, generate equivalent fractions, and express whole numbers as fractions. Students explain arithmetic patterns, use symbols to represent unknown quantities, and solve for missing values in multiplication and division computations. They solve problems using arithmetic properties and the order of operations. Students explain that polygons can be categorized by common attributes. Students multiply side lengths of rectangles to solve area. Students calculate elapsed time, make change, and solve problems using units of measure and information presented in data displays. Students solve real-world problems involving perimeters.

Grade 3 Proficient

A third-grade student performing at the Proficient Level solves practical and real-world problems.

In addition to the skills demonstrated by students performing at the Basic Level, students performing at this level demonstrate these abilities by using place-value skills to add and subtract whole numbers and by multiplying whole numbers through 10×10 and single-digit whole numbers by two-digit multiples of 10. Students determine products and whole-number quotients to solve problems and assess the reasonableness of answers. They identify fractions on a number line, compare fractions with like denominators, and express whole numbers as fractions with a denominator of 1. They create or match a story to numbers and mathematical symbols and identify arithmetic patterns. Students explain shared attributes of polygons. They calculate elapsed time within the same hour and compare and round amounts of money. Students measure and estimate mass, length, and liquid volume of objects. Students organize, display, and translate information in data displays to solve one-step problems. Students calculate perimeters of polygons.

Pennsylvania Mathematics Performance Level Descriptors

Grade 3 Basic

A third-grade student performing at the Basic Level solves simple or routine problems by applying skills and procedures in the five Pennsylvania Mathematics Reporting Categories.

Students performing at this level demonstrate these abilities by using place-value skills to round, order, and add and subtract whole numbers without regrouping. Students calculate products and whole-number quotients (basic facts). They identify fractions as equal parts of a whole or set. Students match mathematical equations to real-world situations. They calculate areas of polygons by counting square units and identify rhombi, rectangles, and squares. Students read an analog clock, measure lengths, and calculate amounts of money. They read and interpret information presented in data displays.

Grade 3 Below Basic

Students performing at this level demonstrate a partial and selective understanding of place-value when performing arithmetic. They show partial understanding of fractions as numbers. Students understand the relationship between multiplication and division in limited and restricting ways and demonstrate difficulty solving problems involving the four operations. They show understanding of a limited variety of patterns. Students may or may not apply basic geometric concepts. They have difficulty solving problems involving measurement (time, money, liquid volume, mass, length). Students read some types of data but do not consistently represent and interpret data. They show partial understanding of the concepts of area and perimeter.

Grade 4 Advanced

A fourth-grade student performing at the Advanced Level solves complex problems and demonstrates in-depth understanding of the skills, concepts, and procedures in the five Pennsylvania Mathematics Reporting Categories.

In addition to the skills demonstrated by students performing at the Basic and Proficient Levels, students performing at this level demonstrate these abilities by interpreting remainders while performing computations and estimations and by determining the relationship between the values of digits in whole numbers. They add and subtract mixed numbers and add fractions having denominators of 10 and 100 in the same problem. Students solve equations with a symbol representing an unknown quantity, determine prime or composite numbers, and interpret problems to find multiples or factors of a number. Students identify features that are not explicit in patterns. They solve problems to find unknown angles. Students solve problems by analyzing information from line plots.

Grade 4 Proficient

A fourth-grade student performing at the Proficient Level solves practical and real-world problems.

In addition to the skills demonstrated by students performing at the Basic Level, students performing at this level demonstrate these abilities by comparing whole numbers using the four operations to perform computations and by estimating the answers to addition, subtraction, and multiplication problems. They generate equivalent fractions to represent and compare fractions, mixed numbers, and decimals, and multiply whole numbers by fractions. Students use information from a line plot to add and subtract fractions. They find factors and factor pairs of whole numbers and define prime and composite numbers. Students use numbers and symbols to interpret equations and expressions. They create, complete, and extend patterns and determine or apply rules to find missing elements in function tables. Students draw and classify figures based on geometric properties, measure angles, and solve problems using area and perimeter formulas. Students draw and identify lines of symmetry. They tell time, complete single-step conversions from a larger unit to a smaller unit, and solve problems involving measurement units. They create line plots with fractional units and translate information between different data displays.

Pennsylvania Mathematics Performance Level Descriptors

Grade 4 Basic

A fourth-grade student performing at the Basic Level solves simple or routine problems by applying skills and procedures in the five Pennsylvania Mathematics Reporting Categories.

Students performing at this level demonstrate these abilities by comparing and expressing whole numbers in different forms. They use the four operations to perform single-step computations and to round numbers. Students compare, add, and subtract fractions with common denominators and generate equivalent fractions. They identify multiples, expressions and equations, and rules for simple patterns. They measure right angles with a protractor and identify and draw parallel line segments, perpendicular line segments, and basic geometric figures. Students tell time as the number of minutes after the hour, identify relative measurements, and match line plots to given data.

Grade 4 Below Basic

Students performing at this level have a partial and selective place-value understanding for whole numbers. They inadequately use place-value understanding and properties of operations. Students show limited understanding of fraction equivalence and ordering. Students demonstrate difficulty with decimal notation with fractions. They use the four operations in selective and incomplete ways. Students are developing familiarity with factors and multiples. They show an understanding of limited types of patterns. Students apply geometric concepts to familiar objects, but have difficulty in using general principles. They have difficulty solving problems involving measurement and conversions. Students have limited success in representing and interpreting data.

Pennsylvania Mathematics Performance Level Descriptors

Grade 5 Advanced

A fifth-grade student performing at the Advanced Level solves complex problems and demonstrates in-depth understanding of the skills, concepts, and procedures in the five Pennsylvania Mathematics Reporting Categories.

In addition to the skills demonstrated by students performing at the Basic and Proficient Levels, students performing at this level demonstrate these abilities by explaining patterns of decimal point placement when a decimal is multiplied or divided by a power of 10. They solve multistep word problems using multidigit whole numbers, decimals, fractions, and mixed numbers. They solve problems involving computation of fractions shown on line plots. Students calculate the volume of solid figures composed of two non-overlapping right rectangular prisms.

Grade 5 Proficient

A fifth-grade student performing at the Proficient Level solves practical and real-world problems.

In addition to the skills demonstrated by students performing at the Basic Level, students performing at this level demonstrate knowledge of place-value concepts of decimals, including writing, comparing, and rounding decimals. Students use whole-number exponents to denote powers of 10. They solve single-step word problems using multidigit whole numbers, decimals, fractions, and mixed numbers. Students use multiple grouping symbols to complete calculations, and evaluate expressions by applying the order of operations. Students generate, extend, analyze, and determine relationships between corresponding terms of two patterns. Students plot, describe, and interpret ordered pairs in quadrant I to solve real-world problems. They categorize two-dimensional figures in a hierarchy based on properties. Students convert different-size units within a given measurement system to solve multistep problems. Students represent and interpret data shown in various displays to solve real-world problems. They calculate the volume of right rectangular prisms with whole-number edge lengths.

Pennsylvania Mathematics Performance Level Descriptors

Grade 5 Basic

A fifth-grade student performing at the Basic Level solves simple or routine problems by applying skills and procedures in the five Pennsylvania Mathematics Reporting Categories.

Students performing at this level demonstrate these abilities by reading decimals using base-ten numerals, word form, and expanded form. Students use multidigit whole numbers and decimals to perform single-step computations. They add, subtract, and multiply fractions with unlike denominators. Students interpret numerical expressions by using grouping symbols in the order of operations. Students extend numerical patterns and determine relationships between corresponding terms of two single-operation patterns. Students identify parts of a coordinate grid. They convert like measurement units within a given measurement system and interpret data shown in data displays.

Grade 5 Below Basic

Students performing at this level have a limited and selective understanding of the place-value system of whole numbers and decimals. They perform operations with limited whole numbers and decimals. Students show an understanding of fraction equivalence and operations using fractions with explicit visual models. Students write and interpret selected numerical expressions. They show an understanding of patterns whose variations are limited. Students graph selected points on a coordinate grid in one dimension at a time. They classify figures based on properties with limited generalization. Students have difficulty solving problems involving measurement and conversions. They represent and interpret selected types of data. Students show partial understanding of concepts of volume.

Pennsylvania Department of Education
Grade 4 Science Performance Level Descriptors

Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced
A fourth-grade student performing at Below Basic Level demonstrates a limited conceptual understanding of science content and an ineffective application of processes in the four Pennsylvania Science Reporting Categories.	A fourth-grade student performing at the Basic Level demonstrates partial conceptual understanding of science content and the application of processes in the four Pennsylvania Science Reporting Categories. A student performing at the Basic Level	A fourth-grade student performing at the Proficient Level demonstrates a general conceptual understanding of science content and the application of processes in the four Pennsylvania Science Reporting Categories. A student performing at the Proficient Level	A fourth-grade student performing at the Advanced Level demonstrates a thorough conceptual understanding of science content and the application of processes in the four Pennsylvania Science Reporting Categories. A student performing at the Advanced Level
	A. conducts simple investigations following explicit directions; identifies the processes and tools of science; recognizes changes to natural and human-made systems; recognizes models; and identifies patterns.	A. conducts simple investigations and makes measurements; applies the processes of science; observes, records, and describes changes to systems; uses models; distinguishes between scientific fact and opinion; and connects changes to results.	A. designs simple investigations based on testable questions; utilizes appropriate tools of science; categorizes systems; uses models in explanations; compares patterns of change in organisms and objects; and states conclusions.
	B. recognizes the needs of organisms; describes variations in populations; distinguishes between living and nonliving; identifies environmental changes; and describes human uses of the environment.	B. describes structure, function, and needs of organisms; explains the impact of adaptations; identifies basic genetic characteristics; describes ecosystem components and interactions; and identifies causes of environmental changes.	B. compares the structure, function, and needs of organisms; relates adaptations to survival; describes genetic variations; compares components of ecological systems; predicts environmental changes; and describes basic competition for resources.
	C. uses basic physical properties to describe matter; identifies forms of energy; identifies different forces; and describes position and motion of objects.	C. compares multiple physical properties of matter; describes energy forms and flow through a system; and describes relative motion and position of objects and forces causing changes in motion of objects.	C. categorizes matter using multiple characteristics and physical properties; illustrates energy flow and conversions through systems; and explains changes in motion of objects caused by forces.
	D. names major Earth features; identifies natural products and resources; recognizes water systems; describes changes in weather; and connects diurnal and seasonal changes to Earth movements.	D. describes the formation of Earth features; describes major types of resources and patterns of use; identifies soil components; identifies phase changes of water and compares water systems; identifies components of weather; and describes Earth, Sun, and Moon motions.	D. compares the formation of Earth features and structures; contrasts types and uses of resources; describes the composition of soil; explains the water cycle and the role of water systems; uses patterns and instruments to predict weather; and explains time through Earth, Sun, and Moon motions.

PSSA TEXT-DEPENDENT ANALYSIS SCORING GUIDELINES

Score Point	Description	Score Point	Description
4	• Effectively addresses all parts of the task demonstrating in-depth analytic understanding of the text(s) • Effective introduction, development, and conclusion identifying an opinion, topic, or controlling idea related to the text(s) • Strong organizational structure that effectively supports the focus and ideas • Thorough analysis of explicit and implicit meanings from text(s) to effectively support claims, opinions, ideas and inferences • Substantial, accurate, and direct reference to the text(s) using relevant key details, examples, quotes, facts, and/or definitions • Substantial reference to the main idea(s) and relevant key details of the text(s) to support the writer's purpose • Skillful use of transitions to link ideas • Effective use of precise language and domain-specific vocabulary drawn from the text(s) to explain the topic and/or to convey experiences/events • Few errors, if any, are present in sentence formation, grammar, usage, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation; errors present do not interfere with meaning	2	• Inconsistently addresses some parts of the task demonstrating partial analytic understanding of the text(s) • Weak introduction, development, and/or conclusion identifying an opinion, topic, or controlling idea somewhat related to the text(s) • Weak organizational structure that inconsistently supports the focus and ideas • Weak or inconsistent analysis of explicit and/or implicit meanings from text(s) that somewhat supports claims, opinions, ideas, and inferences • Vague reference to the text(s) using some details, examples, quotes, facts, and/or definitions • Weak reference to the main idea(s) and relevant details of the text(s) to support the writer's purpose • Inconsistent use of transitions to link ideas • Inconsistent use of precise language and domain-specific vocabulary drawn from the text(s) to explain the topic and/or to convey experiences/events • Errors may be present in sentence formation, grammar, usage, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation; errors present may interfere with meaning
3	• Adequately addresses all parts of the task demonstrating sufficient analytic understanding of the text(s) • Clear introduction, development, and conclusion identifying an opinion, topic, or controlling idea related to the text(s) • Appropriate organizational structure that adequately supports the focus and ideas • Clear analysis of explicit and implicit meanings from text(s) to support claims, opinions, ideas, and inferences • Sufficient, accurate, and direct reference to the text(s) using relevant details, examples, quotes, facts, and/or definitions • Sufficient reference to the main idea(s) and relevant key details of the text(s) to support the writer's purpose • Appropriate use of transitions to link ideas • Appropriate use of precise language and domain-specific vocabulary drawn from the text(s) to explain the topic and/or to convey experiences/events • Some errors may be present in sentence formation, grammar, usage, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation; errors present seldom interfere with meaning	1	• Minimally addresses part(s) of the task demonstrating inadequate analytic understanding of the text(s) • Minimal evidence of an introduction, development, and/or conclusion • Minimal evidence of an organizational structure • Insufficient or no analysis of the text(s); may or may not support claims, opinions, ideas, and inferences • Insufficient reference to the text(s) using few details, examples, quotes, facts, and/or definitions • Minimal reference to the main idea(s) and/or relevant details of the text(s) • Few, if any, transitions to link ideas • Little or no use of precise language or domain-specific vocabulary drawn from the text(s) • Many errors may be present in sentence formation, grammar, usage, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation; errors present often interfere with meaning