

Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA)

Frequently Asked Questions

Who takes the PSSA tests?

Students in grades 3-8 are assessed in Mathematics. Grades 4 and 8 are assessed in Science. New this year, an English Language Arts (ELA) assessment will replace the Reading and Writing in grades 3-8.

What does the PSSA measure?

The PSSA is a standards-based, criterion-referenced assessment used to measure a student's attainment of the academic standards while also determining the degree to which school programs enable students to attain proficiency of the standards. The assessment measures the student mastery of the grade level content standards aligned to each subject.

How long does the PSSA take to administer?

Each section of the PSSA is approximately 60 minutes in length. While 55 minutes is the suggested time for administration, students may receive extended time, if necessary, to complete the assessment.

How does the district use the results from the PSSA?

Schools use the PSSA results, along with other data, to determine areas of strength and needs for individual students. The analysis informs the attainment of mastery of state standards, planning of interventions for struggling students, enrichment opportunities, and progress monitoring of growth in achievement. Additionally, the PSSA results are used to monitor curriculum alignment and instructional practices.

How is the PSSA reported and provided to parents/guardians?

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) provides individual scores and reports to parents/guardians in the fall, following the spring administration of the assessments. These reports provide overall scaled scores and proficiency levels, as well as scores for each content strand.