HUNTINGDON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Standing Stone Elementary

10 29th Street, Huntingdon, PA 16652
(814) 643-0771

Mr. John Miller, Principal

Ms. Anna Boughner, Assistant Principal

Families,

The fourth marking period has arrived and with it comes our annual Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) testing. This letter aims to provide you with the testing dates and strategies to help your students during the testing window.

Testing for 3rd, 4th, and 5th-grade students will occur over two weeks during the morning and will be as follows:

- English Language Arts - **April 23rd, 24th, and 25th**
- Math - **April 28th and 29th**
- Science - (grade 5 only) - **April 30th**

During these dates, it will be important for students to be on time and in the building before 8:55 AM. Testing will begin promptly after we have taken attendance. Students must not be scheduled for early dismissals on these dates. If they are scheduled to leave during a testing window, we can not have them begin their tests. Please try to schedule appointments only toward the end of the day.

How to help your student be successful:

- Remind students that they should give their best effort. One test does not define them as a person, but they should give their best effort.
- Students should eat breakfast each morning. They are welcome to eat in the cafeteria. Breakfast is free and we begin serving at 8:30 AM.
- Get students to bed early. It is important to get a good night's rest so they are prepared and ready to work when they arrive.

John Miller
Principal
Standing Stone Elementary
(814) 643-0771 ext. 4207

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The PSSAs are an important benchmark for school performance. The information gathered from the tests plays an important part in curriculum planning and professional learning and is connected to the teacher and school evaluation process. Students should participate in the exams and do their best, as the results provide one measure used in the scheduling and instructional decision-making process.

The district is subject to a federal requirement to have 95 percent or more of students participate. Student opt-outs have a negative impact on student participation rate for district and school federal/state accountability measures. *The ONLY option to not participate is limited to a religious opt-out.* ***Section 4.4 of Title 22, Chapter 4 provides for the rights of any parent or guardian to excuse his or her child from the state assessment if, upon inspection of the testing materials, they find the assessment to be in conflict with their religious beliefs. This is the only basis for a parent or guardian to excuse his or her child from the statewide assessments.***

If you feel you qualify for a religious opt-out please follow these procedures:

1. Parent/Guardian schedules the secure assessment review (to be held at the student's school) at a time convenient for both parties.
    a. The building principal must be present with the Parent/Guardian at all times during the review of secure test materials.
    b. Parent/Guardian must surrender any electronic device(s) over to the building principal (to be held until secure review has been completed).
    c. Parent/Guardian may not take any notes during the secure review.
    d. Parent/Guardian reviews the assessment (for each content area considering an opt-out). To opt out of all three PSSAs and/or KEYSTONEs, all three content area assessments must be reviewed.
    e. Parent/Guardian signs the Pennsylvania Department of Education Parent Confidentiality Agreement upon review completion.
2. Parent/Guardian if after review find the assessment to conflict with their religious beliefs they will document religious objection within a letter addressed to the superintendent, Mrs. Jennifer Mitchell, and submit it to the building principal for approval <u>within at least two weeks prior to the scheduled testing window</u>.
3. The Superintendent may deny the Parent/Guardian request. In cases of any disapproval, Mrs. Mitchell will contact Parent/Guardian providing notification of the determination.

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Pennsylvania
Department of Education

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.

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 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(s) 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 . . .

- Have notes in your possession during the test.
- Have any unapproved electronic devices (cell phones, smartphones, smartwatches, etc.) in your possession during the test. Note, you may have approved calculators, if applicable, during the test.
- Share a calculator with others.
- Use the bubbles in the answer booklet to either eliminate possible incorrect answers or possible correct answers by making marks in multiple bubbles and erasing. Mark only the bubble for the correct answer(s) you have chosen.
- Talk with others about questions on the test during or after the test. (Students should be assured that they may discuss the testing process or issues of concern with their parents/guardians.)
- 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.
- Use social media to post information about the test and/or test items.