

**Huntingdon Area School District**  
**Southside Elementary School**

Gregory Shingle  
Principal & Federal Program Coordinator  
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Phone: 814-627-1100

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April 1, 2025

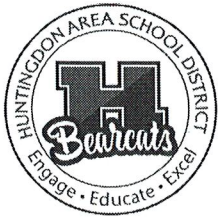
Dear Parents and Guardians,

Your son or daughter will be taking the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) tests between April 22 and April 29, 2025. The purpose of these tests is to assess how learners are progressing toward proficiency in meeting state standards for college and career readiness. The PSSAs will assess English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, and Science. The PSSAs are an important benchmark for school performance. The information gathered from the tests play an important part in curriculum planning, professional learning and are connected to the teacher and school evaluation process. It is important for students to participate in the exams, and do their best, as the results provide one measure that is used in the scheduling and instructional decision-making process for students.

The district is subject to a federal requirement to have 95 percent or more of the 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 PSSA's and/or KEYSTONES's, 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 be in conflict with their religious beliefs they will document religious objection within a letter addressed to the superintendent, Mrs. Jennifer Mitchell, and submits to the building principal for approval within at least two weeks prior to scheduled testing window.



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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.

It is important for your son or daughter to get plenty of rest the evening before the test and a good breakfast the morning of the test. The ELA and Mathematics tests are administered to Grades 3, 4, and 5. **The ELA test will take place on April 22, 23 and 24 (3 sections). The Mathematics test will be administered on April 28 and 29 (2 sections). The Science test, for Grade 5 only, is scheduled for April 30 (2 sections).** All testing sections will be administered in the morning, with a modified schedule for the day to follow. **Exam make-ups will take place as needed within days after the originally scheduled dates.**

Please note that in light of increased state accountability measures, the school district will be enforcing measures that ensure test security. Learners will indicate on the test that they are aware of and will abide by the Code of Conduct for Test Takers. Learners will not be permitted to bring electronic devices or purses and bags to the testing rooms. Learners will be reminded of this upon the commencement of the testing period. In addition, the district may need to contact guardians if there is a violation of this policy. Discipline, including monetary damages, may be administered if there are breaches in test security. Enclosed with this letter is information regarding PSSA FAQs, electronic device safeguards, and the code of conduct.

Please wish your learners good luck on the exams, and if you have questions, please do not hesitate to call the school office at (814)-627-1100. As always, we strive to provide the best possible education for your learners, and we could not do this without your continued support.

Sincerely,

Mr. Gregory A. Shingle

Southside Elementary School Principal