

## Did You Know?

### 2018 Testing Reduction

Pennsylvania plans to reduce the ELA 3-8 PSSA assessment from four to three sections. This will take effect with PSSA testing in 2018.

The mode-specific writing prompt has been removed and the number of language multiple choice items has been reduced. PDE will post the revised ELA test blueprint when finalized.

To assist districts in meeting the mode-specific writing standards, PDE is currently working on performance-based writing assessment resources to add to the SAS portal.

### Testing Information

In depth technical information is available that describes the annual test development, scoring, and equating process for the PSSAs, including a description of the reporting category scores and strength profiles, and how they may be used. The 2016 PSSA Technical Report is the most recent in this series and is available here:

<http://www.education.pa.gov/Documents/K-12/Assessment%20and%20Accountability/PSSA/Technical%20Reports/2016%20PSSA%20Technical%20Report.pdf>

### 2018 Item Samplers

Keystone and PSSA Item Samplers will be posted by the end of September.

## Question & Answer

**Q:** Our recent scores for the 7<sup>th</sup> grade TDA appear lower than any other grade level. We have worked on TDA instruction and are not sure where to turn at this point. Any ideas?

**A:** We understand your concern that one of your grades performed lower than any other grade level on a PSSA question. Assessment and instruction go hand-in-hand, so we examined the assessment first. We found that the 7<sup>th</sup> grade TDA field test data was similar to the 2017 operational data which confirmed the validity of the prompt. The item was difficult, however, with statistical equating, it did not affect students' overall performance level. Although we cannot release the operational passage and prompt, you might want to examine CC.1.2.7.E and CC.1.4.7.S to help you determine if instructional gaps exist that may have contributed to your students' performance. Do not feel discouraged or stuck. This is really hard work and it takes time for these deep teaching and learning changes to become evident in a summative assessment. Formative assessment is where you will see movement first. Embedding TDA throughout the curriculum will allow for instructional and learning changes to occur over time. It is critical to consider teaching analysis in consistent increments throughout the year -- building stamina for close reading and responding.

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Our monthly ELA Assessment eBlast will focus on providing the following: insight around standardized assessment, professional learning for ELA classroom assessment, professional opportunities, and a question/answer section.

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The Pennsylvania Core Standards-aligned Assessment Anchors and Eligible Content for ELA were approved by the State Board of Education in September 2013. The Assessment Anchors clarify what is expected across each grade span and focus the content of the standards into what is assessable on a large-scale test. The Assessment Anchor documents also serve to communicate Eligible content, also called assessment limits, or the range of knowledge and skills from which the PSSA would be designed.

[ELA AA & EC](#)

## Professional Learning

To continue the discussion on formative assessment mentioned above, please refer to, *Formative Assessment: Examples of Practice*, located on pages 2-11 below.

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