



Five Key Points Parents Should Know About the 2015 PSSA

1. This past spring a new PSSA was administered in Pennsylvania's classrooms, grades 3 through 8, in English Language Arts and Mathematics. This assessment was the first PSSA to be fully-aligned to the more rigorous PA Core Standards, which the State Board of Education adopted in fall 2013. The PA Core Standards are intended to better prepare commonwealth students for college and career readiness when they graduate.
2. A decline in your student's performance level does not indicate that he/she is learning less. Transitions take time, including curriculum development and resources, and the 2014-15 school year was only year one of the new assessment. It is not useful to directly compare students' scores on the new assessment to students' scores from previous assessments because they are aligned to different standards. The results on the 2015 test are a snapshot in time and will set a benchmark for future academic growth.
3. The process of developing new standards and scaling scores was undertaken with thoroughness and thoughtfulness by a committee of Pennsylvania educators. As students and teachers become more familiar with the new standards, and more resources are directed at transitioning to the new standards, students will experience steady academic growth.
4. Results on standardized tests are not the sole indicator of student achievement. Students have different strengths and flourish in different ways. It is important to evaluate students in a holistic manner, using a variety of performance measures.
5. You can help your child(ren) grow academically by reviewing their PSSA results with them and by continuing to encourage them to do their best in school.