

Fleetwood Area School District Report
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Assessment of Student Achievement

The use of state and national assessments of student achievement to measure students' progress and to evaluate both individual school and school district performance has increased significantly since the passage of the federal law commonly known as *No Child Left Behind*. To comply with the law, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) administers the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) to all students statewide. Reading and math skills are assessed in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 11. Writing skills are assessed in grades 5, 8, and 11 while science skills are assessed in grades 4, 8, and 11.

These assessments help school districts and the state and federal government determine if students are making progress relative to the state standards. They indicate how students within a school or school district are progressing from year to year. The PSSA, as reflected in its name (Pennsylvania System of School Assessment), was designed to provide information on how schools are meeting the needs of their students. Needy schools are identified and further training of staff and revision of the curriculum can be completed to help students master the standards.

It is important to note that these assessments rely on one sample of a student's work. They are therefore, less reliable in assessing individual student achievement than assessments that take multiple and different measures. For example, if the student is feeling ill while taking the PSSA, did not get much sleep prior to the test, or is experiencing some type of problem, the results are less reliable. This is why determination of whether a student has achieved the state standards is not to be based solely on the results of the PSSA.

Our PSSA results for 2010 demonstrate that district-wide our students are performing at or above the state average. They scored within or above the average range for students statewide on each of the tests at each grade level. Our students consistently outperformed their peers in the state on the writing and science assessments.

As part of our continuing effort to improve student achievement we have implemented a number of new supports, made changes to our curriculum, and increased instructional time in reading and math. Through the use of specialized software, we are completing a detailed alignment of our curriculum with PSSA anchors and state standards. At the middle school, we have restructured the fifth grade schedule to provide more instructional time in reading and math. Students are also grouped based on their skill level to provide additional instruction and remediation when needed. In addition, at-risk students receive additional support through scheduled study skills classes in place of a world language class. At the high school, we are now requiring seniors who have not reached proficiency on the PSSA to retest and complete remedial work in mathematics.

In addition, we are using the increasingly detailed analyses of PSSA results, now provided by PDE, to analyze our curriculum and instruction.

Starting at the end of this school year, the Pennsylvania State Board of Education will implement a new set of tests that are designed to measure a student's mastery of skills learned in a specific course. These tests, referred to as the Keystone Exams, will be administered at the end of specific secondary courses in Mathematics, English, Science, and Social Studies. Students completing Algebra 1, Biology, and Literature courses this year will be required to take the new exam. Students in the graduating classes of 2015 (this year's 8th grade class) and 2016 must demonstrate proficiency in English Composition, Literature, Algebra I, and Biology. Students in the graduating class of 2017 and beyond will be required to demonstrate proficiency in six of ten content areas as follows:

- Both English Composition and Literature;
- Two of three Mathematics (Algebra 1, Algebra II, or Geometry);
- One of two Sciences (Biology or Chemistry); and
- One of three Social Studies (American history, Civics and Government, or World History).

Students who fail the exam on two occasions will be permitted to complete a project in order to raise their score to a passing level.

PDE plans to apply to the US Department of Education to replace the current 11th grade PSSA test with the Keystone Exams. This plan will address the concern that the 11th grade PSSA Test requires students to have mastery of skills (particularly in math) that they learned in a class a year or more prior to taking the exam.

We have begun to examine our Algebra 1, Biology, and Literature courses to ensure that they are aligned with the skills that will be assessed on the Keystone Exam.

Upcoming Events in the Fleetwood Area School District

December 9 – High School Winter Concert; 7:00 p.m.

December 14 – Middle School Advanced Winter Concert; 7:00 p.m.

December 23 – Early Dismissal

December 24 – December 31 – No School

School Resumes January 3rd

The Board of School Directors will meet on December 7th at 7:00 p.m. The business meeting will be held immediately following the re-organization meeting.