

Lower Merion School District

301 East Montgomery Ave.

Ardmore, PA 19003-3399

Phone: 610-645-1903 ♦ www.lmsd.org



August, 2019

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Although the District's standardized tests are included in this year's District calendar, I would like to give you a concise picture of our testing program for easy reference. The schedule for 2019-20 standardized testing is now being posted on our website for easy and convenient reference.

- *Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA)*
We will administer the Mathematics and English Language Arts tests in Grades 3 through 8, and the Science test in Grades 4 and 8. Specific information regarding the PSSA tests will be sent to parents prior to each of the tests.
- *Keystone Exams*
Keystone Exams are end-of-year assessments that will be administered in three areas: Algebra 1, Biology and Literature. Any student enrolled in these three courses during the 2019-20 school year will be required to participate in the Keystone Exams. Regardless of when a student test, it is the 11th grade year that the results will be utilized to calculate Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) legislation.
- *English Language Arts*
Elementary students are given a variety of literacy assessments throughout the year to identify reading levels, skills and strategies they need to learn. The tests measure comprehension, fluency and word knowledge/phonics skills. Tests used to assess students are: *Degrees of Reading Power (DRP)* to test comprehension; *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)* to test reading fluency; *Reading Records* are used for comprehension and fluency; *Phonics and Decoding Inventory* is to determine a snapshot of each student's word knowledge. Prompt-based *District Writing Assessments* are also given to determine strengths and areas of need to inform writing instruction.
- *Math Placement Testing*
Students will be assessed to measure how well they can utilize higher-level thinking skills to analyze mathematical concepts, make generalizations and compare quantities mathematically. Additionally, we will measure how students integrate and apply math concepts to solve problems and compute or estimate solutions.

In addition to giving us a clearer picture of the strengths and needs of individual children, the results of these assessments will help us measure our progress in meeting instructional and curriculum goals. Increasingly, test scores are being used to assess schools and are linked to various measures related to educational progress. To promote the best educational program, it is our goal to have one standardized test battery per year, along with other assessments to measure student progress. In addition to these standardized tests, we will be assessing student progress with curriculum-based mathematics and writing assessments throughout the year.

With this advanced notice, we ask that you not schedule family trips or vacations that would take your child out of school during the days indicated for your child's grade. Since test administrations are best conducted when all students are tested at the same time, we request you schedule routine doctor appointments on a day other than the testing dates. Please help your child to prepare for these tests by making sure they are well rested the night before the test, and eat a good breakfast the day of the testing.

Sincerely,

Mr. Robert Copeland
Superintendent