



PA CORE PSSA
ANALYSIS/CONSIDERATIONS
2015-2016

RIVERVIEW SCHOOL DISTRICT

BACKGROUND – DIFFERENT TEST



This past spring a new PA Core 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 Pennsylvania's students for college and career readiness when they graduate.

BACKGROUND – CUT SCORES

On July 9, at a public meeting in Harrisburg, the State Board of Education approved “cut scores” for determining student performance levels on the 2015 PSSAs. The Secretary of Education recommended these cut scores, which a standards setting team of 58 Pennsylvania educators developed.

These educators are subject matter experts, who represented different geographic regions, levels of teaching experience, and urban, suburban and rural communities. The team used a best practice methodology called “Bookmarking,” and the process was undertaken with fidelity and reliability.

BACKGROUND – LOWER SCORES



The heightened difficulty and increased rigor of the PA Core, and the limited time between final adoption and implementation of the new PSSA has resulted in fewer students scoring proficient or advanced.

Other states have experienced similar results when making the transition to more rigorous standards. Transitioning to the new standards requires time to develop new curriculum, train teachers and provide resources to support the new curriculum.

Other states have experienced similar drops in scores upon transitioning to a new assessment, including Maryland, New York, Florida, and Kentucky.

BACKGROUND – CAUTION AGAINST COMPARING



It is not useful to directly compare students' scores on the new assessments to student scores from previous years because the 2015 PSSA measures different content than the previous years' PSSAs.

In fact, some content is now being taught a full grade level earlier than under the previous Academic Content Standards. In addition to new content, the new assessment requires deeper knowledge, and stronger problem solving and critical thinking skills.

PDE and educators are confident that as teachers and students become more familiar with the PA Core and more resources are directed toward teaching and learning the PA Core, student performance will steadily grow.

RSD SCORES VERSUS STATE AVERAGE

ELA

Gr	Tenth St.	PA Average	Difference
3	88.6	62	26.6
4	90.6	59	31.6
5	79.6	62	17.6
6	92	61	31

Gr	Verner	PA Average	Difference
3	80.8	62	18.8
4	76.4	59	17.4
5	59.1	62	-2.9
6	66.7	61	5.7

Gr	Jr./Sr. High	PA Average	Difference
7	72.5	59	13.5
8	70.8	58	12.8

Math

Gr	Tenth St.	PA Average	Difference
3	85.7	49	36.7
4	73.6	44	29.6
5	75	43	32
6	48	40	8

Gr	Verner	PA Average	Difference
3	80	49	31
4	76.4	44	32.4
5	63.6	43	20.6
6	37.5	40	-2.5

Gr	Jr./Sr. High	PA Average	Difference
7	31.9	33	-1.1
8	40.3	30	10.3



HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE SNAPSHOT: A “New” Test!

- ▶ Using the PSSA data from 2002 as a starting point, the State set the following targets. In 2002, the PSSA was a new concept for our teachers and students. **In 2007, our students took the PSSA in 7th Grade Math for the first time.** We saw real growth over the next 8 years in our ability to aim for State performance targets and District levels of achievement. **In 2015, our students took the PA Core PSSA for the first time.** Below is a comparison of student performance and state targets on each assessment as they were first administered to our students.



PENNSYLVANIA
Common Core State Standards

State Math Assessment Comparison Jr./Sr. High School			
7 th Grade	RSD Students	State Average	State Target
2007 PSSA	66.7%	67%	45%
2015 PA Core PSSA	31.9%	33%	n/a

EXAMPLE OF CHANGE – SHIFT IN GRADE LEVEL

The content of this question used to be tested in Grade 6 and will now be tested in Grade 3.

- Which fractions are in order from **greatest to least**?

* A. $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{3}$, $\frac{1}{4}$

B. $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{4}{4}$, $\frac{3}{6}$

C. $\frac{1}{6}$, $\frac{1}{3}$, $\frac{1}{2}$ |

D. $\frac{2}{3}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{2}{5}$

(Pennsylvania Department of Education)

EXAMPLE OF CHANGE – SHIFT IN RIGOR

The level of rigor (or difficulty) has drastically increased in the PA Core. In other words, we are expecting (and testing for) a much deeper understanding of the content.

Old PSSA item for 4th grade:

What is the value of the underlined digit?

1,724

- a) 7**
- b) 70**
- c) 700**
- d) 7,000**

New PSSA Core item for 4th grade:

There are almost 40 thousand fourth graders in Mississippi and almost 400 thousand fourth graders in Texas. There are almost 4 million fourth graders in the United States. How many times more fourth graders are there in the United States than in Texas? Use the approximate populations listed above to solve.

- a) 10 b) 20 c) 40 d) 100**

Needs: RSD SCORES VERSUS STATE AVERAGE

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Key

Area of Need when compared with State Average

Positives: RSD SCORES VERSUS STATE AVERAGE

ELA

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Key	
	Good student performance when compared with State Average
	Commendable overall student achievement

CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH CHANGE IN STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENT

- ▶ Curriculum must change to include the new standards.
- ▶ Instruction must change to teach the new standards.
- ▶ Assessment must change to measure whether our students are effectively learning the new standards.

Moving Forward

- ▶ Analyze Assessments
- ▶ Accessible Data
- ▶ Support Teachers' Analysis of Data
- ▶ Target individual student needs
- ▶ Focus on Grades 5-8 Math
- ▶ Focus on Writing
- ▶ Provide Teacher Collaboration Time
- ▶ Ongoing Curricular Refinement (Alignment with PA Core Standards)
- ▶ Comparison/Collaboration with other Schools