



# TUNKHANNOCK AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Mary Gene Eagen  
Assistant Superintendent

October 1, 2015

Dear Parents,

In September, the Pennsylvania Department of Education released the 2014-15 Pennsylvania State System Assessment (PSSA) scores for public school students, including those for our district. In July, the district received preliminary notification from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) that across the commonwealth, students' scores on the PSSAs are significantly lower this year than previous years.

The reason for the statewide drop in scores is primarily due to a change in the PSSA during the 2014-15 school year to align the assessment with the new academic standards known as the PA Core Standards, which were implemented in the 2013-14 school year. In a letter to superintendents dated July 13, 2015, Secretary of Education, Pedro Rivera explained the reason for the statewide drop in scores as follows:

“The PSSAs in English, language arts and mathematics administered this past spring were comprised solely of the new, more challenging standards,” wrote Secretary Rivera.

It is important to note that these anticipated results represent a snapshot in time of student progress on a more rigorous assessment. The PA Core Standards that were adopted in 2013 set the bar high, purposefully, in order to better prepare our students to be college and career ready when they graduate. Our students haven't changed, but the assessment has.

Also as a result of the new test being administered to students this past year, PDE has sought and received a one-year waiver from the U.S. Department of Education in using the 2015 PSSA scores to calculate School Performance Profiles (SPP) for schools with students in grades 3-8 that only take the PSSAs.

You should receive your child's individual scores during Parent/Teacher Conferences on October 1, 2015. If you are unable to attend conferences, your child's report will be placed in the mail. I know that as parents you will have many questions regarding your child's score and you will find it troubling that your child's score may have dropped from last year to this year in the same subject area.

While this is very challenging for you, your child, our teachers and our administration, please know that this year's scores are a baseline for a new state mandated assessment. They are just one measure of your child's academic achievement. Despite the changes to the PSSA, I am confident in our ability to teach your child and your child's ability to succeed in the classroom.

As always, providing an outstanding education in a safe, secure and nurturing environment is our top priority. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact your child's teacher, principal or myself. Any one of us will try to provide you with the information you need to be an informed and active participant in your child's education.

Sincerely,

Mary Gene Eagen  
Assistant to the Superintendent

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