

PALMERTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
CONTINGENCY PLANS FOR POSSIBLE
DISRUPTIONS TO THE REGULAR TESTING SCHEDULES
DURING THE PSSA AND KEYSTONE ASSESSMENTS

There is always the possibility of events that may disrupt the regular testing schedule established for the PSSA/Keystone at each school. This document serves to address possible disruptions and serves to inform school personnel on how disruptions will be handled.

Most important, testing protocol for the PSSA dictates that the sections or subtests of the PSSA must be administered in sequence as they appear in the PSSA Test Booklets and Answer Booklets. Therefore if a section(s) or subtest(s) is postponed, testing should resume on the next available day with that section(s) or subtest(s). The only exception to this testing protocol involves make-up testing.

In all instances, the PSSA/Keystone must be administered during the testing window designated by the state of Pennsylvania.

EVENTS RELATED TO SEVERE WEATHER

In the event of severe weather on a given testing day, every effort should be made to administer as much of the testing scheduled for the day as possible. Schools at each level will need to determine how testing will be handled across all of the schools at that level. Generally speaking, a minimum of one and a half hours should be available to administer a single section or subtest of the PSSA or module of the Keystone Exam.

EARLY DISMISSAL FROM SCHOOL

Severe weather may create the need to dismiss students from school earlier than normal. If this occurs, school personnel should determine if sufficient time remains for students to complete the PSSA section(s)/Keystone module scheduled. If less than two hours remain before students are being dismissed, School Testing Coordinator will choose to administer just one section of the PSSA/Keystone exam or postpone the section(s) scheduled for that day. Again, a minimum of one and a half hours should be available to administer a single section or module of the PSSA/Keystone.

LATE START OF SCHOOL

Severe weather may create the need to begin school later than normal. The PSSA/Keystone exam may be administered during the afternoon hours of a school day. Again, at least one and a half hours of testing time should be available. Therefore adjustments to the school's lunch schedules may be necessary in order to allow students in the standardized testing grade levels to eat lunch earlier than normal in order to have sufficient time to test after lunch. Schools may choose to administer just one section/module of the PSSA/Keystone exam if necessary.

CLOSING OF SCHOOLS

Severe weather may cause the closing of schools on a given day. The section(s)/module scheduled will need to be postponed. However, testing should resume with that section(s)/module on the next available day. Again, the PSSA sections must be administered in sequence as they appear in the PSSA Booklets.

EXTENDED TESTING TIME

The PSSA and Keystone exams are not timed tests. For some sections of the standardized tests, students may need more time than the estimated time given in the testing manuals. When this occurs, every effort should be made to provide students with sufficient time to complete the section of the assessment being administered.

A MAJORITY OF STUDENTS NEED ADDITIONAL TIME

A testing session should continue with little or no interruptions if more than one or two students in a class need additional time to complete the section of the assessment being administered. When this occurs, the testing session should continue in the regular testing environment until only one or two students remain needing extended time.

A SMALL GROUP OF STUDENTS NEED EXTENDED TIME

A testing session may end when only one or two students in a class need extended time. This extended time may be offered in the regular testing environment or in another setting. In either case, students needing extended time should be provided with the best possible testing environment. School personnel will need to escort students and testing materials when another setting is selected for extended time.

TESTING EXTENDS INTO LUNCH PERIODS

Every effort should be made to schedule sufficient time for students to complete the section(s)/module(s) being administered on a given day before the start of lunch periods. Should a majority of students at a particular testing grade need additional time leading into their lunch period, testing should continue and arrangements should be made to readjust the lunch period accordingly. When extended time is needed for a few students at a particular grade level leading into their lunch period, these students may be taken to another setting, to complete the test section(s) being administered and provide lunch after completion of the assessment. Students with any medical condition that requires medication or lunch at a certain time will be treated on an individual basis. The School Assessment Coordinator will be notified and determine the best course of action.

FIRE DRILLS OR OTHER SCHOOL EVACUATIONS

Fire drills should be avoided during testing sessions. However, when a school evacuation is necessary, students should be escorted from the building and proper supervision should be provided to avoid students discussing any portion of the test section being administered at that time. When students are able to return to the building, time should be given to allow students to refocus and then testing should resume until the test section is completed. Other school events may need to be rescheduled, postponed or canceled in order to ensure the test section is completed before students continue on with their schedule for the day.

STUDENT ILLNESS DURING A TESTING SESSION

If a student becomes ill during a testing session, every effort should be made to first address the student's illness. This will disrupt the student's testing for that day. School personnel should determine if the student can resume and complete the test section being administered or if make up testing at a later time is necessary. If make up testing at a later time is necessary, efforts should be made to avoid the student discussing any portion of the test section with other students in the interim.

STUDENT BEHAVIORAL ISSUES

A student may display inappropriate behaviors during a testing session. If this occurs, the student should be removed from the regular test setting and taken to a separate test setting to avoid any distractions for the other students.

If a student refuses to participate in or complete a particular section of the test, school personnel should make an effort to encourage and support the student. If the refusal persists, testing can be attempted at another time. In rare instances, it may be necessary to document a student's persistent refusal to participate by marking the "Other" category under "NON-ASSESSED STUDENTS" on page one of the student's PSSA Answer Booklet. If this is necessary, please notify the School Assessment Coordinator.

ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

STUDENT ABSENCE

When a student is absent from school on a given testing day, make up testing should be offered in order to ensure that most or all students complete the entire test. When a student returns to school, they should continue with the test section/module being administered to their class on that day. Make-up testing for test sections missed can be administered out of sequence when necessary.

STUDENT LATE ARRIVAL TO SCHOOL

When a student arrives late to school on a given testing day, every effort should be made to include the student in the regular testing schedule. Students arriving less than 20 minutes after a testing session begins can be included in the regular testing schedule. Students arriving 20 or more minutes after a testing session begins will need to complete the test section being administered during a make up testing period. Arrangements should be made for these students if they are not participating in the regular testing schedule.

EXTENDED STUDENT ABSENCE

If a student is absent from school during most of the testing window or for the entire testing window, it may not be possible to make up some or any of the test. Procedures to handle this type of situation are listed on the next page under MAKE UP TESTING.

TEST ADMINISTRATOR OR TEACHER ABSENCE

When a teacher who is administering the assessment is absent from work, a trained member of the school's support team must be used to administer the test to the class affected. A substitute teacher may be utilized if necessary however, the substitute teacher will need support and training from the School Assessment Coordinator prior to administering the assessment. Plans for a teacher absence should be discussed and arranged in advance to minimize any disruption or delay in testing.

SCHOOL ASSESSMENT COORDINATOR ABSENCE

If the School Assessment Coordinator is absent from work, the School Principal should assume responsibility or appoint an alternate School Assessment Coordinator for the coordination of testing until the School Assessment Coordinator is able to return to work.

MAKE UP TESTING

Every effort should be made to ensure that most or all students complete the entire test. Make up testing may be conducted following the testing session on a regular testing day or it may be conducted on days specifically designated for make up testing. An individual course of action should be planned for a student who is absent based on the number of days the student is absent and the most conducive method to administer missed sections of the assessment.

Students who were not able to participate in the entire test should be notated under “NON-ASSESSED STUDENTS” on the student’ Answer Booklet. These students would have a completely blank Answer Booklet.

Students who are absent without make-up for one or more sections/modules of the test will have it notated on the student’ Answer Booklet. These students would have an Answer Booklet that is partially completed.

In all instances, regular testing and make up testing must occur during the testing window designated by the state of Pennsylvania.

TEST SECURITY

Test security is paramount during events that disrupt the normal testing schedule. Every effort must be made when possible to keep the Test Booklets and Answer Booklets in a secure and locked location when certain disruptions occur. Secure test materials should not be left in an open area where they can be viewed by students, parents or school personnel. In addition, every effort must be made to eliminate the opportunity for students to discuss any portion of the test during certain disruptions to the regular testing schedule.