

MADISON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Dear Families,

I am writing with an update regarding the state assessments for the spring of 2019. This letter outlines the testing that will occur and how you and your child can participate in it in a productive manner.

Under the current regulations, school districts are required to administer certain assessments to students in grades 3-11 that influence school rankings and serve as data regarding student performance as measured against the New Jersey State Learning Standards (NJSLS).

This year the New Jersey Department of Education outlined a new assessment structure, which is outlined in a [recent memo](#). Students will now be taking the New Jersey Student Learning Assessments in Math (NJSLA-M), English Language Arts (NJSLA-ELA), and Science (NJSLA-S). The ELA and Math assessments are administered to students in grades 3-10 and the Science assessment is administered to students in grades 5, 8, and 11. District testing information can be found [here](#).

The district's position is that eligible students should participate in testing and should work to the best of their ability to reach proficiency. This approach provides us with a valid snapshot of our performance and allows us to reflect on areas of success and areas in which we can make improvements. Consider the following illustrative scenarios:

- You have children in 8th grade and 4th grade. The results from an 8th grade assessment indicate that students' scores were below the state average. In reviewing the data, the district realizes its **curriculum** is not aligned to the standards and undertakes a rewrite. The newly updated program ensures that your child in 4th grade will have an enhanced experience in that course.
- The district performance report indicates that students in a certain **demographic group** perform significantly below their peers. The assessment results help the district identify areas in which structural supports may be needed to support all learners.
- A number of **school rankings** platforms use state assessment data to calculate scores for schools or districts. High levels of participation and dedicated performance ensure that the reported data truly reflects the excellence in the district.

We appreciate your willingness to participate in this process. Madison Public Schools has had many years of high participation rates, which is a testament to the dedication and thoughtfulness of our community about this issue. If, however, you would prefer to not have your child participate in these assessments, please complete and submit the Release of District Responsibility form, which can be found [here](#).

If you have any questions or comments please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Ross, Esq.
Assistant Superintendent