



Dear Families,

This spring your child will participate in state assessments that provide your child's teacher and you with important information about how your child is progressing. This helps educators know how to best support your child to ensure your child is ready for the next grade level and, ultimately, success in life. The tests are one of several indicators, in combination with report cards, teacher feedback and classroom work, that create a complete picture of a student's progress in school.

For English language arts and mathematics, students in grades 3 to 6 take the Smarter Assessment. Educators from Delaware and around the country helped create and improve the test by writing questions and reviewing the assessments for content, bias, sensitivity, and accessibility. These online, adaptive tests are designed so that students, including those who are learning English or have special needs, can demonstrate what they know and can do.

The portions of the Smarter tests that call for "written response" are hand-scored individually by people who have expertise in the subject matter and are trained to judge them objectively. Your child's teacher receives results in about three weeks after students take the assessment. Family reports are mailed home statewide in July.

In science, students in grade 5 take the DeSSA Next Generation Science Assessment. This assessment asks students to demonstrate their progress toward mastery of the Next Generation Science Standards, or NGSS. Delaware redesigned its social studies assessment for grade 4. The assessment will be administered in the Spring. DeSSA Social Studies is the state's student testing program for social studies. The program aligns to Delaware's Social Studies Standards and the Delaware State Standards for Literacy in History/ Social Studies. Both assessments will be online. As with all statewide assessments, teachers will use the NGSS science assessment and DeSSA Social studies assessment score as one of many measures to determine your child's progress in science and social studies. This score will be included with multiple measures to identify strengths and weaknesses in your child's learning pattern to identify ongoing strategies to best meet the needs of your child.

The Smarter Assessments and the DeSSA assessments in science and social studies offer significant improvements over the state's previous testing. The traditional multiple choice format is replaced by more thoughtful questions that challenge students to come up with their own answers, show their work, and explain their thinking. The assessments include real-life performance tasks requiring your child to apply knowledge and skills across multiple content standards to increase critical thinking abilities. The tests are connected to classroom instruction, matching the skills and content students are learning and practicing in the classroom daily. For parent resources about these assessments, please visit www.delexcels.org

On December 10, 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA) was signed into law. Section 1112(2) of ESSA states that parents of students in Title I schools have a right to know about state or Academy policies regarding student participation in any assessment mandated by ESSA, including any policy, procedure, or parental right to opt student out of such assessments. If you would like to receive information about this topic, please contact Ms. Debbie Postles, Curriculum and Instruction Administrator for our Academy.

Sincerely,

Michele Marinucci
Head of School