



# MUNCY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Dear Muncy Family,

The purpose of this letter is to let you know that Muncy School District is transitioning to online state testing for this year's state assessments (PSSAs and Keystone Exams).

On Thursday, April 18, 2024, Governor Shapiro announced all Pennsylvania School Districts would be required to administer state assessments online beginning with the 2026 administration. The main reasons for the state's transition to online state testing are provided at the end of this letter for your review.

As a result of Governor Shapiro's announcement, one of the district's goals for this school year, is to transition this school year to online state testing to make sure we are ready to meet the state's 2026 online testing requirement.

To assist with the transition, the state has developed a link to help all stakeholders gain an understanding of what students will experience when taking the PSSAs and Keystone Exams online. The [Online Testing Tutorials](#) provide short video clips that describe how different parts of the online tests operate. The [Online Training Tools](#) provide a sample set of questions for students to work with in order to understand how to use the different tools that will be available during the test to answer the questions and complete the test. Although we will provide time in school for our students in tested subject areas to use both the online testing tutorials and online training tools prior to taking their online tests, you may also access them to gain a better understanding of the online state assessments.

It is important to note that most of our students have already successfully completed online assessments (ex. MAP; PSAT) multiple times during their elementary and high school careers. Additionally, the state has developed a new Firefly assessment that we will be piloting soon to assist students with the transition to online testing for our state assessments.

## **State Science Assessment Update**

The state's science assessment that used to be administered in grades 4 and 8, will now be administered in grades 5 and 8 starting with this year's state science assessments (Spring 2025). Since the state is in the process of transitioning to their new Science, Technology, Engineering, Environmental Literacy and Sustainability (STEELS) Standards, this year's science state assessment will be a field test only. As a field test, student assessment reports will only provide percentile scores that let a student know how they performed in comparison to all other students who took the same test. For example, a percentile score of 60 would mean that a student scored higher than 60% of students who took the same form of the test. Typical score reports indicating whether a student is proficient in the state science assessments will return for next year's state science assessments (Spring 2026).

## **School In Session on Monday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>**

Please note that school is in session on Monday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Please note that the first day school is in session after Winter Break is Monday, January 6<sup>th</sup>.

Days off for Thanksgiving Break:

- Wednesday, November 27<sup>th</sup>
- Thursday, November 28<sup>th</sup>
- Friday, November 29<sup>th</sup>

Days off for Winter Break:

- Monday, December 23<sup>rd</sup> through Friday, December 27<sup>th</sup>
- Monday, December 30<sup>th</sup> through Friday, January 3<sup>rd</sup>

## **2024-2025 School Calendar**

Access the 2024-2025 school calendar through the following link: [2024-2025 School Calendar](#)

We will continue to use all scheduled snow days in the school calendar for school closures due to inclement weather. The district will transition to Flexible Instructional Days (FID) after the *two (2) scheduled snow days* are used in the school calendar. Students should follow the FID Expectations found at the end of this letter when a FID Day is announced.

## **Weather Delays, Dismissals or Closings**

When the Muncy School District experiences weather delays, dismissals or closings, notifications will be sent using OneCallNow™. Additionally, we will post the information on the Muncy School District website ([www.muncysd.org](http://www.muncysd.org)) and provide the information to our local television and radio stations.

## **One Call Now**

We will continue to use One Call Now as our mass notification system to send out phone messages as necessary throughout the school year (ex. school closings, delays or dismissals).

If you need to update the phone number used by our One Call Now system or add a phone number to our One Call Now system, please contact the high school office or the elementary school office to update the number. If you would like to opt out of receiving phone messages from One Call Now, there is a prompt you can follow at the end of each phone message to opt out or you can contact the high school office or the elementary school office to let them know.

One Call Now also allows us to send e-mail messages or text messages. If we send an e-mail message, the e-mail will come from the following address 'Muncy School District [mail@notify.onecallnow.com](mailto:mail@notify.onecallnow.com).' To ensure that you receive these emails, please add [mail@notify.onecallnow.com](mailto:mail@notify.onecallnow.com) to your e-mail address book. You can opt out of receiving e-mail messages by clicking the unsubscribe link at the bottom of each e-mail received from One Call Now.

If we send a text message, the text will come from 22300. The message header will read 'Muncy School District' followed by the message. You can opt out of receiving text messages by replying STOP to 22300.

### **Flexible Instructional Day Expectations for Students**

Flexible Instructional Days (FID) are school days. All assigned materials will contribute to your overall attendance for school and your overall marking period grade and need to be turned into your teacher within two (2) school days after the FID Day. Attending class means completing all hard copy assignments provided by the teacher. You will be marked as absent from school if you do not turn in your assignments on time. You will need to provide an excuse to the office for a FID day absence in the same manner as a regular school day.

All assignments will consist of review and enrichment activities. All assignments will be shared with you in advance of the FID Day by your teacher(s) in a hard copy format. Additionally, information about assignments and electronic versions of assignments will be shared with you by the teacher(s) through Google Classroom.

All teachers will be available to help and support students and parents between 8:45 a.m. and 12:45 p.m. through Google Meet and Google Classroom as well any other communication platforms identified by the teacher (ex. Go Guardian; E-mail; Remind) on a FID Day. Students may use the Internet or the dial-in number to connect with a teacher through Google Meet. *If there is a need to move from a 2-hour delay to a FID Day, all teachers will be available to help and support students and parents between 10:45 a.m. and 1:45 p.m.*

Students must use their district provided username and password to sign into their district assigned Chromebook. Students must sign into the Google Chrome Browser if they are using their own personal device at home and utilize Classlink.

### **Google Meet Learning Expectations:**

1. All in-person classroom rules apply in digital conferencing sessions through Google Meet.
2. Student attire should be school appropriate.
3. Students should choose an area with good lighting, limited noise, and with no inappropriate items behind them.
4. Students should utilize headphones for participation in digital conferencing sessions through Google Meet.
5. Students should enter Google Meet muted using their school assigned login information.
6. Students should follow any additional teacher guidelines.
7. **Any unauthorized recordings and screenshots of digital conferencing sessions through Google Meet are strictly prohibited.**

### **Tips to help your child:**

1. **Set (and keep) a schedule** - The closer this is to a 'school schedule,' the easier it will likely be on everyone.
2. **Make sure they have any materials necessary to complete all assignments** - Your child should have most of the materials they will need to complete their assignments. Be sure they have paper and pencil handy.
3. **Provide an environment conducive to learning** - Help your child find a spot where they can work without being too distracted. The less distractions a student has, the better their chances of completing their assignments.
4. **Work with your child to help them learn** - Do your best to help your child when they are struggling. If an activity becomes too overwhelming, take a break, and return to it at a later time. You can also contact the teacher and let them know your child needs help with a specific assignment.
5. **Make sure all work is completed** - At the end of each day, make sure your child has completed all their assignments.
6. **Help them check messages and communicate with the teacher** - Whether it is you or your child, be sure to stay in contact with the classroom teacher. All teachers will be available to help and support students and parents between 8:45 a.m. and 12:45 p.m. through Google Meet and Google Classroom as well any other communication platforms identified by the teacher (ex. Go Guardian; E-mail; Remind) on a FID Day. Students may use the Internet or the dial-in number to connect with a teacher through Google Meet. *If there is a need to move from a 2-hour delay to a FID Day, all teachers will be available to help and support students and parents between 10:45 a.m. and 1:45 p.m.*

### **Pennsylvania Department of Education's Online State Testing Press Release**

Governor Shapiro and PDE have heard from Pennsylvania students, parents, and teachers about the burden standardized testing places on them, and the Governor promised to take action to reduce our reliance on those tests and ensure students and teachers have the flexibility they need to be successful.

While states are given some flexibility to create or adapt assessments suited to their needs, under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act, states must administer statewide assessments. All 50 states have an assessment program used to satisfy federal testing requirements, and in Pennsylvania's case, eliminating standardized testing entirely would put the Commonwealth at risk of losing \$600 million in federal funding for our schools.

However, the Shapiro Administration has been working to identify alternative ways to lessen the burden of standardized testing while still complying with federal mandates. That's why, to further reduce the Commonwealth's reliance on standardized testing and the burden it places on students and teachers, the Administration is announcing significant changes to the administration of PSSAs and Keystone Exams.

These changes will reduce the total amount of time students spend taking standardized tests, reduce the amount of time teachers have to spend administering tests so they can focus on educating our kids, reduce stress and anxiety around testing by adopting question types that match how kids learn, and save the Commonwealth millions of dollars.

Please read below for a summary of the changes:

**First, PDE will begin implementing a two-year phased plan to migrate all PSSA and Keystone testing online for the 2026 administration. (Paper and pencil assessments will still be available where circumstances require.)** Online testing has several noteworthy advantages over the current paper tests:

- More engaging student testing experience.
- Preventing answer sheet misalignment.
- Ability to deliver accommodations more discreetly and without pulling students out of class.
- Less handling and management of secure materials.
- Expedited reporting and reduced test set-up.
- Reducing the amount of time teachers need to spend administering tests, so that they can spend more time teaching.

**The PDE Content Advisors and Assessment Coordinators can provide detailed technical assistance to assist schools in this transition:**

- Live Professional Learning sessions and archived webinars.
- The online Insight portal provides sample assessments, tutorials for online testing tools, assistance for systems administrators, and a helpdesk feature.
- Monthly Assessment Update newsletters.
- The Classroom Diagnostic Tools, available to all PA LEAs use the same sign in and testing engine for experience with online testing in the classroom.
- The SAS Portal website has sample items and professional learning on assessment literacy.
- Additionally:
  - PDE provides a state-wide IU Core Support team, and a regional support lead in each IU region.
  - Each IU and the regional PaTTANs provide support for educational and assistive technology.
  - An online archive for training resources at [PA CDT Training and Resource Site](#).

**Second, once test administration has moved fully online PDE will adopt Technology-Enhanced Item (TEI) question types that better match how students learn in the classroom.**

TEIs allow students to answer questions using methods they are already familiar with (e.g., drag-and-drop, sorting, graphic manipulation) and use in the classroom on a daily basis rather than answer time-consuming multiple-choice and essay questions that don't match how students learn.

- Implementing TEIs will reduce testing time for students and potentially shorten the state's assessment window.
- TEIs typically require students to demonstrate a greater depth of knowledge than typical multiple-choice items, but they do not take as much time to answer as current text-dependent analysis or constructed response items.
- The performance-based nature of the questions more closely aligns with inquiry and technology-based instruction and assessment practices of modern, post-pandemic classrooms, providing a more authentic testing experience. They are most often machine-scorable in seconds.

**Moving to online testing and implementing TEIs also makes it possible to greatly increase the speed with which results are reported back to schools in order to more quickly help students get back on track.**

- Schools currently receive scoring reports throughout the summer months, making it difficult to use them for decision-making in student scheduling, course content alignment, and resource allocation. Online testing eliminates shipping, scanning, sorting, and reconciliation time, making it realistic to expect scoring in less than a month.

**District educators will save significant time in the transition to online testing, ranging from 10-20 hours in small schools to dozens of hours or even days in larger schools.** The time saved stems mainly from the elimination of physical materials handling.

- No more shipping, unboxing, boxing, and labeling.
- No more sorting of books and affixing student labels to them.
- No more secure storage and handling of student booklets. Schools are currently required to maintain positive control of all booklets from the moment the booklets arrive on campus to the moment the booklets are given to the shipper. This often involves complex and labor-intensive handout, collection and storage procedures that take time.
- No more need to reconcile mismatches between student booklets and student data files (match to master), since online tests virtually always match relevant data sets by default. Matching to master can take significant time in larger schools.

**Third, PDE will develop a free, optional benchmark assessment tool for schools, which is tailored to Pennsylvania standardized tests. This Pennsylvania-specific tool will be made available to all schools to use if they choose at no cost.** Benchmarking helps educators better understand whether students are on track to succeed on the end-of-year exams.

- **Schools can participate in a Winter 2024 pilot that will allow them to help inform and shape the system moving forward.**
- While most LEAs conduct regular benchmark assessments, school leaders often express frustration that popular off-the-shelf assessments do not reliably predict success on the PSSA or Keystone Exams. These commercial products are not aligned with Pennsylvania's content or scoring, and local usage policies are often inconsistent.

- In addition to getting test results back faster, school leaders have expressed the need to receive data that directly impacts instruction planned for students. In combination with the already existing diagnostic data and the proposed benchmark data, PDE could augment the present reporting of test results to correlate more closely with classroom content.

These changes will save Pennsylvania millions of dollars, reduce the burden on students, families, and teachers, shorten the amount of time students spend taking tests and teachers spend administering them, and ensure schools get results faster so they can address learning gaps and give students the tailored support they need to succeed.

### **School District Contact Information**

As always, please let us know if you have any questions or concerns by e-mailing or calling the individuals listed below. We will work as quickly as possible to answer individual inquiries.

1. For district related questions and concerns, please contact Kim Hill at [khill@muncysd.org](mailto:khill@muncysd.org) or 570-546-3125 ext. 2040
2. For high school related questions and concerns, please contact Katie McGuire at [kmcguire@muncysd.org](mailto:kmcguire@muncysd.org) or 570-546-3125 ext. 3200
3. For elementary school related questions and concerns, please contact Vickie Conner at [vconner@muncysd.org](mailto:vconner@muncysd.org) or 570-546-3125 ext. 1100
4. For health services related questions and concerns, please contact Stacie Nierzwicki at [snierzwicki@muncysd.org](mailto:snierzwicki@muncysd.org) or 570-546-3125 ext.1160 (ES) / 3280 (HS)
5. For special education related questions and concerns, please contact Cheryl Good at [cgood@muncysd.org](mailto:cgood@muncysd.org) or 570-546-3125 ext. 1250
6. For food service related questions and concerns, please contact Tom Kuntz at [tkuntz@muncysd.org](mailto:tkuntz@muncysd.org) or 570-546-3125 ext. 1120
7. For athletic related questions and concerns, please contact Curt Chilson at [cchilson@muncysd.org](mailto:cchilson@muncysd.org) or 570-546-3125 ext. 3630
8. For transportation related questions and concerns, please contact Kay Buck at [kay@susquehannabus.com](mailto:kay@susquehannabus.com) or 570-935-0542
9. For building and grounds questions and concerns, please contact Corey Palmatier at [cpalmatier@muncysd.org](mailto:cpalmatier@muncysd.org) or 570-546-3125 ext. 3720
10. For technology questions and concerns, please contact Chris Frey at [cfrey@muncysd.org](mailto:cfrey@muncysd.org) or 570-546-3125 ext. 7777

Stay Safe! Stay Healthy! Stay Strong!

Sincerely,



Craig R. Skaluba, Ph.D.  
Superintendent  
Muncy School District