



December 12, 2016

To the Parents/Guardians of Rocky Ford School District Students:

The state assessments for the 2016/2017 school year will be administered in April, 2017. These assessments include the science and social studies tests that are commonly referred to as the Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS), the English language arts and mathematics assessments developed by the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), the PSAT for 10th grade students, and the SAT for 11th grade students. The specific dates that these tests will be administered will be shared by the school that your child attends.

The assessment results are used for multiple purposes. First, the Colorado Department of Education uses the results to complete a Performance Framework and to calculate an accreditation rating for each school and district in the state. Neither the state nor the federal government collects any personally identifiable information on the students beyond using a student identification number to connect the right results with the correct student. The school district also uses the results to make instructional decisions for a variety of programs.

While many school districts in the state experienced a significant number of opt-outs last year, I am proud to state that we still had a participation rate of over 95% in Rocky Ford. The expectations for student learning have been raised with these new assessments; however, thanks to the parents and staff in our district, the students did not back away from this challenge. I also appreciate the high participation rate because it did not put our federal Title funding at risk. In order to avoid any risk to federal funding, we are required to maintain a participation rate higher than 95% on the state assessments at each grade level. As a district, Rocky Ford receives approximately \$607,000 in federal funds. About 80% of this is spent on additional staff members that are necessary to maintain specific instructional programs. Of the remaining amount, 2% is spent on professional development, 5% on supplies for instructional programs, and 13% on an after-school tutoring programs. We want to express our gratitude to the community, the parents, and the students for helping us to maintain a level of participation on the state assessments that did not put our funding at risk.

The following table displays the total time required (in hours) for students by grade level.

Grade Level	English Language Arts	Math	Social Studies	Science	PSAT	SAT	Total
Grade 3	4.25	4					8.25
Grade 4	4.5	4					8.5
Grade 5	4.5	4		4			12.5
Grade 6	4.5	4					8.5
Grade 7	4.5	4					8.5
Grade 8	4.5	4		4			8.5
Grade 9	4.5	4.5					9.0
Grade 10					4		4.0
Grade 11				4		4	8.0

If a parent/guardian feels that it is necessary for their student to be opted out of the state testing, we ask that they contact the superintendent, Kermit Snyder, at 254-7423 before the end of January, 2017. There will be no consequences for students who opt out of the testing; however, communication with the superintendent about the opt-out requests will help the district to be aware of any concerns that may exist within the community regarding the state assessments. If you have any further questions, please contact either the front offices at the individual school buildings or Central Office.

Sincerely,

Kermit Snyder, Ed.D.
Superintendent

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE: 601 South 8th Street; Rocky Ford, CO 81067; 719-254-7423 phone; 719-254-7425 fax

MISSION: The mission of Rocky Ford School District No. R2 is to ensure individual success and learning of all students, within a safe environment.