



PHILLIPSBURG SCHOOL DISTRICT

Dear Parent,

This year our district has been randomly selected to participate in the English Language Arts (ELA) Field Test for the Spring 2020 New Jersey Student Learning Assessment-English Language Arts (NJSLA-ELA). Field testing is considered part of the statewide assessment program. Field test items do not count towards a student's score.

What is Field Testing?

The main purpose of field testing is to “test the test questions” to ensure that all questions that appear on operational assessments do a good job of measuring the content and skills they are intended to measure. The field testing also ensures the questions are clear and are fair to all students. Every question goes through multiple rounds of review by assessment professionals and committees that include New Jersey educators prior to being field tested. A final determination regarding the quality of each question is made only after it has been included in a test taken by students and the resulting field-test data has been analyzed.

How is Field Testing Implemented in New Jersey?

For math field testing, an embedded census field testing model is used. This means that all tested students in all New Jersey schools respond to a few field test questions that are embedded within an operational unit. Each math field test set consists of 5 to 10 questions, depending on how many points each question in each set is worth. In math, like ELA, the field test questions are distributed in different positions across the testing units in each form, so students don't know which questions “count” towards their score and therefore expend a similar amount of effort while answering all questions.

For ELA, New Jersey samples approximately one-third of schools across the state. Each tested student in a sampled school takes one ELA field test unit, or section. The field test unit may contain a Narrative Writing Task unit, Literary Analysis Task unit, or Research Simulation Task unit, and may appear as the first, second, or third unit on the test. This helps ensure that students do not know which questions “count” towards their score and which are field test questions, and therefore expend a similar amount of effort while answering all questions.

Schools are selected for ELA field testing so that the annual sample is representative of the state's overall testing population in terms of achievement and demographics. All students in tested grades in the district will participate in the field test. Students taking the ELA field test will be given a total of three units instead of two units. The district has taken this into account in



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planning the Spring 2020 testing schedule. Districts that were selected to participate in field testing this year will not be required to participate again for the next two years of assessment administration (i.e. 2021 and 2022). If you should have any questions or concerns, you may email or contact me at the below number.

Sincerely,

Maureen Kehoe

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