

LAKELAND SCHOOL DISTRICT

William F. King
Superintendent of Schools

Joseph Caputo
Business Manager



James Pivrotto JSHS Principal
David Rosenkrans JSHS Assistant Principal
Andy Falonk Acting Elementary Principal
Kevin Sullivan Elementary Principal
Marian Carroll Director of Curriculum & Instruction

Jeffrey Price Director of Technology
Margot Parsons Supervisor of Special Education
Amber Evans School Psychologist
Michael Motsay Director of Transportation

"Learning Today. Leading Tomorrow."

March 15, 2019

Dear Parent:

Please see the guidance provided to all public school districts in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania from Matthew Stem, Deputy Secretary, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, regarding participation in State Assessments and Parental/Guardian Rights afforded under Chapter 4 and Accountability Under ESSA.

The U.S. Department of Education (USDE) continues to require participation of all students; however, in recognition of special circumstances, USDE provides some flexibility for 5 percent non-participation. This 5 percent flexibility is important to Pennsylvania, as Chapter 4 regulations allow parents/guardians to have their children excused from testing due to a conflict with religious belief. Though Pennsylvania regulations permit this excusal, USDE does not recognize this as an allowable reason for non-participation and all students who do not participate due to the allowance in Chapter 4 will have a negative impact on an LEA's/school's participation rate, and potentially achievement rate as well. The provision in Chapter 4 specifically says: § 4.4 General Policies.

(d) School entities shall adopt policies to assure that parents or guardians have the following:

(4) The right to review a State assessment in the school entity during the convenient hours for parents and guardians, at least 2 weeks prior to their administration, to determine whether a State assessment conflicts with their religious belief. To protect the validity and integrity of the State assessments, each school entity shall have in place procedures to be followed when parents or guardians request to view any state assessment. Procedures must be consistent with guidance provided by the Department in its assessment administration instructions. If upon inspection of a State assessment parents or guardians find the assessment to be in conflict with their religious belief and wish their students to be excused from the assessment, the right of the parents or guardians will not be denied upon written request that states the objection to the applicable school district superintendent, charter school chief executive officer or AVTS director.

Parents/guardians are not to be denied their right to have their children excused if they follow proper protocol. Parents/guardians must sign a confidentiality agreement form prior to reviewing the assessment. After reviewing the assessment, parents/guardians must state in writing to the school district superintendent, charter school chief executive officer, or AVTS director that they wish to have their child(ren) excused from the assessment due to a conflict with religious belief. **The specific conflict does not need to be stated; simply that it is a conflict with religious belief.**

LEAs and schools are encouraged to seek 100 percent participation in the assessments, but please be reminded of parents'/guardians' rights under Chapter 4.

Respectfully,

William F. King
Superintendent