



Bellefonte Area School District

318 North Allegheny Street
Bellefonte, PA 16823
Telephone: (814) 355-4814

Dr. Cheryl A. Potteiger, Superintendent
Dr. Michelle R. Saylor, Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Kenneth G. Bean, Jr., Director of Fiscal Affairs

March 9, 2016

Per the Pennsylvania Department of Education
RE: PSSA/Keystone Assessments

Dear Parent/Guardian:

In an era of cell phones, smartphones, and other electronic devices which can easily photograph and instantly share information, confidential and secure test materials can be compromised. Not only is it expensive to replace a compromised test item, the material contained in the PSSA and Keystone Exams is copyright protected. Copying or duplicating the material from the assessment, including the taking of a photograph, is a violation of the federal Copyright Act. Penalties for violations of the Copyright Act may include the cost of replacing the compromised test item(s) or fines of no less than \$750.00 up to \$30,000.00 for a single violation. 17 U.S.C. § 101 *et seq.*

In order to ensure reliable test results and to avoid the cost of replacing test items, the Department of Education requires schools to set rules and take certain steps to protect test materials. One step or rule required in all schools is that electronic devices are not permitted at test sites. Electronic devices include (but are not limited to) cell phones, smartphones, E-readers, Nooks, Kindles, iPods, tablets, camera-ready devices, and any other electronic device which can be used to photograph or duplicate test materials, access the internet and/or communicate with others during the administration of the PSSA or Keystone Exams. If students bring their electronic devices to a test site, test administrators will collect all electronic devices at the test site at the beginning of each session and return the devices to students at the end of each testing session. Please speak with your child and let him/her know that the possession and/or use of a cell phone or other electronic device during the administration of the PSSA or Keystone Exams will result in disciplinary consequences.

If a student is discovered using and/or having a cell phone or other electronic device in his/her possession during the administration of the PSSA or Keystone Exams, you will be contacted by the school. Students that ignore this directive will be subject to our disciplinary policy and the Department of Education's requirement that the student's test will not be scored and the student will be required to retake the entire exam. In addition, the electronic device will be held by school staff and the device's stored photographs will be searched. School staff will also ask for permission to search the other functions of the electronic device. If a photograph of the PSSA or Keystone Exams is discovered or if permission to search other functions of the electronic device is refused, the device will be held by the school staff and, because Pennsylvania Department of Education holds the copyright to all materials contained with the PSSA and Keystone Exams, the Pennsylvania Department of Education will be notified.

If after testing is complete and test materials have been returned, it is discovered that a student used and/or had a cell phone or other electronic device in his or her possession during the administration of the test, the school's discipline policy will be followed and the student's scores will be invalidated.

Thank you for your understanding of this directive and please help us ensure your child(ren) are aware of the proper rules and guidelines as noted in this letter.

Sincerely,

Michelle Saylor, Ed. D.

Michelle Saylor, Ed. D.
Assistant Superintendent