



Pittsburgh  
Public Schools



*The Pathway to the Promise.™*  
We are an equal rights and opportunity school district.

DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING 341 S. Bellefield Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213

**For Immediate Release**

Contacts: Ebony R. Pugh (412) 529-3616

## **Pittsburgh Public Schools Releases 2015 Student Achievement Results**

*2015 PSSA Results Set Benchmark for Future Student Academic Growth  
Most Schools See Gains on State Keystone Exams*

PITTSBURGH September 29, 2015– Today Superintendent Linda Lane released student achievement results from the 2015 Keystone Exams, representing the District’s best year on the exams since they were introduced three years ago. The District saw improvement on all three Keystone exams – Algebra 1, Literature, Biology – in 2015 for All and African-American students. Dr. Lane also released results from the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA), revealing anticipated lower proficiency rates on the English Language Arts and Mathematics exams newly aligned to the PA Core Standards. Results from the 2015 assessments will serve as a baseline for measuring future growth. Today’s release follows the Pennsylvania Department of Education’s release of state and school level PSSA results. A full review of the District’s student achievement data will be shared at the Board’s October 13<sup>th</sup> Education Committee Meeting.

“We are pleased our students saw progress on all three Keystone exams. While these modest gains mean more students are college and career ready, we know we still have much work to do if we are to ensure that all students are able to avail themselves of a Pittsburgh Promise scholarship,” said Superintendent Linda Lane. “The 2015 PSSA was a tough assessment for our students and for students across the Commonwealth. While we expected to see a drop in performance on the first PSSA aligned to the PA Core, the results are not what we had hoped as schools and staff have been working hard to prepare students for the more rigorous standards. However, we are not discouraged by these baseline results and appreciate the Pennsylvania Department of Education’s decision to push the “pause button” as it relates to issuing scores on School Performance Profile for our schools that administered the new rigorous exams,” concluded Lane.

### **Most Schools See Gains on 2015 Keystone Exams**

Keystone Exams are end of course exams aligned to the Pennsylvania Core Standards that measure student learning in Algebra 1, Literature and Biology. Students take these exams immediately after completing the corresponding course. Although students may take the Keystone Exams at various times throughout their high school career, results for State and Federal accountability purposes are attributed to the school when the student reaches 11<sup>th</sup> Grade.

District level improvement was achieved on all three Keystone exams with increases in the percent of students scoring proficient or advanced in 2015 up to 52.4 percent from 49.8 percent in 2014 in Algebra 1, 64.6 percent from 62.8 in 2014 in Literature, and 32.2 percent from 21.9 percent in 2014 in Biology. All schools saw increases in achievement on the Biology Keystone, with four schools, Pittsburgh CAPA, Pittsburgh Carrick, Pittsburgh Science and Technology Academy and Pittsburgh Westinghouse, achieving increases on all three exams. The table below displays the percent of students scoring proficient or advanced on Keystone Exams at the District and school level on the first three years of Keystone Administration.

**-more-**

Percent of Gr.11 Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced

	Algebra I			Literature			Biology		
	2013	2014	2015	2013	2014	2015	2013	2014	2015
District	51.2	49.8	52.4	63.8	62.8	64.6	23.4	21.9	32.2
Allerdice	64.2	70.0	66.3	73.6	79.6	82.6	36.1	36.7	50.3
Brashear	46.0	49.3	47.2	59.1	59.8	50.8	17.0	11.1	22.6
CAPA	80.7	80.4	81.7	95.8	95.8	96.5	53.8	49.3	55.3
Carrick	53.1	37.1	50.5	66.1	60.6	71.0	24.1	12.6	27.3
Obama	71.6	73.1	76.8	88.0	92.3	87.9	20.4	32.1	52.4
Perry	27.7	27.7	30.8	35.4	44.0	42.6	5.1	8.1	16.4
SciTech	73.3	79.5	86.0	81.6	91.7	95.3	46.5	49.3	66.3
UPrep at Milliones	27.2	27.7	31.7	43.2	46.2	33.3	1.3	0.0	8.7
Westinghouse	9.2	2.6	18.3	32.3	7.9	33.9	3.0	0.0	1.7

The District additionally saw increases in African-American student performance on all three Keystone exams, with most schools seeing increases on the Biology Keystone. In addition, African-American student performance increased on all three exams at Pittsburgh Carrick, Pittsburgh Perry, Pittsburgh Science and Technology Academy and Pittsburgh Westinghouse. The table below displays the percent of African-American students scoring proficient or advanced on Keystone Exams at the District and school level on the first three years of Keystone Administration.

Percent of Gr.11 African-American Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced

	Algebra I			Literature			Biology		
	2013	2014	2015	2013	2014	2015	2013	2014	2015
District	34.8	34.9	37.3	49.7	48.7	52.8	7.7	8.0	16.2
Allerdice	35.1	45.5	44.0	48.1	64.0	68.8	6.6	9.0	22.1
Brashear	29.4	42.5	31.4	43.8	49.4	41.7	3.9	2.6	13.9
CAPA	68.3	70.6	62.8	92.7	94.1	93.0	30.0	27.5	25.6
Carrick	27.9	12.8	30.6	48.7	38.5	63.3	11.6	7.7	8.2
Obama	65.9	67.3	69.1	83.8	88.9	84.0	8.8	16.4	39.5
Perry	21.6	24.5	28.4	28.6	36.4	38.6	1.5	3.9	12.5
SciTech	63.5	61.1	71.1	75.0	85.7	94.7	30.8	27.8	42.1
UPrep at Milliones	26.0	29.0	31.5	42.1	46.8	33.3	0.0	0.0	7.7
Westinghouse	9.4	2.6	17.2	32.8	7.9	33.3	3.1	0.0	1.7

\*A small number of students who take the Pennsylvania Alternative System of Assessment (PASA) are included in these results.

## Page 3- Pittsburgh Public Schools Releases 2015 Student Achievement Results

### 2015 District-Level PSSA Results

This past spring, a new PSSA was administered to students in grades 3 through 8, in English Language Arts and Mathematics. The 2015 assessment was the first PSSA to be fully-aligned to the more rigorous PA Core Standards and the first to combine reading and writing assessments into one English Language Arts exam. On July 9, the State Board of Education approved new “cut scores” for determining student performance levels on the 2015 PSSA. As anticipated the new, more rigorous exams and cut scores have resulted in lower proficiency rates across the State. District changes in proficiency rates are very similar to those seen across the state, with the District seeing significantly lower results, especially in Mathematics.

Since the PSSA taken by students this year measures different content than in years past, it is not useful to directly compare students’ scores to previous years. This year’s results will serve as a baseline year for measuring future growth. Overall, the percent of students scoring proficient or advanced on **PSSA Mathematics\*** is 25.6 percent in 2015. Grade level Mathematics 2015 results include:

- 36.6 percent of students proficient or advanced in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade
- 30.5 percent of students proficient or advanced in 4<sup>th</sup> grade
- 27.2 percent of students proficient or advanced in 5<sup>th</sup> grade
- 21.6 percent of students proficient or advanced in 6<sup>th</sup> grade
- 18.2 percent of students proficient or advanced in 7<sup>th</sup> grade
- 19.2 percent of student proficient or advanced in 8<sup>th</sup> grade

Better results were realized on the **PSSA English Language Arts\***, with the percent of students scoring proficient or advanced at 42.8 percent in 2015. Grade level Reading results include:

- 49.9 percent of students proficient or advanced in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade
- 43.1 percent of students proficient or advanced in 4<sup>th</sup> grade
- 42.0 percent of students proficient or advanced in 5<sup>th</sup> grade
- 40.1 percent of students proficient or advanced in 6<sup>th</sup> grade
- 39.5 percent of students proficient or advanced in 7<sup>th</sup> grade
- 42.0 percent of students proficient or advanced in 8<sup>th</sup> grade

“These results do not mean our students are learning less. The heightened difficulty and increased rigor of the PA Core has resulted in fewer students scoring proficient or advanced,” said Superintendent Lane. In addition to new content, the new PSSA requires deeper knowledge, and strong problem solving and critical thinking skills. As teachers and students become more familiar with the PA Core Standards we expect to see steady growth in student achievement.”

For detailed school level PSSA results please visit the Pennsylvania Department of Education website at <http://www.education.pa.gov/Pages/PSSA-Information.aspx#.VgrQwvIViko>.

*\*A small number of students who take the Pennsylvania Alternative System of Assessment (PASA) are included in these results.*

#####