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Dear Parents and Guardians,

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to inform you of an important change regarding state testing for students in our district. Starting this spring, all state-required assessments will be conducted 100% online. This transition to online testing will apply to all students in grades 3rd through 8th for the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) and Keystone Exams for high school.

Why the Change?

This shift to online testing aligns with the growing trend in education to incorporate digital tools and prepare students for a technology-driven world. It also provides numerous benefits, including:

- **Faster results:** Online assessments allow for quicker turnaround of test results, enabling more timely feedback.
- **Improved accessibility:** Students will have access to built-in tools such as text-to-speech, adjustable fonts, and other accommodations to support a wide range of learners.
- **Environmental benefits:** By moving to digital testing, we reduce the need for paper-based assessments, contributing to sustainability efforts.

What Does This Mean for My Child?

Students will take the state assessments on computers or Chromebooks provided by the district. Our technology team has been working diligently to ensure that all students have access to devices and that the online platform is secure and reliable.

In preparation for this change, we are taking the following steps to ensure a smooth transition:

- **Practice opportunities:** We will provide students with opportunities to practice using the online testing platform in class, so they become familiar with the format and features before the actual testing days.
- **Technical support:** Our IT department will be available to assist students and staff with any technical issues that may arise during testing.
- **Test schedule:** A district test schedule for PSSA and Spring keystones will be posted closer to the time of testing.

What Can You Do to Help?

To ensure your child is prepared for the online assessments, we encourage you to:

- **Ensure access to technology:** If your child's Chromebook is missing or not working properly, please contact their school secretary, as soon as possible, to arrange for a new device.
- **Establish a routine:** Ensure your child charges his/her Chromebook nightly and places them in their bookbags each morning when getting ready for school.
- **Practice online skills:** If possible, encourage your child to practice typing, using the Typing Club app via Clever, and using the online tools practice via <https://wbte.drccdirect.com/PA/portals/pa>.
- **Encourage a positive mindset:** Online testing may look different from previous years but reassure your child that this is simply a new way to show their knowledge. Students should use

the same testing strategies as with paper and pencil testing, such as deep breathing, taking small breaks when feeling overwhelmed, and coming to school well-rested and having eaten breakfast.

We understand that this is a significant change, but we are confident that the transition to online state testing will be a positive experience for our students. We will continue to keep you updated as we move forward with this transition. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to District Assessment Coordinator Courtney Laver at claver@eriesd.org or via phone at (814)874-6019.

Thank you for your continued support as we work together to provide the best possible educational experience for your child.

Sincerely,
Courtney Laver
District Assessment Coordinator/School Counseling Supervisor
Erie's Public Schools