



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
PHILADELPHIA

Trends in 3rd grade ELA PSSA scale scores from 2014-15 to 2018-19

Key Findings

- Across the four ELA PSSA performance groups (Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced), third grade students who scored in the Advanced category saw the greatest increase in average scale scores between 2014-15 to 2018-19.
- Asian and White students in third grade had the highest performance from 2014-15 to 2018-19 and had a larger increase in average scale scores compared to their Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx classmates.
- Female students in third grade had higher average scale scores than male students between 2014-15 and 2018-19.
- Although third grade English Learners (ELs) and students with an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) had lower average scale scores than their counterparts, ELs and students with an IEP saw higher increases in average scale scores in these five years than non-ELs and students without an IEP.

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Background

The Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) is a standards-based, criterion-referenced test administered to all Pennsylvania students in grades 3-8 during spring of each year. The intended purpose of the PSSA is to measure how well students acquire the knowledge and skills described in the Pennsylvania Assessment Anchor Content Standards as defined by the Eligible Content for Mathematics, English and Language Arts (ELA), and Science.¹

Scale scores

Students receive a scale score for each assessment based on the number and difficulty of the questions they answer correctly. The PSSA is based on an item response theory model, which means that its scale scores adjust for the item difficulties. Using cut points on the score range, which can vary across grade and academic year, scale scores correspond to one of four performance tiers: Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced.²

The performance level categories are derived from the scale scores, and scale scores provide a more nuanced understanding of trends in performance as they range from approximately 600-1600. Although scale scores cannot be compared between years or subject tests for a particular student, it is appropriate to compare average scale scores for the same grade level across multiple years.^{3,4} The outcomes of interest in this report are the average scale scores on the 3rd grade ELA PSSA from 2014-15 to 2018-19.

Research Question

Three related research questions were the focus of the analyses described in this report:

1. What were the average scale scores for the 3rd grade ELA PSSA from 2014-15 to 2018-19?
2. Were there differences in scale score patterns by demographic characteristics?
3. Were there differences in scale score changes from 2014-15 to 2018-19 by school?

Student Sample

The student sample in this report consists of different cohorts of 3rd grade students each year. The demographic makeup of the sample remained consistent for all five years (Table 1). Between 2014-15 and 2018-19, between 48% to 50% of students were Black/African American and 21% to 23% were Hispanic/Latinx. There was an eight-point increase in the percentage of students who were

¹ For more information see: <https://www.education.pa.gov/K-12/Assessment%20and%20Accountability/PSSA/Pages/PSSA-Technical-Reports.aspx>

² For links to more information about cut scores and a description of performance levels at each grade level see: <https://www.education.pa.gov/K-12/Assessment%20and%20Accountability/PSSA/Pages/DescriptorsCutScores.aspx>.

³ See: <https://www.education.pa.gov/K-12/Assessment%20and%20Accountability/PSSA/Pages/PSSA-Technical-Reports.aspx> for more formation about PSSA scale score calculations.

⁴ For more examples see: <https://nces.ed.gov>

economically disadvantaged across the five years. The percentage of students with IEPs and English Learners (ELs) remained relatively consistent at about 11% to 15% of the population between 2014-15 and 2018-19.

Table 1. Demographic sample of students who took the 3rd grade ELA PSSA and received strength profiles for the anchor tests

Student Characteristic	2014-15 (n = 10594)	2015-16 (n = 10755)	2016-17 (n = 10580)	2017-18 (n = 10364)	2018-19 (n = 10038)
Race/Ethnicity					
Asian	8%	7%	8%	8%	8%
Black/African American	50%	50%	48%	49%	48%
Hispanic/Latinx	22%	21%	22%	23%	23%
Multi-Racial/Other	6%	8%	8%	8%	8%
White	14%	13%	14%	13%	14%
Gender					
Female	50%	50%	49%	50%	48%
Male	50%	50%	51%	50%	52%
Socio-Economic Status					
Econ. Disadvantaged	70%	71%	75%	77%	78%
Not Econ. Disadvantaged	30%	29%	25%	23%	22%
Special Education Status					
Students with IEPs	11%	13%	12%	12%	13%
Students without IEPs	89%	87%	88%	88%	87%
English Learner Status					
English Learner	12%	12%	12%	13%	15%
Not an English Learner	88%	88%	88%	87%	85%

Source: PSSA Accountability, accessed 12-20-21; Qlik Total Student Enrollment Yearly, accessed 11-17-21.

Note: Students who took the PASA did not receive scale scores and therefore were not included in this report.

Findings

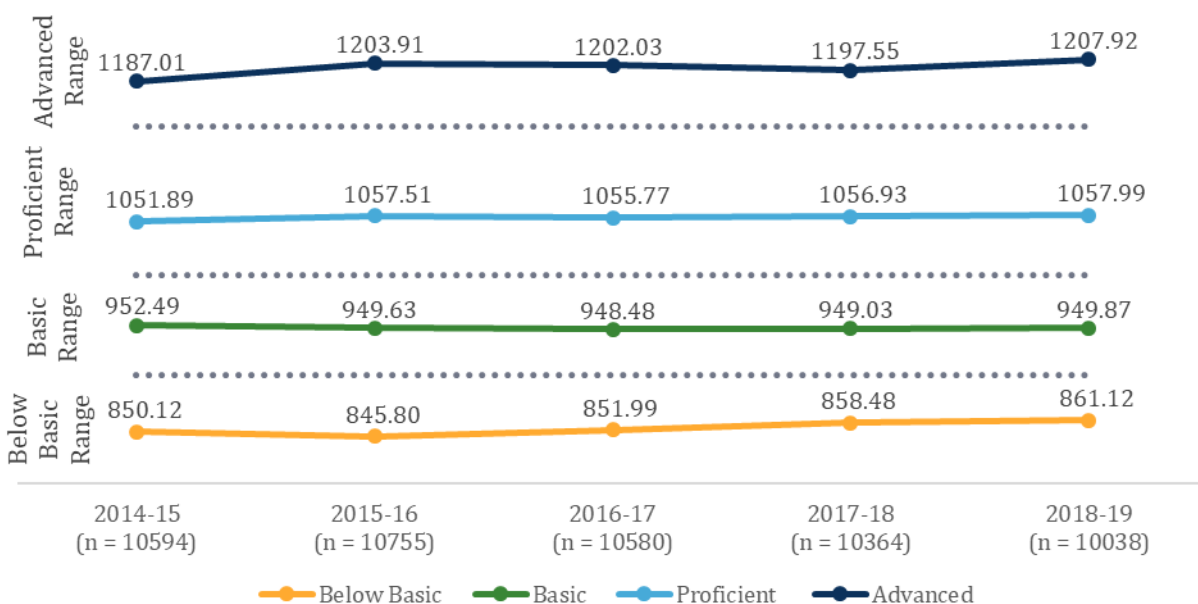
What were the average scale scores for the 3rd grade ELA PSSA from 2014-15 to 2018-19? Were there differences in scale score patterns by demographic characteristics?

Across all four ELA PSSA performance groups, students who scored in the Advanced range saw the greatest increase in average scale scores between 2014-15 to 2018-19.

When examining the average scale scores for 3rd grade ELA PSSAs from 2014-15 to 2018-19 by 3rd grade ELA PSSA performance group in each year, we found relatively consistent average scale score performance across the five-year study period (Figure 1). For example, there is not much growth or change between performance across the five years, as the average scale scores of students who performed in the Basic range stayed between 948 – 952. Critically, the Advanced category had the

smallest group of 3rd graders (2,391) across five years, and there was more movement for students who performed in the Advanced range on the 3rd grade ELA PSSAs from 2014-15 to 2018-19; performance increased from an average scale score of 1187 in 2014-15 to 1208 in 2018-19. Note that for each performance category, the average scale score will generally stay consistent due to the constrained score range of that category, especially for large populations. Thus, the Advanced category may have seen the most movement because it had a larger range of possible scale scores compared to other categories and/or because of its smaller sample size.

Figure 1. Average scale scores on the 3rd grade ELA PSSA for students from 2014-15 to 2018-19 in the four ELA PSSA performance groups



Source: PSSA Accountability, accessed 12-20-21; Qlik Total Student Enrollment Yearly, accessed 11-17-21.
Note: See Appendix A, Table A1 for the number of students in each performance group by year. The dotted lines represent the cut points between PSSA performance level groups. The dotted line between the Below Basic and Basic ranges is 905, the dotted line between the Basic and Proficient ranges is 1000, and the dotted line between the Proficient and Advanced range is 1143, or the Advanced scale score cut point.

Asian and White students saw the highest increase in average scale scores.

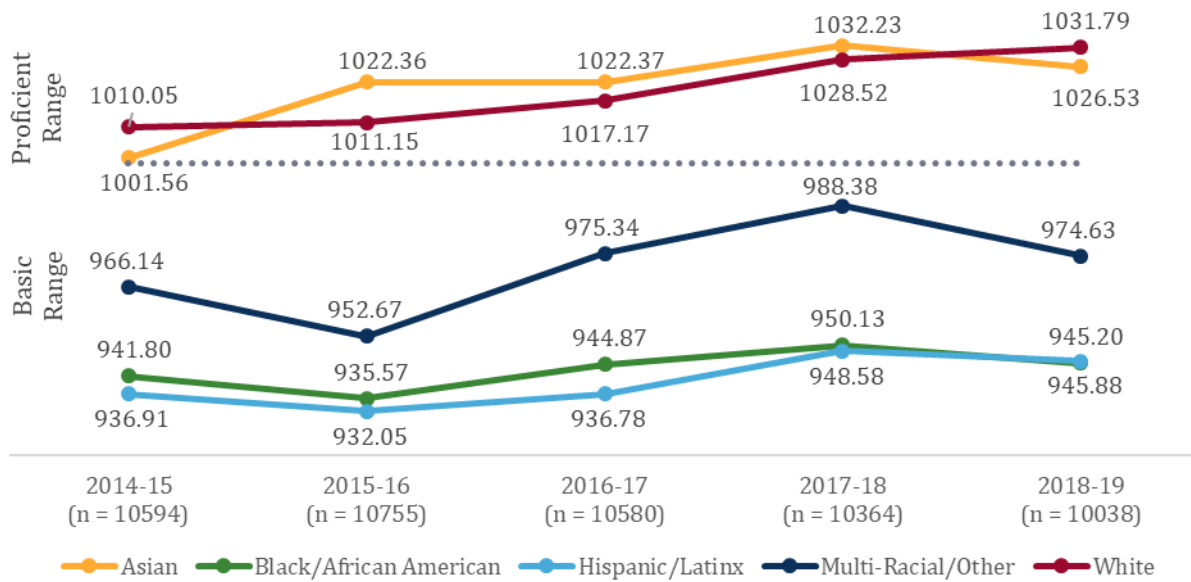
Different patterns emerge when looking at performance of student groups by race/ethnicity on the 3rd grade ELA PSSAs from 2014-15 to 2018-19 (Figure 2). Primarily, the average scale scores of Asian students and White students landed in the *Proficient* range, whereas the average scale scores of Black/African American, Hispanic/Latinx, and Multi-Racial/Other students remained in the Basic range.

All student groups saw an increase in average scale scores, however, some groups demonstrated greater improvement than others. For example, there was an average increase of 25 scale score points from 2014-15 to 2018-19 for Asian students, with Asian students starting out at the cut point between the Basic and Proficient range in 2014-15 (1002). Similarly, there was an average increase of 21 scale score points for White students during the five years.

In contrast, Hispanic/Latinx students experienced a net average increase of about nine scale score points across the five years, and for Black/African American students there was an average increase of three scale score points from 2014-15 to 2018-19.

The pattern for Multi-Racial/Other students fluctuated more than for other student groups. As Figure 2 displays, 3rd grade students in this group did not have a steady upwards trajectory from 2014-15 to 2018-19, but did experience an average increase of about eight scale score points over the five-year period.

Figure 2. Average scale scores on the 3rd grade ELA PSSA for students from 2014-15 to 2018-19 by race/ethnicity

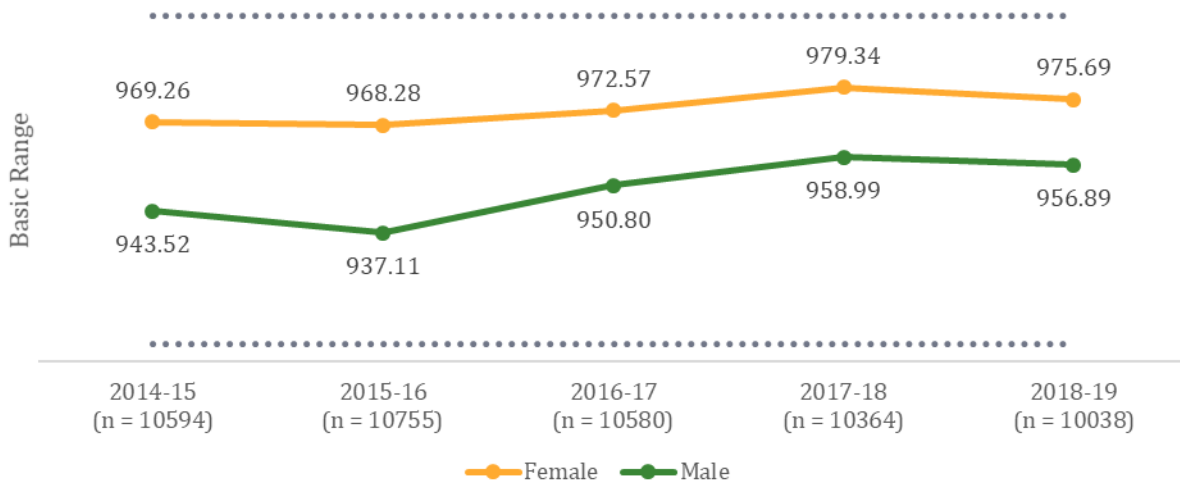


Source: PSSA Accountability, accessed 12-20-21; Qlik Total Student Enrollment Yearly, accessed 11-17-21.
Note: See Appendix A, Table A2 for the number of students in each racial/ethnic group by year. The dotted line represents the cut point between PSSA performance level groups Basic and Proficient (1000).

Female students had higher average scale scores than male students between 2014-15 and 2018-19.

Between 2014-15 and 2018-19, female students demonstrated higher average scale scores on the 3rd grade ELA PSSAs than male students (Figure 3). Although both groups, on average, consistently performed in the Basic range across all five years, female students demonstrated an average increase of about seven scale score points, while male students experienced an average increase of 13 scale score points.

Figure 3. Average scale scores on the 3rd grade ELA PSSA for students from 2014-15 to 2018-19 by gender

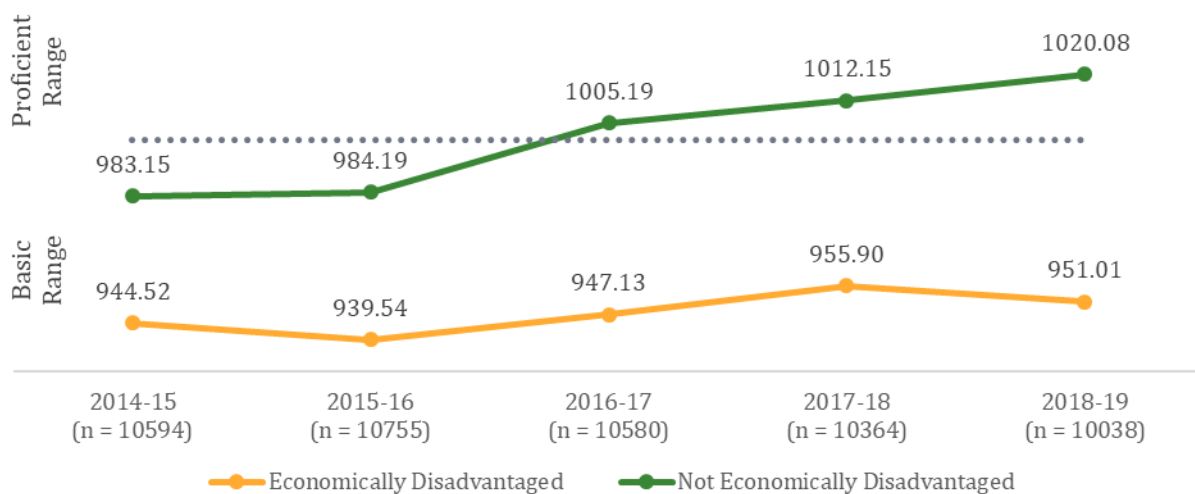


Source: PSSA Accountability, accessed 12-20-21; Qlik Total Student Enrollment Yearly, accessed 11-17-21.
Note: See Appendix A, Table A3 for the number of students in each gender group by year. The dotted lines represent the cut points at either end of the Basic PSSA performance level group (905 and 1000).

Economically disadvantaged students saw lower increases in average scale scores than non-economically disadvantaged students across years.

There were very different performance patterns on the 3rd grade ELA PSSAs from 2014-15 to 2018-19 by student economic disadvantaged status (Figure 4). Economically disadvantaged students on average performed in the Basic range between the five years and demonstrated an average increase of five scale score points from 2014-15 to 2018-19. However, for students who were not economically disadvantaged, there was a nearly 40-point increase in average scale scores, moving the average performance of the group from the Basic range to the Proficient range from 2014-15 to 2018-19.

Figure 4. Average scale scores on the 3rd grade ELA PSSA for students from 2014-15 to 2018-19 by economically disadvantaged status



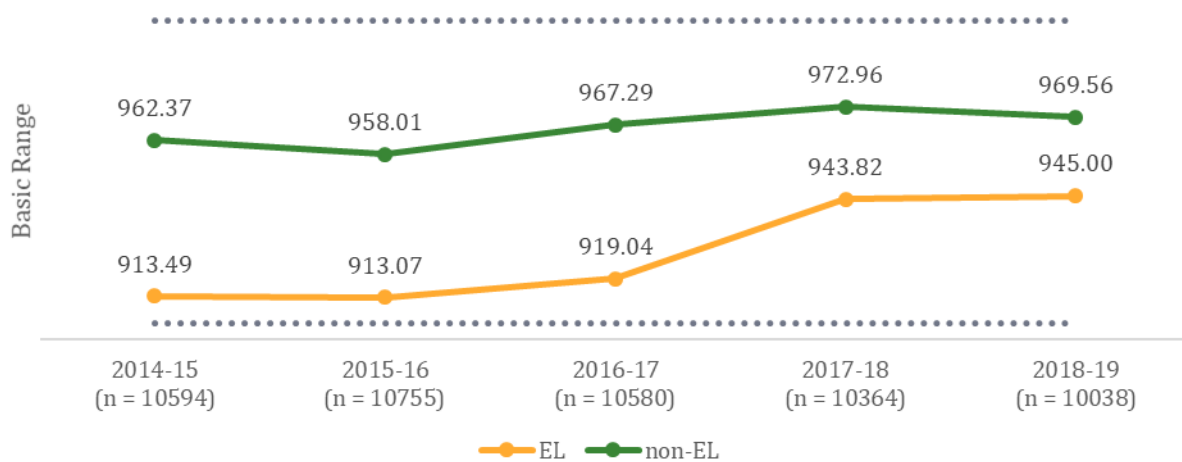
Source: PSSA Accountability, accessed 12-20-21; Qlik Total Student Enrollment Yearly, accessed 11-17-21.

Note: See Appendix A, Table A4 for the number of students in each economically disadvantaged status group by year. The dotted line represents the cut point between PSSA performance level groups Basic and Proficient (1000).

English Learners (ELs) saw higher increases in average scale scores than non-ELs across years.

There were very different performance patterns on the 3rd grade ELA PSSAs from 2014-15 to 2018-19 by student English Learner (EL) status (Figure 5). While both groups, on average, performed in the Basic range across the five years of interest, non-ELs demonstrated higher average scale scores than ELs overall. There was an increase of eight scale score points on average from 2014-15 to 2018-19 for non-ELs. However, there was a 31-point increase in average scale scores for ELs between 2014-15 to 2018-19.

Figure 5. Average scale scores on the 3rd grade ELA PSSA for students from 2014-15 to 2018-19 by English learner status

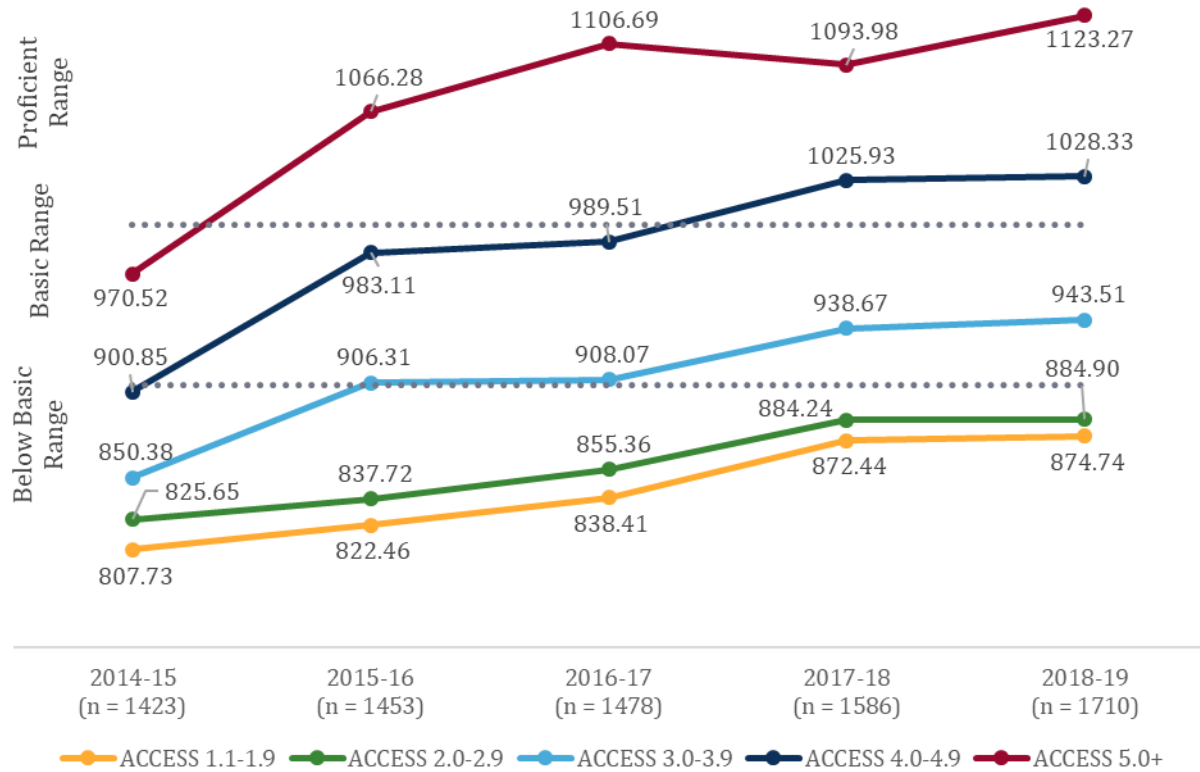


Source: PSSA Accountability, accessed 12-20-21; Qlik Total Student Enrollment Yearly, accessed 11-17-21.
Note: See Appendix A, Table A5 for the number of students in each EL status group by year. The dotted lines represent the cut points at either end of the Basic PSSA performance level group (905 and 1000).

Current ELs take the ACCESS assessment as one method in determining if they are ready to transition to Former EL status. The ACCESS assessment provides an indicator score, with lower scores indicating lower performance, and students who score 5 or higher are evaluated for transition into Former EL status. Given that the ACCESS is a measure of English proficiency, it is not surprising that students who had higher ACCESS scores had higher average 3rd grade ELA PSSAs scale scores between 2014-15 and 2018-19 (Figure 6).

Notably, the ACCESS assessment changed between the 2014-15 and 2015-16 school years, arguably becoming more difficult. As a result, the distribution of ACCESS scores shifted significantly downward between the two years. For example, the number of students scoring 5+ decreased from 541 to 40 between the two years (Appendix A, Table A6). It is likely that this shift meant that students who had high performance on the more difficult ACCESS assessment also had high performance on the ELA PSSA, a pattern we see from 2015-16 onward; students in the 5+ ACCESS group began scoring in the Proficient PSSA range on average. We can observe a similar sustained increase in the average PSSA scores for the 4+ and 3+ ACCESS groups between 2014-15 and 2015-16 as well, again likely due to the increased difficulty of the ACCESS test between the two years.

Figure 6. Average scale scores on the 3rd grade ELA PSSA for students from 2014-15 to 2018-19 by English learner (EL) ACCESS level

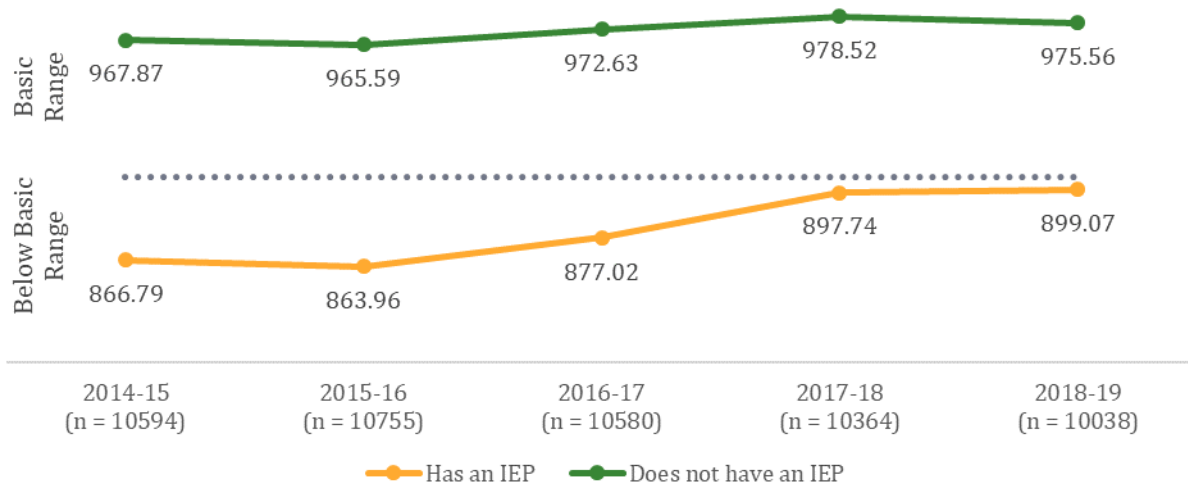


Source: PSSA Accountability, accessed 12-20-21; Qlik Total Student Enrollment Yearly, accessed 11-17-21.
Note: See Appendix A, Table A6 for the number of students in each ACCESS level by year. The numbers of students in each ACCESS performance groups in each school year are lower than in other figures, therefore the results of this figure should be interpreted with caution. The dotted lines represent the cut points between PSSA performance level groups. The dotted line between the Below Basic and Basic ranges is 905, and the dotted line between the Basic and Proficient ranges is 1000.

Students with an IEP saw higher increases in average scale scores than students without an IEP across years.

There were different performance patterns on the 3rd grade ELA PSSAs from 2014-15 to 2018-19 by student Special Education status (Figure 7). Overall, students with an IEP (e.g., students with specialized needs that qualify them to receive special education services) demonstrated lower average scale scores than students without an IEP. For students with IEPs, however, there was a 32-point increase in average scale scores between 2014-15 to 2018-19. In comparison, there was an average increase of just six scale score points during those years for students without an IEP.

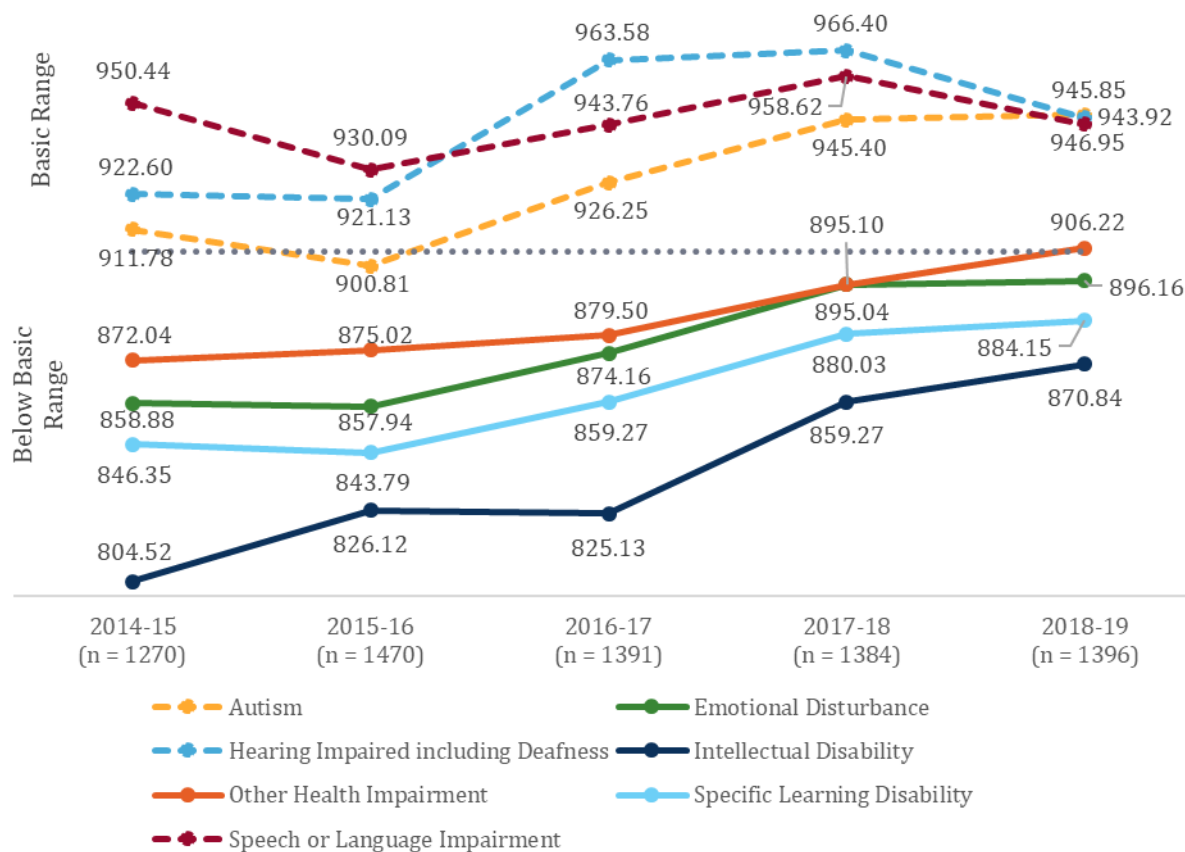
Figure 7. Average scale scores on the 3rd grade ELA PSSA for students from 2014-15 to 2018-19 by special education status



Source: PSSA Accountability, accessed 12-20-21; Qlik Total Student Enrollment Yearly, accessed 11-17-21.
Note: See Appendix A, Table A7 for the number of students in each IEP status group by year. The dotted line represents the cut point between PSSA performance level groups Below Basic and Basic (905).

Students with an IEP have a designated primary disability. There were different performance patterns by primary disability. Although students with Speech or Language Impairments had the higher average scale scores in 2014-15—staying firmly in the Basic category for all five years—this population experienced a decline of about four points across the five years, with similar average scores in 2018-19 to students with Autism and Hearing Impairments including Deafness (Figure 8). Students with an Intellectual Disability had the lowest average scale scores in all five years, but saw the greatest average increase of about 65 points from 2014-15 to 2018-19.

Figure 8. Average scale scores on the 3rd grade ELA PSSA for students from 2014-15 to 2018-19 by special education primary disability



Source: PSSA Accountability, accessed 12-20-21; Qlik Total Student Enrollment Yearly, accessed 11-17-21.

Note: See Appendix A, Table A8 for the number of students in each primary disability group by year. The numbers of students in each primary disability category in each school year are lower than in other figures, therefore the results of this figure should be interpreted with caution. The dotted line represents the cut point between PSSA performance level groups Below Basic and Basic (905).

Were there differences in scale score changes from 2014-15 to 2018-19 by school?

Ninety-three schools saw scale score increases between 2014-15 and 2018-19.

Ten schools saw a scale score increase of more than 50 points, 30 schools saw a scale score increase of between 25 to 49 points, 32 schools saw a scale score increase of between 10 to 24 points, and 21 schools saw a scale score increase of between zero to nine points between 2014-15 and 2018-19 (Table 2). Sixteen schools saw a scale score decrease between zero and nine points, 19 schools saw a scale score decrease between 10 and 24 points, and 16 schools saw a scale score decrease of more than 25 points between 2014-15 and 2018-19.

Table 2. Average 3rd grade ELA PSSA scale scores for each school from 2014-15 to 2018-19 by 2018-19 Learning Network

2018-19 Network	School	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	Scale Score Change from 2014-15 to 2018-19
Learning Network 2	ANDERSON	945.05	944.44	943.59	945.16	959.42	14.37
	CASSIDY	955.38	913.18	946.44	907.70	911.55	-43.83
	GOMPERS	957.04	950.85	929.97	1005.54	935.69	-21.35
	HAMILTON	909.23	926.09	911.93	916.89	924.88	15.65
	LAMBERTON E.S.	917.16	937.11	920.58	927.11	914.43	-2.73
	LEA	933.98	945.24	937.51	968.17	953.16	19.18
	LOCKE	900.63	892.80	909.86	896.22	904.66	4.03
	OVERBROOK E.S.	982.17	945.26	993.59	997.47	1007.53	25.36
	OVERBROOK EDUC.	966.65	942.56	954.57	966.61	1017.97	51.32
	PENN ALEXANDER	1116.92	1158.54	1143.41	1125.71	1130.76	13.84
	POWEL	1026.42	1020.12	1023.78	1051.92	1053.04	26.62
WASHINGTON, M.	975.88	946.54	973.90	979.47	960.18	-15.70	
Learning Network 3	ADAIRE	975.63	997.69	1050.24	1005.74	1045.03	69.40
	DEBURGOS	897.08	911.51	927.29	942.76	932.59	35.51
	GREENFIELD	1112.60	1108.89	1133.41	1160.62	1145.36	32.76
	KEARNY	938.43	908.60	916.38	974.58	952.33	13.90
	LUDLOW	971.40	965.36	986.67	1008.35	927.56	-43.84
	MC CALL	1035.54	1068.53	1080.31	1093.06	1096.97	61.43
	MEADE	912.62	898.05	889.17	903.02	919.93	7.31
	MEREDITH	1102.80	1106.22	1124.97	1131.27	1088.60	-14.20
	MOFFET	987.81	956.14	980.70	979.07	1020.63	32.82
	MORRIS	903.96	939.56	961.84	929.52	924.77	20.81
	NEBINGER	956.63	985.94	1007.53	1006.39	1049.71	93.08
	SHEPPARD	937.00	937.47	899.44	929.97	953.72	16.72
	SPRING GARDEN	888.52	952.96	936.28	982.06	975.88	87.36
	VARE-WASHINGTON	942.64	972.93	978.75	978.66	961.53	18.89
WARING	976.94	949.73	934.95	976.79	934.80	-42.14	

2018-19 Network	School	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	Scale Score Change from 2014-15 to 2018-19
Learning Network 5	BROWN, H.A.	921.00	949.41	956.46	974.79	950.69	29.69
	DUCKREY	905.44	899.89	922.06	935.11	939.32	33.88
	HACKETT	988.74	974.15	990.89	1023.33	1026.00	37.26
	HARTRANFT	901.72	908.38	926.63	966.63	943.71	41.99
	HOPKINSON	946.61	926.38	918.27	956.35	943.50	-3.11
	HUNTER	933.33	916.23	921.34	937.11	908.26	-25.07
	JUNIATA PARK	953.61	967.53	969.36	965.63	992.03	38.42
	RICHMOND	978.03	955.45	978.94	1000.92	989.46	11.43
	SHERIDAN, MAIN	924.80	911.63	926.36	926.07	928.24	3.44
	WEBSTER	926.16	921.17	909.14	948.51	939.54	13.38
	WELSH	925.92	917.62	937.12	938.46	930.63	4.71
	WILLARD	993.70	967.38	966.39	991.57	943.95	-49.75
	WRIGHT	892.75	894.83	928.33	929.96	927.97	35.22
Learning Network 6	COOK-WISSAHICKN	990.05	994.84	1002.51	976.93	992.86	2.81
	DOBSON	1040.83	1039.91	1039.78	1069.80	1061.06	20.23
	EDMONDS, F.S.	975.52	914.93	981.24	970.38	937.99	-37.53
	EMLN	952.56	992.29	995.81	965.96	953.72	1.16
	FITLER	969.81	1004.29	995.96	979.21	990.53	20.72
	HENRY	991.78	1002.04	1032.32	1029.06	1061.98	70.20
	HOUSTON	978.19	960.55	956.85	967.28	960.56	-17.63
	JENKS, J.S.	1010.70	1006.13	1021.37	1047.49	1011.32	0.62
	KELLY, J.B.	969.99	944.85	941.85	922.45	926.81	-43.18
	LINGELBACH	977.44	985.16	979.80	993.72	977.69	0.25
	LOGAN	948.54	958.03	956.07	953.78	952.21	3.67
	MCCLOSKEY	999.11	945.23	985.00	962.13	958.82	-40.29
	MIFFLIN	983.29	972.50	978.36	1011.56	948.17	-35.12
	PENNYPACKER	937.58	934.14	914.16	942.44	947.77	10.19
SHAWMONT	1000.40	1008.75	1006.35	1034.85	1000.77	0.37	

2018-19 Network	School	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	Scale Score Change from 2014-15 to 2018-19
Learning Network 7	CARNELL	941.38	900.37	910.57	908.26	919.16	-22.22
	ELLWOOD	972.80	920.42	973.89	960.22	968.49	-4.31
	FELTONVILLE INT	931.13	922.99	933.56	929.26	927.69	-3.44
	FINLETTER	959.99	924.23	968.01	990.79	994.29	34.30
	FRANKLIN E.S.	933.18	933.86	955.06	933.78	946.95	13.77
	HOWE	916.11	927.79	912.55	941.37	932.58	16.47
	LOWELL	962.39	945.03	951.26	954.57	967.54	5.15
	MARSHALL, T.	900.50	915.25	918.76	929.96	918.50	18.00
	MORRISON	897.97	911.39	894.08	938.00	910.42	12.45
	OLNEY E.S.	910.75	938.51	963.35	962.62	959.76	49.01
	PENNELL	952.44	917.73	927.20	925.09	936.96	-15.48
	PRINCE HALL	956.47	962.90	954.26	956.49	957.33	0.86
	ROWEN	941.74	975.09	976.69	969.99	967.63	25.89
Learning Network 8	ANNE FRANK	1030.97	1023.40	1064.89	1049.50	1059.42	28.45
	COMLY	1019.13	1029.51	1050.06	1049.35	1077.43	58.30
	CROSSAN	1015.16	1022.13	1012.47	1023.61	1038.64	23.48
	DECATUR	995.60	985.99	1001.21	1026.83	1036.97	41.37
	FARRELL	974.59	969.70	962.83	971.75	975.30	0.71
	FITZPATRICK	964.36	960.34	986.15	984.98	968.94	4.58
	FOX CHASE	1018.45	988.24	1011.39	1005.09	1012.87	-5.58
	GREENBERG	1031.37	1049.05	1068.95	1058.45	1041.24	9.87
	HANCOCK/LABRUM			1050.09	1009.60	993.24	N/A
	LOESCHE	1004.67	1031.86	1027.78	1013.16	1041.52	36.85
	MOORE	973.23	975.71	985.22	993.84	993.57	20.34
	RHAWNURST	951.49	975.54	996.87	1027.37	995.42	43.93
	SOLIS-COHEN	972.21	983.40	989.90	995.47	984.63	12.42

2018-19 Network	School	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	Scale Score Change from 2014-15 to 2018-19
Learning Network 9	ALLEN, ETHAN	929.29	931.93	950.04	952.17	955.54	26.25
	BRIDESBURG	1009.88	998.89	998.78	1020.97	1017.99	8.11
	BROWN, J.H.	990.32	990.25	959.89	963.49	972.99	-17.33
	DISSTON	946.37	938.53	955.34	958.84	927.90	-18.47
	HOLME	998.23	1004.31	980.92	1008.43	1001.69	3.46
	LAWTON	956.21	953.50	935.28	960.81	949.45	-6.76
	MAYFAIR	1019.45	1019.27	1017.34	1009.40	996.31	-23.14
	POLLOCK, R.	979.21	1001.96	988.89	992.24	976.51	-2.70
	SPRUANCE	962.53	964.63	941.40	968.24	962.37	-0.16
	STEARNE	884.79	913.05	888.21	907.48	902.49	17.70
	SULLIVAN	910.97	900.68	909.15	919.41	921.84	10.87
	ZIEGLER	943.91	934.45	925.02	933.96	954.44	10.53
Learning Network 10	ARTHUR	980.35	943.50	1007.61	1052.19	1052.48	72.13
	CHILDS	925.57	952.40	971.24	945.56	953.56	27.99
	FELL	987.24	1013.16	980.83	1039.82	1015.49	28.25
	JACKSON	960.21	976.27	967.24	987.83	1028.21	68.00
	JENKS, A.S.	1032.89	1057.65	1028.31	1046.11	1046.44	13.55
	KEY	991.79	945.70	953.10	950.98	948.95	-42.84
	KIRKBRIDE	993.88	1024.67	1018.64	998.15	1004.81	10.93
	LONGSTRETH	929.41	930.64	917.14	952.52	914.17	-15.24
	MC DANIEL	917.47	895.69	885.21	923.49	937.84	20.37
	PATTERSON	934.77	906.25	946.82	965.17	964.32	29.55
	PENROSE	946.50	969.97	955.02	956.79	944.19	-2.31
	SHARSWOOD	967.38	948.08	940.43	996.86	965.11	-2.27
SOUTHWARK	932.32	941.32	928.71	950.35	963.66	31.34	

2018-19 Network	School	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	Scale Score Change from 2014-15 to 2018-19
Learning Network 11	BETHUNE	931.94	907.95	932.55	906.16	921.15	-10.79
	BLAINE	921.28	905.87	915.33	961.31	934.24	12.96
	CAYUGA	918.36	894.59	935.74	928.03	923.67	5.31
	CRAMP	904.15	916.02	939.10	954.88	939.51	35.36
	DICK, WILLIAM	921.14	909.09	939.78	927.69	929.76	8.62
	ELKIN	923.05	906.88	894.12	909.82	906.51	-16.54
	GIDEON	906.69	891.28	892.19	916.16	918.69	12.00
	KELLEY, W.D.	949.50	935.98	971.96	958.81	925.09	-24.41
	KENDERTON ES			901.10	895.48	910.09	N/A
	MC CLURE	926.36	913.77	914.42	926.61	914.37	-11.99
	MORTON	919.07	918.44	946.80	934.88	923.31	4.24
	PEIRCE, T.M.	957.27	907.42	911.49	938.44	941.04	-16.23
TAYLOR	926.71	926.71	901.67	940.17	948.97	22.26	
Learning Network 12	BACHE-MARTIN	975.74	999.43	992.07	1019.02	1018.28	42.54
	BREGY	939.26	947.08	965.54	969.75	990.50	51.24
	CATHARINE, J.W.	956.99	966.59	980.60	954.08	934.60	-22.39
	COMEGYS	907.60	909.10	924.60	934.13	947.74	40.14
	DAY	983.22	942.70	978.16	965.47	981.83	-1.39
	FORREST	974.31	969.41	957.57	942.93	943.29	-31.02
	GIRARD	951.81	931.79	949.56	960.37	932.74	-19.07
	HARRINGTON A.D.	966.18	940.81	913.85	942.71	938.24	-27.94
	MC KINLEY	949.53	895.56	923.92	946.59	907.86	-41.67
	STANTON, E.M.	945.72	941.03	995.58	976.69	974.21	28.49
TAGGART	940.87	955.84	946.23	943.89	941.64	0.77	

2018-19 Network	School	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	Scale Score Change from 2014-15 to 2018-19
Acceleration Network	ALLEN, ETHEL	914.20	922.30	925.98	936.52	928.43	14.23
	BARRY	911.23	882.76	907.25	920.73	929.19	17.96
	BLANKENBURG	941.51	915.07	915.81	921.20	907.82	-33.69
	BRYANT	910.38	957.80	923.26	937.82	905.49	-4.89
	COOKE	921.05	913.61	922.09	940.86	942.25	21.20
	DUNBAR	909.84	916.74	968.96	964.72	908.05	-1.79
	HESTON	952.57	935.02	936.75	944.47	926.22	-26.35
	MARSHALL, J.	935.14	915.36	910.27	916.94	918.04	-17.10
	MC MICHAEL	889.37	912.72	985.34	973.89	914.92	25.55
	MITCHELL	927.53	916.72	935.53	941.18	923.53	-4.00
	MUNOZ-MARIN	900.56	897.71	911.56	940.19	940.18	39.62
	POTTER-THOMAS	938.92	882.94	914.20	932.83	931.13	-7.79
	RHOADS E.S.	947.19	932.66	931.65	916.42	941.12	-6.07
	RHODES E.S.	907.19	924.27	911.76	921.40	885.06	-22.13
	ROOSEVELT	885.77	912.88	883.94	910.51	911.40	25.63
STEEL	943.38	909.17	921.95	930.83	909.50	-33.88	

Source: PSSA Accountability, accessed 12-20-21; Qlik Total Student Enrollment Yearly, accessed 11-17-21.

Summary of Results

This report examined the average scale scores on the 3rd grade ELA PSSA from 2014-15 to 2018-19 by student demographic group.

Different student demographic groups displayed different patterns of change across years. For example, students who scored in the Advanced range on the ELA PSSA saw the greatest increase in average scale scores between 2014-15 to 2018-19 compared to students who scored in the Proficient, Basic, or Below basic ranges. Similarly, Asian students, White students, and female students saw the highest increases in average scale scores compared to their counterparts. Critically, ELs and students with an IEP also had greater increases in scale scores compared to their classmates. This finding may be due to ELs and students with an IEP having lower average scale scores than their classmates, therefore leaving more room to increase performance over time than non-ELs and students without an IEP.

Limitations

This analysis includes a cross-sectional student sample, consisting of different cohorts of 3rd grade students each year. This allows us to look at broad trends in PSSA ELA performance within the District over time, in much the same way that performance is measured annually at the state-level, but it does not provide insight into individual student growth.

When students are grouped by performance category, the average scale score for each category will be restricted to the range of scores that define that category. For the 3rd grade PSSA ELA the Below Basic performance category includes scores between 600 to 904, the Basic category includes scores between 905 and 999, the Proficient category includes scores between 1000 and 1142, and the Advanced category includes 1143 to the max score, which was ~1500 in 2019.⁵ Performance categories with larger ranges (e.g., Advanced) have the potential to accommodate more movement within a category than do performance categories with smaller ranges (e.g., Basic). Using the Basic category as an example, only scores between 905 to 999 will be included in the average, but not scores of 1000 or 1001, both of which are in the Proficient category. Therefore, if the number of students scoring Proficient increased from one year to the next, this change may not be captured in the year-to-year average scale score for the Basic category because only scores within the range of Basic at each point in time will be considered.

⁵ See <https://www.education.pa.gov/Documents/K-12/Assessment%20and%20Accountability/PSSA/Technical%20Reports/2019%20PSSA%20Technical%20Report.pdf>

Appendix A

Table A1. Number of students who took the 3rd grade ELA PSSA from 2014-15 to 2018-19 by the four ELA PSSA performance groups

Group	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Below Basic	3,465	3,682	3,375	2,857	2,983
Basic	3,641	3,819	3,564	3,933	3,842
Proficient	3,132	2,818	3,144	2,999	2,686
Advanced	356	436	497	575	527
Total	10,594	10,755	10,580	10,364	10,038

Source: PSSA Accountability, accessed 12-20-21; Qlik Total Student Enrollment Yearly, accessed 11-17-21.

Table A2. Number of students who took the 3rd grade ELA PSSA from 2014-15 to 2018-19 by race/ethnicity

Group	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Asian	800	792	810	778	781
Black/African American	5,331	5,377	5,093	5,057	4,774
Hispanic/Latinx	2,314	2,301	2,367	2,384	2,304
Multi-Racial/Other	679	848	831	796	791
White	1,470	1,437	1,479	1,349	1,388
Total	10,594	10,755	10,580	10,364	10,038

Source: PSSA Accountability, accessed 12-20-21; Qlik Total Student Enrollment Yearly, accessed 11-17-21.

Table A3. Number of students who took the 3rd grade ELA PSSA from 2014-15 to 2018-19 by gender

Group	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Female	5,251	5,364	5,197	5,141	4,852
Male	5,343	5,391	5,383	5,223	5,186
Total	10,594	10,755	10,580	10,364	10,038

Source: PSSA Accountability, accessed 12-20-21; Qlik Total Student Enrollment Yearly, accessed 11-17-21.

Table A4. Number of students who took the 3rd grade ELA PSSA from 2014-15 to 2018-19 by economic disadvantage status

Group	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Economically Disadvantaged	7,370	7,595	7,963	7,935	7,863
Non-Economically Disadvantaged	3,224	3,160	2,617	2,429	2,175
Total	10,594	10,755	10,580	10,364	10,038

Source: PSSA Accountability, accessed 12-20-21; Qlik Total Student Enrollment Yearly, accessed 11-17-21.

Table A5. Number of students who took the 3rd grade ELA PSSA from 2014-15 to 2018-19 by EL status

Group	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
EL	1,321	1,281	1,270	1,379	1,466
Non-EL	9,273	9,474	9,310	8,985	8,572
Total	10,594	10,755	10,580	10,364	10,038

Source: PSSA Accountability, accessed 12-20-21; Qlik Total Student Enrollment Yearly, accessed 11-17-21.

Table A6. Number of students who took the 3rd grade ELA PSSA from 2014-15 to 2018-19 by EL ACCESS level

Group	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
ACCESS 1.1-1.9	37	161	179	289	358
ACCESS 2.0-2.9	131	318	294	340	369
ACCESS 3.0-3.9	322	585	651	600	620
ACCESS 4.0-4.9	362	349	324	313	326
ACCESS 5.0+	571	40	30	44	37
Total	1,423	1,453	1,478	1,586	1,710

Source: PSSA Accountability, accessed 12-20-21; Qlik Total Student Enrollment Yearly, accessed 11-17-21.

Table A7. Number of students who took the 3rd grade ELA PSSA from 2014-15 to 2018-19 by special education status

Group	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Has IEP	1,215	1,369	1,232	1,211	1,258
Does not have IEP	9,379	9,386	9,348	9,153	8,780
Total	1,0594	1,0755	1,0580	1,0364	1,0038

Source: PSSA Accountability, accessed 12-20-21; Qlik Total Student Enrollment Yearly, accessed 11-17-21.

Table A8. Number of students who took the 3rd grade ELA PSSA from 2014-15 to 2018-19 by special education primary disability

Group	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Autism	81	68	89	75	91
Emotional Disturbance	146	140	125	134	124
Intellectual Disability	31	34	23	33	56
Other Health Impairment	185	261	237	230	238
Specific Learning Disability	634	721	643	610	609
Speech or Language Impairment	178	231	255	287	265
Total	1,255	1,455	1,372	1,369	1,383

Source: PSSA Accountability, accessed 12-20-21; Qlik Total Student Enrollment Yearly, accessed 11-17-21.

Table A9. The number of students who took the 3rd grade ELA PSSA in each school from 2014-15 to 2018-19 by 2018-19 Learning Network and school

2018-19 Network	School	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Learning Network 2	ANDERSON	55	67	71	51	49
	CASSIDY	72	76	56	54	53
	GOMPERS	51	39	40	31	41
	HAMILTON	56	60	48	55	60
	LAMBERTON E.S.	57	57	69	71	41
	LEA	57	69	71	54	67
	LOCKE	60	48	52	38	50
	OVERBROOK E.S.	42	31	23	32	34
	OVERBROOK EDUC.	24	23	30	24	32
	PENN ALEXANDER	68	71	72	70	71
	POWEL	57	53	55	54	50
	WASHINGTON, M.	26	56	31	35	29
Learning Network 3	ADAIRE	35	26	33	38	38
	DEBURGOS	80	78	69	67	97
	GREENFIELD	71	79	84	71	87
	KEARNY	50	61	40	31	31
	LUDLOW	25	48	37	31	38
	MC CALL	81	83	90	105	83
	MEADE	39	39	37	45	47
	MEREDITH	64	67	72	72	64
	MOFFET	54	52	66	44	41
	MORRIS	78	39	41	24	33
	NEBINGER	30	47	33	34	48
	SHEPPARD	43	46	34	38	29
	SPRING GARDEN	27	34	33	31	35
	VARE-WASHINGTON	36	41	35	41	53
WARING	34	39	41	30	26	

2018-19 Network	School	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Learning Network 5	BROWN, H.A.	48	59	57	41	35
	DUCKREY	71	82	103	75	81
	HACKETT	42	46	45	47	60
	HARTRANFT	54	68	56	65	62
	HOPKINSON	103	111	100	100	110
	HUNTER	46	58	54	64	55
	JUNIATA PARK	113	133	127	135	127
	RICHMOND	120	111	105	110	90
	SHERIDAN, MAIN	132	131	141	134	140
	WEBSTER	141	117	139	138	117
	WELSH	53	57	60	42	44
	WILLARD	116	151	135	144	111
	WRIGHT	51	50	41	54	62
Learning Network 6	COOK-WISSAHICKN	42	51	54	45	47
	DOBSON	29	23	47	30	34
	EDMONDS, F.S.	71	75	74	74	79
	EMLN	59	63	79	52	51
	FITLER	26	21	28	24	16
	HENRY	53	52	58	68	53
	HOUSTON	37	40	35	27	27
	JENKS, J.S.	47	52	55	59	56
	KELLY, J.B.	93	98	112	110	103
	LINGELBACH	37	45	55	47	42
	LOGAN	42	30	54	57	47
	MCCLOSKEY	55	56	53	42	36
	MIFFLIN	27	23	35	41	37
	PENNYPACKER	43	60	43	37	39
	SHAWMONT	59	55	53	59	37
Learning Network 7	CARNELL	180	165	142	152	143
	ELLWOOD	49	50	46	49	50
	FELTONVILLE INT	257	243	268	248	227
	FINLETTER	103	90	87	89	86
	FRANKLIN E.S.	98	115	109	120	100
	HOWE	38	39	40	32	48
	LOWELL	179	146	188	132	130
	MARSHALL, T.	68	76	79	74	74
	MORRISON	74	84	91	69	79
	OLNEY E.S.	88	101	83	104	97
	PENNELL	69	78	54	76	75
	PRINCE HALL	92	83	80	87	81
ROWEN	82	89	80	79	72	

2018-19 Network	School	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Learning Network 8	ANNE FRANK	192	218	215	234	243
	COMLY	79	89	67	91	71
	CROSSAN	59	53	71	53	48
	DECATUR	119	113	114	100	93
	FARRELL	124	118	131	118	112
	FITZPATRICK	96	95	106	95	97
	FOX CHASE	89	82	56	77	87
	GREENBERG	77	78	75	90	75
	HANCOCK/LABRUM			77	74	N/A
	LOESCHE	110	130	137	119	139
	MOORE	191	218	218	205	194
	RHAWNHURST	102	112	109	97	134
	SOLIS-COHEN	194	227	198	198	206
Learning Network 9	ALLEN, ETHAN	118	115	97	116	97
	BRIDESBURG	83	93	139	81	90
	BROWN, J.H.	97	79	70	79	83
	DISSTON	112	95	94	105	88
	HOLME	67	66	68	72	85
	LAWTON	97	119	130	130	107
	MAYFAIR	131	154	187	192	252
	POLLOCK, R.	100	83	113	82	79
	SPRUANCE	166	141	163	172	156
	STEARNE	65	57	64	66	61
	SULLIVAN	111	118	114	120	119
	ZIEGLER	58	57	55	56	61
Learning Network 10	ARTHUR	23	27	19	27	28
	CHILDS	62	75	47	61	59
	FELL	53	78	64	53	56
	JACKSON	53	56	75	66	87
	JENKS, A.S.	47	52	55	52	49
	KEY	72	80	71	69	67
	KIRKBRIDE	60	58	62	56	59
	LONGSTRETH	56	61	60	42	35
	MC DANIEL	105	79	67	43	52
	PATTERSON	123	134	122	107	102
	PENROSE	40	80	56	45	53
	SHARSWOOD	47	51	48	57	48
SOUTHWARK	63	80	85	89	100	

2018-19 Network	School	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Learning Network 11	BETHUNE	86	92	71	84	85
	BLAINE	46	47	43	49	53
	CAYUGA	65	92	85	67	73
	CRAMP	90	94	89	96	83
	DICK, WILLIAM	56	68	68	58	51
	ELKIN	162	149	155	193	143
	GIDEON	40	42	37	48	33
	KELLEY, W.D.	48	45	49	55	38
	KENDERTON ES			59	66	47
	MC CLURE	107	87	117	105	119
	MORTON	143	107	108	119	104
	PEIRCE, T.M.	56	75	74	66	55
	TAYLOR	87	86	107	95	90
Learning Network 12	BACHE-MARTIN	24	48	57	44	35
	BREGY	48	43	41	26	30
	CATHARINE, J.W.	93	100	90	78	90
	COMEGYS	78	63	73	63	59
	DAY	45	43	66	49	57
	FORREST	159	155	181	172	150
	GIRARD	125	106	114	106	78
	HARRINGTON A.D.	51	55	56	53	53
	MC KINLEY	49	49	61	53	46
	STANTON, E.M.	33	33	31	28	31
	TAGGART	56	44	52	48	53
Acceleration Network	ALLEN, ETHEL	61	83	50	53	46
	BARRY	83	85	73	68	69
	BLANKENBURG	41	44	54	64	35
	BRYANT	44	62	46	46	50
	COOKE	46	47	45	44	67
	DUNBAR	31	47	29	30	40
	HESTON	50	60	58	83	62
	MARSHALL, J.	73	60	43	71	52
	MC MICHAEL	33	38	47	39	38
	MITCHELL	76	80	57	66	70
	MUNOZ-MARIN	71	85	67	78	62
	POTTER-THOMAS	61	71	68	59	61
	RHOADS E.S.	67	62	62	55	73
	RHODES E.S.	59	47	54	45	38
ROOSEVELT	46	43	42	48	34	
STEEL	62	80	73	66	61	

Source: PSSA Accountability, accessed 12-20-21; Qlik Total Student Enrollment Yearly, accessed 11-17-21.