[Date]

Dear Parent or Guardian:

As your child grows, we want to determine how they and all students in our school are learning core academic skills. We are writing to inform you that [school name] will administer the District of Columbia Comprehensive Assessments of Progress in Education (DC CAPE) assessments this spring, which are replacing the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC).

The change to DC CAPE is because the District is now developing its own statewide assessments in math, English language arts (ELA) and science rather than as part of a multi-state consortium. The testing experience will be nearly identical for students and your child’s results from DC CAPE will be able to be compared to past PARCC assessments. These assessments allow us to know where students are in their academic journey, how we can best respond to their needs and how the District can make the right investments for student success, particularly as we continue to build back from the pandemic.

We want to take a few moments to explain what these assessments are and why your student is taking them. [*If applicable, add:* Eligible students with significant cognitive disabilities will take the Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA) or Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) assessments instead of DC CAPE. Students who are English learners will also take the ACCESS for ELLs assessments.]

We are fortunate to have peer-reviewed, tried-and-true assessments that have been successfully administered every year since 2015 other than the two-year break when students were not physically in schools due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), in partnership with content experts and outstanding local educators, strives to build assessments that are accessible and culturally responsive. They test student understanding of key academic skills that they are learning every day, so your student does not need to study or do any special preparation.

Of course, these assessments are just one measure of student learning at one point in time. They do not tell your child’s whole story; they help us support them. The detailed results will help us understand your child’s strengths and needs so that we can better support them through instruction and enrichment.

In the District of Columbia, the required statewide assessments are:

* + DC CAPE
  + English language arts/literacy (ELA), grades 3-8 and high school (ELA I and ELA II)
  + Mathematics, grades 3-8 and high school (Algebra I and Geometry)
  + [*If applicable*] Science, grades 5, 8 and high school biology
* [*If applicable*] Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA)
  + English language arts/literacy, grades 3-8 and 11
  + Mathematics, grades 3-8 and 11
* [*If applicable*] Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Science Alternate Assessment
  + Science, grades 5, 8 and high school biology
* [*If applicable*] ACCESS for ELLs or WIDA Alternate ACCESS
  + English language proficiency, grades K-12

As a District, we need to have a high participation rate to ensure we receive much-needed federal funding for our schools. At our school, most students will take these assessments on computers [specify laptops, tablets if appropriate]. Please rest assured that students with identified learning needs will be provided necessary test accommodations per their individual plans (IEP, 504 plan, and/or EL plan).

At [school name], the assessments will be administered in the following windows:

[list your applicable windows here]

* DC CAPE:
* MSAA:
* DLM:
* ACCESS for ELLs:

[Insert any school-specific information]

We are excited that DC students are participating in these high-quality assessments that will help all of us better understand what our students know and are able to do. You can find a suite of helpful resources, including sample score reports, at <osse.dc.gov/dccape> to help you better understand the assessments. We ask for your assistance in encouraging your child to do their best, and in making sure your child is present and on time during the testing windows for both assessment and instruction. Additionally, if your child was part of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) sample this year, we want to thank you and your child for participating!

If you have any questions regarding these assessments, please contact me, and I will be happy to speak with you. Thank you for your continued support and cooperation.

Sincerely,

[School Principal]

[School Contact information] ­