



R.J. Murray Middle School

150 N. Holmes Blvd. • St. Augustine, FL 32084



Phone: 904.547.8483 Fax: 904.547.8475
www-mms.stjohns.k12.fl.us

Dear Parent/Guardian,

This letter is to inform you about important testing information including dates, testing policies, and additional resources.

Your student will participate in the computer-based Grade 8 Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.) Writing assessment on **Tuesday, April 4th**. The B.E.S.T. Writing assessment is administered in one 120-minute session, and students may work up to half of a typical school day.

Your student will also participate in the third administration (PM3) of the Grade 8 Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) Reading assessment on **Friday, May 3rd** and the Mathematics assessment on **Tuesday, May 7th**. The FAST assessments are administered in one 100-minute session, and students may work up to the entire school day.

Students taking Algebra 1 Honors or Geometry Honors will take the Algebra 1 or Geometry End-of-Course (EOC) exam instead of the FAST Mathematics assessment on **Tuesday, May 7th**. Students taking 8th Grade Science will take the Grade 8 Statewide Science Assessment (SSA) on **Thursday, May 9th**. Students taking Biology Honors will take the Biology EOC instead of the Grade 8 SSA on **Thursday, May 9th**. Each test will be administered in one 160-minute session, and students may work up to the entire school day.

The Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) is a progress monitoring system that is administered three times per year to track your student's progress in learning the Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.) Standards throughout this school year. Your student's FAST assessments are computer-adaptive tests taken on a computer or tablet. The questions get less or more difficult depending on how a student responds, and each student will see different questions from a common item bank.

For more information on the test design, please visit <https://www.fldoe.org/accountability/assessments/k-12-student-assessment/best/>. If you or your student would like to interact with the online testing platform or review sample items at home, sample test materials are available at <https://flfast.org/families.html>.

Please review the following policies with your student before testing:

- **Electronic Devices**—Students are not permitted to have any electronic devices, including, but not limited to, cell phones, smartphones, and smartwatches, at any time during testing **or** during breaks (e.g., restroom), **even if the devices are turned off or students do not use them**. If your student is found with an electronic device or is found using Bluetooth/wireless headphones/earbuds during testing, his or her test will be invalidated.
- **Calculator Policy**—For Grades 7–8 FAST Mathematics assessments, approved handheld scientific calculators may be used. For Grade 6 FAST Mathematics, a handheld four-function calculator may be used.

Holly Smith, Assistant Principal

Dr. Esther Seward, Principal

Angela Hunter, Assistant Principal

“One Team, No Limits!”

- **Testing Rules Acknowledgment**—All tests include a Testing Rules Acknowledgment that reads: “I understand the testing rules that were just read to me. If I do not follow these rules, my test score may be invalidated.” Prior to testing, test administrators read the rules to students, and students acknowledge that they understand the testing rules by clicking the box in the secure browser indicating they understand the testing rules.
- **Discussing Test Content after Testing**—The last portion of the testing rules read to students before they click the box to accept the Testing Rules Acknowledgment states that because the content of all statewide assessments is secure, students may not discuss or reveal details about the test content (including test items and passages) after the test. This includes any type of electronic communication, such as texting, emailing, or posting to social media sites. Please make sure your student understands this policy prior to testing and remind them that “discussing” test content includes any kind of electronic communication, such as texting, emailing, posting to social media, or sharing online. **While students may not share information about secure test content after testing, this policy is not intended to prevent students from discussing their testing experiences with their parents/families.**
- **Working Independently**—Students are responsible for doing their own work during the test and for protecting their answers from being seen by others. If students are caught cheating during testing, their tests will be invalidated.
- **Leaving Campus**—If your student leaves campus before completing a test (e.g., for lunch, an appointment), he or she **will not** be allowed to return to that test. If your student does not feel well on the day of testing, it may be best for him or her to wait and be tested on a make-up day. Please remember not to schedule appointments on testing days.
- **Testing Accommodations**—If your student has an Individual Education Plan (IEP), a Section 504 Plan, or is an English Language Learner (ELL) or a recently exited ELL, please contact the school to discuss the testing accommodations that will be provided for your student.

If you have any questions related to this test administration, you may contact Dawn Brailsford at Dawn.BrailsfordMoretta@stjohns.k12.fl.us.

For more information about the FAST program, please visit the portal at FLFAST.org.

Thank you for supporting your student and encouraging him or her to do his or her best during this test administration.

Sincerely,



Esther Seward, Ed.D