The Chambersburg Area School District takes pride in the professional manner the staff conducts PSSA testing. Furthermore, we respect and appreciate that the Department of Education holds every district accountable for the fairness and integrity of high stakes testing. The following information is being provided in response to the July 12th, 2011 public opinion article titled, “Cheating on State Tests?”.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education received a report from DRC in July of 2009. A “right to know” request was recently made to PDE by a “watch” group for the 2009 report and then the information was relayed to the media. PDE has communicated with CASD officials and is sympathetic to this issue and how it has played out.

Upon being notified of the report by the Public Opinion, the district immediately contacted the Department of Education for more information. We were informed over the phone of some of the details and that we would receive a more detailed report on July 15th, 2011. We will be required to respond to PDE within 30 days of the official report.

Now that Chambersburg has more of the report details that support the claim the picture is much clearer. For Chambersburg School District 6th grade at CAMS was identified as having irregularities. So what are the irregularities?

1. In 2008 we had 1 multi racial student in 6th grade. In 2009 we had 40 multi racial students in 6th grade.

   **CASD Response:**

   We are required to be as accurate as possible in our identification of subgroups as required by PDE. From 2007-2008 to 2008-2009 all districts were required to change student enrollment forms and all student management system fields to include multi-racial.

2. In 2009, CASD had 4 students with a high percent of erased bubbles from wrong to right answers.
**CASD Response:**
The students could have bubbled in the wrong answers for all the questions and then realized they entered them wrong at the end and needed to re-bubble answers. Four students out of 650 tested in 6th grade equals less than 1% of the tested students.

3. The predicted scaled score on the PSSA for 2008-2009 for all students was to be an average of 1325 points and our students achieved an average scaled score of 1365.

**CASD Response:**
The scale score improvements are just that, we got better. An increase of 40 points is a reasonable increase in performance. In proficiency rate percentage points we improved by 9% in reading and 6% in math from 2008 to 2009.

CASD staff and students take the PSSA assessments very seriously and based on the data and details we found this offensive and disheartening. The district wholeheartedly stands behind the staff and students, testing procedures, and protocols all schools use to provide fair and accurate student achievement data to PDE.

The intent of the report is to make sure that as high stakes testing continue to rise, schools do not resort to unethical measures. We agree with the intent but resent the inappropriate messages being relayed about the perceptions of people and students regarding cheating.

In closing, the improved performance, 4 students that bubbled inaccurately and the 40 students identified correctly by their ethnic make-up caused a great deal of concern and controversy regarding the ethical behaviors of students and staff.