

Keystone School District

Guidance and Counseling Services
Keystone Junior Senior High School
700 Beatty Avenue
Knox, PA 16232

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Billing Address: Keystone School District
District Office
451 Huston Avenue
Knox, PA 16232

April 5, 2017

Dear Parent(s):

This letter is to make you aware that students who are currently enrolled in Algebra 1B, Biology, and 10th grade English, as well as those students who have previously tested and not achieved proficient status, will participate in the state-mandated Keystone Exams on May 15-23. Grade 11 students are not permitted to retake the Keystone Exam in any subject where they earned a score of Proficient or Advanced during previous testing. With the exception of those students whose special circumstances preclude them from taking the test, all public school students are required to participate in these assessments.

The Keystone Exams are end-of-course assessments designed to evaluate proficiency in the subject areas of Algebra, Biology, and Literature. Students will be offered multiple opportunities to take the Keystone Exams throughout their high school careers. Additional information regarding the Keystone Exams can be obtained at the following web address: <http://www.pdesas.org/module/assessment/Keystone.aspx#>.

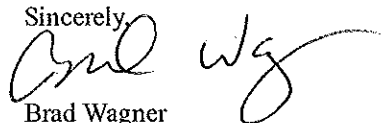
Please join us in working to create a positive outlook from our students on this assessment. A desire to perform at the highest possible level and the commitment to work hard on all test sections are essential for student achievement. A good night's sleep and a healthy breakfast are also crucial in providing your child with the best possible scenario for success. Research has shown that students who eat a healthy, protein-rich breakfast prior to an assessment perform significantly better than students who go without breakfast. I would ask that you make every effort to ensure that your child is in attendance during the testing window. If you have appointments that can be rescheduled, please do so. Completing the assessment with classmates in their regular environment can also impact student achievement—students who are absent due to illness or appointment must be scheduled for a make-up test at a later date.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education has provided strict guidance related to student use of electronic devices (i.e. cell phones, iPods and other personal devices) during the administration of state assessments. All cell phones and other prohibited electronic devices are to be collected as students enter the testing site. Certainly our preference would be that cell phones and other prohibited electronic devices are left at home during the aforementioned testing dates. Students who are caught with an electronic device during the administration of the state assessments may be responsible for compromising the integrity of the assessment. As a result, all parties responsible will face disciplinary action as well as replacement cost for assessment items through the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Parents who wish to review test items prior to testing should contact the Guidance Department no later than May 5, 2017 to arrange an appointment to do so.

Thank you for supporting your child throughout their school experience as well as during this important assessment period. We look forward to successful testing at Keystone Junior-Senior High School!

Sincerely,



Brad Wagner
High School Principal



Dear Parent/Guardian:

In an era of cell phones, smartphones and other electronic devices which can easily photograph and instantly share photographs, confidential and secure test materials can be easily compromised. Not only is it expensive to replace a compromised test item, the material contained in the PSSA and Keystone Exams is copyrighted property of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Copying or duplicating the material from the assessment, including the taking of a photograph of secure assessment material, is a violation of the federal Copyright Act. Penalties for violations of the Copyright Act may include the cost of replacing the compromised test item(s) or fines of no less than \$750 up to \$30,000 for a single violation. 17 U.S.C. § 101 et seq.

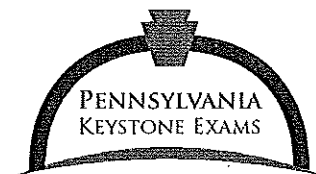
In order to ensure reliable test results and to avoid the cost of replacing test items, the Department of Education requires schools to set rules and take certain steps to protect test materials. Electronic devices such as but not limited to cell phones, smartphones, smartwatches, E-readers, Nooks, Kindles, iPods, tablets, camera-ready devices, and any other electronic device which can be used to photograph or duplicate test materials, access the internet and/or communicate with others during the administration of the PSSA or Keystone Exams are not permitted in any testing site. Please speak with your child and let him or her know that the possession and/or use of a cell phone or other electronic device during the administration of the PSSA or Keystone Exams will result in certain consequences.

You will be contacted by the school if your child is discovered using and/or having a cell phone or other electronic device in his or her possession during the administration of the PSSA or Keystone Exams. Students that ignore this directive will be subject to the school's discipline policy and the Department of Education's requirement that the student's test will not be scored and the student will be required to retake the entire exam. The electronic device will be held by school staff and the device's stored photographs and other functions will be examined with your permission. You may request to be present when the electronic device is examined. If a photograph of the PSSA or Keystone Exam is discovered or if permission to search other functions of the electronic device is refused, the device will be held by the school staff. The Pennsylvania Department of Education holds the copyright to all material contained within the PSSA and Keystone Exams, the Pennsylvania Department of Education will be contacted and further action may be taken.

If, after testing is complete and test materials have been returned, it is discovered that a student used and/or had a cell phone or other electronic device in his or her possession during the administration of the test, the school's discipline policy will be followed and the student's scores will be invalidated.

Information for Parents or Guardians

Pennsylvania Keystone Exams



What are the Keystone Exams?

The Keystone Exams are end-of-course assessments designed to evaluate proficiency in academic content. Beginning with the class of 2019, students must demonstrate proficiency on the Algebra I, Literature, and Biology Keystone Exams to graduate. Students will be offered multiple opportunities to take the keystones throughout their high school career.

Who will participate in the Keystone Exams?

In 2012–13, the Algebra I, Literature, and Biology Keystone Exams replaced the 11th-grade Pennsylvania System of School Assessments (PSSA) in math, reading, and science for purposes of student, educator, and school accountability. Students should take the Keystone Exams at or near the end of a Keystone-related course. The students' results are banked until their junior year for accountability purposes and until their senior year for graduation purposes. Some students who previously completed a Keystone-related course but did not take the Keystone Exam will also participate for accountability purposes. Additionally, students who take a Keystone Exam and do not score Proficient may re-take the exam.

When will the exams be offered?

The Keystone Exams will be administered three times each year—winter, spring, and summer. Specific administration dates will be published by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Who decided what Keystone Exams should measure?

Groups of educators from across Pennsylvania chose the areas of knowledge on which the Keystone Exams are based. The groups included teachers, supervisors, curriculum directors, and college specialists. These groups also reviewed, edited, and approved exam questions.

What is assessed on the Keystone Exams?

Pennsylvania adopted the Pennsylvania Core Standards, standards aligned with expectations for success in college and the workplace. The keystones are designed to measure these standards.

How long is a Keystone Exam administration?

There is no time limit for a student to complete a Keystone Exam. Each Keystone Exam should take the typical student 2 to 3 hours to complete. There are two modules on each test, and each module (or Test Session) of the Keystone Exam should take 1 to 1.5 hours to complete. Districts can administer the Keystone Exam modules across two days or divided across the morning and the afternoon of the same day.

What are the available formats for administering the Keystone Exams?

The Keystone Exams are available in both online and paper/pencil formats. Districts will determine if online, paper/pencil, or both formats will be used locally. Makeup exams will also be administered in either online or paper/pencil format.

Will students have an opportunity to experience online testing before taking a Keystone Exam online?

Tutorials and online training programs have been developed for the Keystone Exams. The PA Online Assessment Student Tutorial uses pictures, motion, and sound to present visual and verbal descriptions of the properties and features of the PA Online Assessment system. Students are allowed to repeat the Student Tutorial as often as desired and needed. The Online Tools Training (OTT) provides an introductory experience using the PA online assessment software allowing students to observe and try out features of the PA online assessment software prior to the actual assessment. Within the OTT, students also have the opportunity to practice typing responses in a narrative format, graphing functions, and entering equations using an equation builder tool. The online exam also has a "Help" feature that is available to the student during the exam.

What types of questions are on the Keystone Exams?

The Keystone Exams will include multiple-choice questions and constructed-response, or open-ended, questions. For each Keystone Exam, approximately 60 percent to 75 percent of the total score will be from multiple-choice questions and 25 percent to 40 percent of the total score will be from constructed-response questions.

How are the written responses to constructed-response questions scored?

The written responses for constructed-response questions are scored by evaluators trained in applying a pre-determined scoring system. Scores are based on content only. Spelling and punctuation are not included as part of the scoring process. Most constructed-response questions require students to show their work or explain their reasoning. These Keystone Exam questions will ask students to explain, analyze, describe, or compare. Some questions will also require students to perform calculations or create graphs, plots, or drawings.

How are the results reported?

Keystone Exam scores will be processed as quickly as possible and provided to the districts.

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Two copies of the individual student report for all Keystone Exams will be sent to the school districts and charter schools. One copy should be sent home to parents/guardians; the other is kept by the school/district.

School-level reports will be used for curricular and planning purposes. School districts and charter schools may publish the results of Keystone Exams for each school. The state will also release school-by-school exam data.

May parents see the Keystone Exams?

Parents and guardians may review the Keystone Exams if they believe they may be in conflict with their religious beliefs by making arrangements with the School Test Coordinator once the exams arrive at the school. Confidentiality agreements must be signed, and no copies of the Keystone Exams or notes about exam questions will be permitted to leave the school.

If, after reviewing the Keystone Exams, parents or guardians do not want their child to participate in one or all of the exams due to a conflict with their religious beliefs, they may write a letter specifying their objection to the school district superintendent or charter school CAO to request their child be excused from the exam(s).

Report Testing Irregularities

Parents/guardians who believe that a testing irregularity may have occurred may email ra-ed-pssa-keystone@pa.gov or call 844-418-1651 to report the incident.

For additional information about the Keystone Exams, visit the PDE website at www.education.pa.gov or contact your school district.