



## 2012-13 PA Keystone Exams – FAQ

### **What are the Keystone Exams?**

**From PDE:** “The Keystone Exams are end-of-course assessments designed to evaluate proficiency in academic content.”

### **Who will participate in the Keystone Exams?**

**From PDE:** “Beginning in 2012-2013 the Algebra I, Literature, and Biology Keystone Exams will replace the 11th grade Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) tests in mathematics, reading, and science for purposes of satisfying No Child Left Behind (NCLB)/Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirements. Therefore, all students in grade 11 must participate in the Algebra I, Literature, and Biology Keystone Exams. Additionally, students in any grade who are enrolled in a Keystone related course should participate.”

### **Which PTSD students take the Keystone Exams and when will they take them?**

**From PTSD:** All PTSD students who have completed Algebra 1, Biology, and Literature prior to January 2013 will be taking those corresponding exams January 9-16, 2013. Re-tests for non-proficient students and those completing the courses in the spring will be conducted May 13-24, 2013.

### **How long does a Keystone Exam take a student to complete?**

**From PDE:** “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.”

**From PTSD:** PSSA Reading and Math are generally scheduled during a four day testing window that includes both AM and PM sessions. PSSA Writing generally is completed during a separate two day period and PSSA Science typically takes a full day for students to complete. For our 11th graders, the Keystones may actually take less time to complete than the PSSA did in the past.

### **How do the Keystone Exams impact graduation requirements?**

**From PTSD:** “Demonstrate proficiency on all state required assessments and/or local assessments aligned with the academic standards.” Therefore, at PTSD, with the class of 2013 and beyond, students must earn a Proficient or Advanced score on the Algebra 1, Biology, and Literature Keystones Exams in order to graduate (to replace required proficiency on the PSSA).

**From PDE:** “Beginning with the class of 2017, students must demonstrate proficiency on the Algebra 1, Literature, and Biology Keystone Exams to graduate. Students will be offered multiple opportunities to take the Keystones throughout their high school careers.”



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### How are we preparing our students for the keystones at PTSD?

**From PTSD:** We have discussed the keystones with our high schools staff. They believe that our students are already well prepared for successful completion of the Keystone exams. Several of the departmental teams are working on packets to re-familiarize students with concepts learned in past coursework.

### How does this impact my 8<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> grade student in PTSD?

**From PTSD:** An 8<sup>th</sup> grader who has completed Algebra I and/or Biology will be testing in those areas in January, as well as taking the PSSA Reading, Math, Science and Writing tests in March-April. For our 11<sup>th</sup> graders, the three Keystone exams will replace their PSSA exams. 11<sup>th</sup> graders will take AP exams that correspond to their coursework in May. Both groups will have an opportunity to re-test on the keystones (where they scored not proficient) during the May 13-14 testing window, or to complete the Keystone Exam that matches a course they have completed in the spring of 2013.

### When and where will my child take the Keystone exams?

	PTHS (Jan. 9-16, 2012)	PTHS (May 13-23, 2013)	PTMS (May 13-23, 2013)
8th Grader (taking Algebra 1 or Biology now)			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8th Grader (done with Algebra 1 or Biology)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
9-11th Grader (taking Algebra 1, Biology, or Literature now)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
9-11th Grader (done with Algebra 1, Biology or Literature)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

**Sources:** PDE's document: "[Information for Parents or Guardians](#)", and PTSD's School Board Policy [5127: Graduation Requirements](#)