

T/E School District's Approach to Keystone Exams

Updated December 28, 2020

As required by the state, Keystone Exams are administered to students in the T/E School District currently enrolled in Algebra 1, Biology, and Literature. Keystone Exams are state-required tests currently planned for three purposes: student accountability, school accountability, and teacher accountability.

Student accountability. Legislation in October 2018 established new pathways for students in the classes of 2023 (grade 10 for the 2020-2021 school year) and beyond to meet the statewide graduation requirement. Remediation and retesting are not required for any student.

Students can meet the statewide graduation requirement by:

- Scoring proficient or advanced on each Keystone Exam.
- Earning a satisfactory composite score of 4452 on the three Keystone Exams (Algebra I, Biology and Literature). A composite score is the sum of the scale scores for the three exams. Students who meet the board-approved composite score must also score proficient on one of the three exams and no less than basic on the other two.
- Earning a passing grade on the courses associated with each Keystone Exam, and satisfactorily complete one of the following: an alternative assessment (SAT, PSAT, ACT), advanced coursework (AP level concurrent enrollment courses), pre-apprenticeship, or acceptance in a 4-year nonprofit institution of higher education for college-level coursework.
- Earning a passing grade on the courses associated with each Keystone Exam, and pass the National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) or the National Institute of Metalworking Skills (NIMS) assessment in an approved Career and Technical Education concentration.
- Earning a passing grade on the courses associated with each Keystone Exam, and demonstrate readiness for postsecondary engagement through three pieces of evidence from the student's career portfolio aligned to student goals and career plan. Examples of evidence will include SAT Subject tests, AP level concurrent coursework, higher education acceptance, community learning project, completion of an internship, externship or co-op or full-time employment.

School accountability. The state requires all students to take Keystone Exams in Algebra 1, Literature, and Biology to measure the effectiveness of all schools. Results for each school are gathered and published annually. The State has established the Future Ready PA Index which is comprised on multiple measures of student achievement, including Keystone Exam results.

The first requirement is that all students must participate in the Algebra 1, Literature, and Biology Keystone Exams at least once before the end of 11th grade. **Even though the exams are not a graduation requirement for students in grade 11, these students are still required to take the Keystone Exams for the purposes of school accountability. Remediation and retesting are not required for any student.**

Additionally, Keystone Exams are the statewide assessment that Pennsylvania uses to comply with accountability requirements in the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Each school district is expected to achieve 95 percent participation on its statewide exams.

Teacher accountability. Since the 2013-14 school year, School Performance Profile scores have been incorporated into the evaluation of each teacher in a particular school. The school's profile score will comprise 15-20% of teacher ratings for each teacher assigned to the school. Since 2014-15, the profile scores have been incorporated into principal evaluations at the same percentage. The use of student achievement data to evaluate teachers and principals was enacted into law by the state legislature in June 2012.

TESD philosophy. The T/E School District believes remediation and retesting of students may lead to increased student stress and limited opportunities to pursue a broad range of elective courses. The new pathways provide students with options other than retesting.

The T/E School District has demonstrated a tradition of excellence that transcends performance on high stakes tests. Students regularly graduate on time, and nearly all students attend two- or four-year colleges. The courses offered in all grades provide a rich educational experience that develops competencies in many skills that are not measured by Keystone Exams, including creativity, collaboration, critical thinking skills, and technological skills. Our primary goal is to maintain this essence of a T/E education. We will continue to work with students to meet the requirements for school accountability, while minimizing the collective impact of exam preparation on instructional time. We will work diligently to give each student the best chance for success to reach proficiency on each Keystone Exam.

For the past several years, the state has provided mixed messages about Keystone Exam requirements. Each new school year has brought changes to the testing mandates. As new information is released, we may be required to modify the District position. We will continue to keep families informed as new developments occur. The District thanks the entire community for your continued support of the students of T/E.