

Keystone Exams and Pittsburgh Public Schools

Education Committee Meeting
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Dr. Jerri Lippert
Deb Friss
Allison McCarthy

Starting this year, the State will begin to transition from PSSA exams to Keystone exams.

This will impact students in grades 8-12.

Your student has likely taken PSSA tests in Reading, Math, Writing and Science in prior years. However, starting this year, high school students will begin to take **Keystone exams**, rather than PSSA's.

Keystone's are *similar* to the PSSA, but are aligned to different standards.

NOTE: 8th graders in 2012-2013 will take PSSAs in Reading, Math, Science and Writing AND the Algebra Keystone if enrolled in Algebra

What is a Keystone Exam?

Keystone Exams are end-of-course exams designed to assess how much students know in specific content areas

- They are standardized tests that all students will take
- They are *mostly* multiple choice
- Students can take them more than once
- Like the PSSA, they are also scored on an Advanced (4), Proficient (3), Basic (2) and Below Basic (1) scale

What content areas will have Keystone Exams?

Students take the corresponding Keystone at the END of the year when enrolled in the following courses:

- Algebra I
- English II
- Biology

10th and 11th graders will have to take a Keystone even if they have previously taken these courses.

(example: An 11th grader will take the Literature Keystone this year, but took English II in 10th grade).

Why is PPS using the Keystone Exams?

PSSA exams are based **Pennsylvania Academic Content Standards**, while Keystone exams are based on **Common Core State Standards (CCSS)**.

Pennsylvania is one of 48 states that have adopted these standards.

The Common Core State Standards:

- Provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them.
- Are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers.

The goal of the CCSS is to nationally improve education and curriculum to ensure that all ***students are ready for college, workforce training and life.***

Keystone Exams and Graduation Requirements

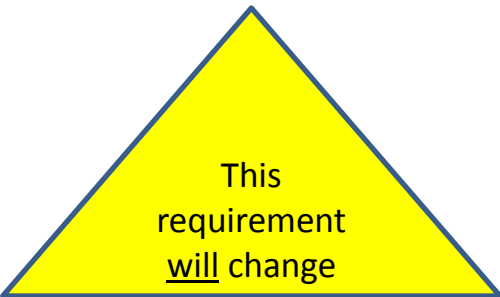
We Want ALL of Our Students to Graduate

This year, graduating Seniors will have to meet the following requirements:

1. **Acquire 26.5 Credits (4 Math, 4 English, 4 Social Studies, 4 Science, etc)**
2. **Complete a Graduation Project**
3. Demonstrate Proficiency on the Math, Reading and Writing PSSA through either:
 - A score of proficient or advanced on the PSSA
 - Or completion of a PSSA Portfolio and/or a PSSA Math course









These
requirements
will not
change



This
requirement
will change

For students in grades 8, 9, 10 and 11, Keystone's will become part of the graduation requirements instead of PSSA's (#3 above).

Graduation Requirements at a Glance

Graduation Requirements	12 th Graders	9-11 th Graders	8 th Graders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A minimum of 26.5 credits (4 credits in Math, English, Science & Math; 7 elective credits; 1 health; 2 PE) 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete a Graduation Project (.5 credit) 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate Proficiency (scoring Proficient or Advanced) on a Standardized Test <u>or</u> Local Assessment 	Math, Reading and Writing PSSA	Algebra & Literature Keystone	Algebra, Literature & Biology Keystone

Graduating Seniors (class of 2013) Are in a Unique Situation

Current 12th graders' Graduation Requirements do not include any Keystone Exams. **However, the way students can meet the *PSSA Reading* proficiency requirement has changed.**

To graduate, SENIORS must:

1. Acquire 26.5 Credits (4 Math, 4 English, 4 Social Studies, 4 Science, etc)
2. Complete a Graduation Project
3. Demonstrate Proficiency on the Math, Reading and Writing PSSA

If students did not pass the Math and/or Reading and/or Writing PSSA in grade 11, they could re-take the PSSA *one more time* in **October**.

12th graders can also fulfill the PSSA requirements by:

- Completing the Standards Based Math (SBM) course
- Completing 4 Culminating Projects, meeting the PSSA portfolio requirement (2 from Reading, 2 from Writing) in your English IV course.

*CTE/SOS Students have different course requirements to meet the 26.5 required credits.

Graduation Requirements for 9th, 10th and 11th Graders Include Algebra & Literature Keystone Exams.

To graduate, Freshman, Sophomores and Juniors must:

1. Acquire 26.5 Credits (4 Math, 4 English, 4 Social Studies, 4 Science, etc)
2. Complete a Graduation Project (embedded in the 11th grade ELA course)
3. Demonstrate Proficiency on the **Algebra** and **Literature** Keystone

Rather than taking the PSSA's students will start taking the Algebra and Literature Keystones. Remember, students will have more than one opportunity to take the Keystone exams if needed.

If students reach the 12th grade and have not passed the Algebra and Literature Keystone exams, students can fulfill the Keystone requirement by:

- Completing a 12th grade Keystone-aligned Math course (name TBD)
- Completing 4 Culminating Projects (2 from Reading, 2 from Writing) in the English IV course.

NOTE: These students will also take the Biology Keystone exam, even though passing it is not a graduation requirement.

Graduation Requirements for 8th Graders include Algebra, Literature & Biology Keystone Exams.

To graduate High School, current 8th graders must:

1. Acquire 26.5 Credits (4 Math, 4 English, 4 Social Studies, 4 Science, etc)
2. Complete a Graduation Project (embedded in the 11th grade ELA course)
3. Demonstrate Proficiency on the **Algebra** , **Literature** and **Biology** Keystones

Students will take both a PSSA and Keystone exam during 8th grade if they are enrolled in Algebra. **Remember, students will have more than one opportunity to take the Keystone exams if needed.**

If students reach the 12th grade and have not passed the Algebra, Literature and/or Biology Keystone exams, students can fulfill the Keystone requirement by:

- Completing a 12th grade Keystone-aligned Math course (name TBD)
- Completing 4 Culminating Projects (2 from Reading, 2 from Writing) in your English IV course.
- Completing a Keystone-aligned Science course (TBD)

2012-13: What Exams Will My Student Take and When?

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- All students will take Keystones required for graduation. Students will have multiple opportunities to take and pass these exams.
- If students don't demonstrate proficiency on a Keystone, they will have an opportunity to meet this requirement through a course or project.
- Generally, students take the Keystone's in MAY if they are enrolled in a Keystone course, and during the WINTER if they have already completed the course.
- Once students pass a Keystone, they do not have to take it again.
- Even though the Biology Keystone is not required for students in grades 9-11 to graduate, they will still need to take the exam at least one time.

What Exams Will My Student Take and When: 12th Graders (class of 2013)

Students re-took the PSSA this **October** if they had not passed the **Math, Reading and/or Writing PSSA**

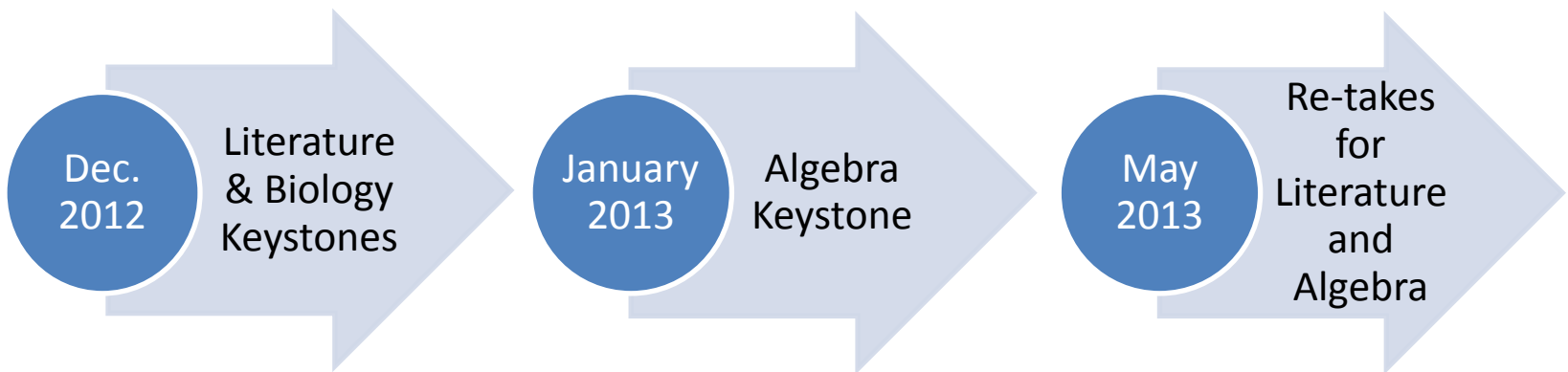
Additionally,

- If a student has not yet passed the Math PSSA, they should be enrolled in Standards Based Math (SBM) course.
- If a student has not yet passed the Reading or Writing PSSA, they will work with their 12th grade teacher to complete 4 culminating projects.

What Exams Will My Student Take and When: 11th Graders (Class of 2014)

11th graders have already taken the courses that Keystones are aligned to (Algebra I, English II, Biology), which means they will have to take all three Keystones this year.

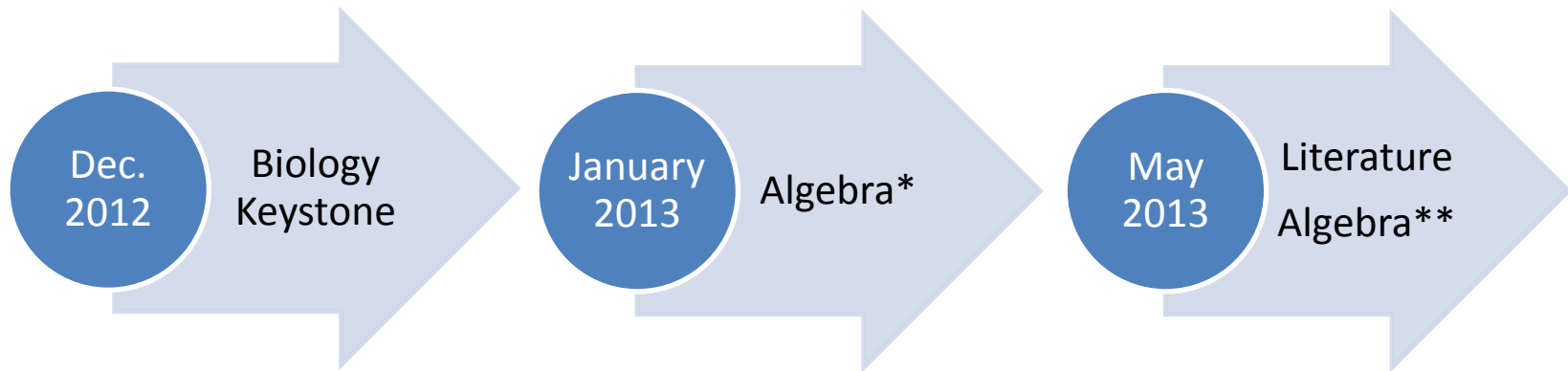
Keystones 11th graders will need to take this year and when they will take them:



What Exams Will My Student Take and When: 10th Graders (Class of 2015)

10th graders are currently enrolled in English II. Most took Algebra I in 9th grade; all took Biology in 9th grade.

Keystones 10th graders will need to take this year and when they will take them:



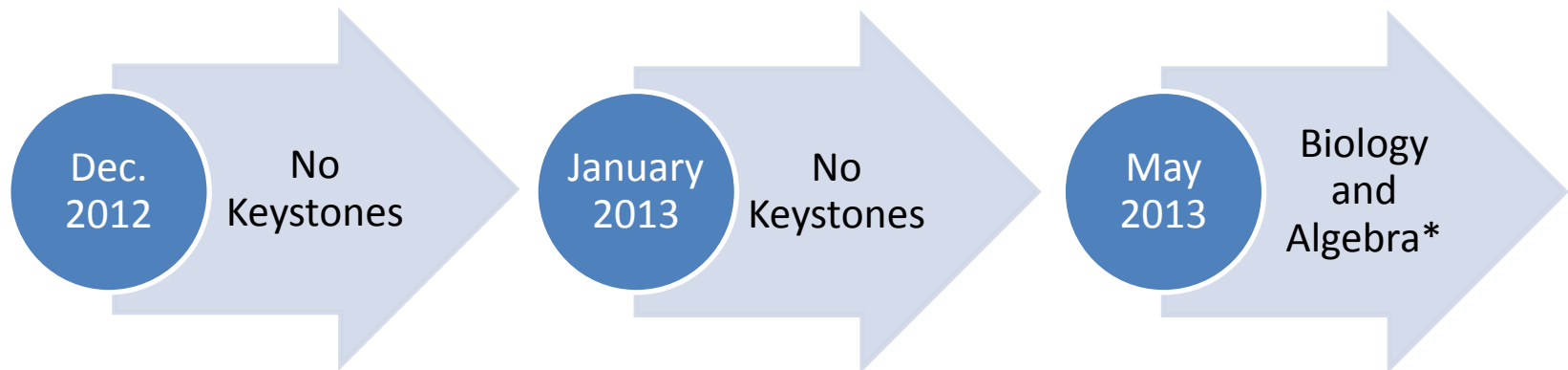
*If students have already taken Algebra I, they will most likely take the Keystone in January.

** Students enrolled in an Algebra 1 course or Geometry AB-BC will take Algebra Keystone in May

What Exams Will My Student Take and When: 9th Graders (Class of 2016)

Current 9th graders are enrolled in Biology, and most are enrolled in Algebra I. Students will wait to take the Literature Keystone until they are in 10th grade and enrolled in English II.

Keystones 9th graders will need to take this year and when they will take them:

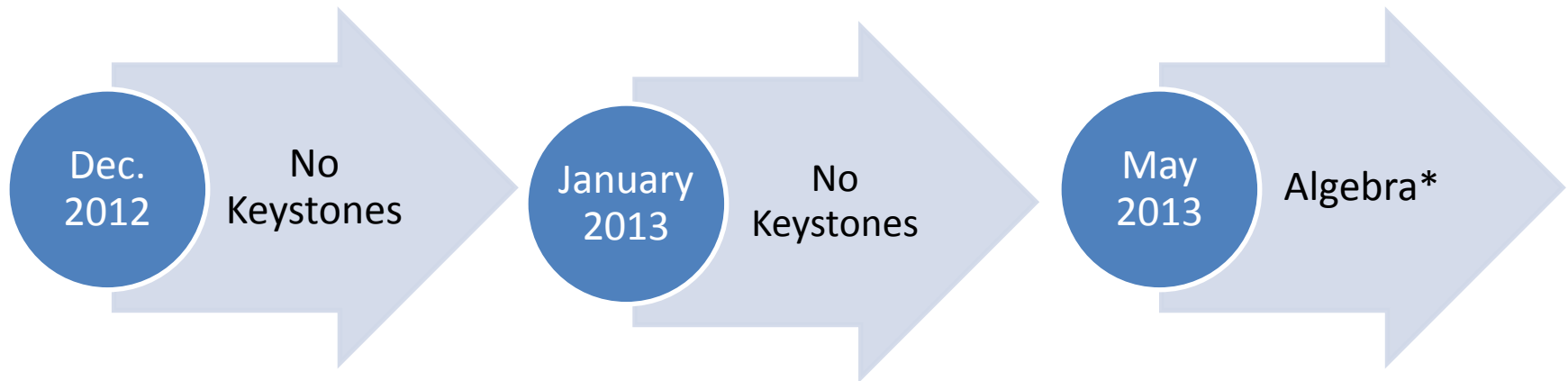


*If students have already taken Algebra I, they will most likely take the Keystone in January. If a student is currently enrolled in Algebra I, they will take the Keystone in May.

What Exams Will My Student Take and When: 8th Graders (Class of 2017)

Some 8th graders may be enrolled in Algebra I this year. If so, they will take the Algebra Keystone. Students that are not enrolled in Algebra will wait to take the Algebra Keystone in 9th grade. All students wait to take the Biology Keystone until 9th grade, and the Literature Keystone until 10th grade.

Keystones 8th graders will need to take this year and when they will take them:



* Students will only take the Algebra Keystone in May if they are currently enrolled in Algebra.

2012-13 Keystone Exams at a Glance

Exams by Grade	Wave 1 December 3-14, 2012	Wave 2 January 9-23, 2013	MAY May 13-24, 2013
11 th Graders	Literature & Biology	Algebra	Re-take opportunities in Algebra and Literature
10 th Graders	Biology	Algebra	Literature (ALL) Algebra (Students currently enrolled in Geometry AB-BC or other Algebra 1 course)
9 th Graders	N/A	Algebra (only if the student has already taken Algebra)	Biology (ALL) Algebra (Students currently enrolled in Algebra 1)
8 th Graders	N/A	N/A	Algebra (Students currently enrolled in Algebra 1)

Students in Grades K-8

Students in grades 3-8 will continue to take the PSSA. However, over time PSSA's will become aligned to the Common Core, rather than the PA Academic Standards.

	PSSA Aligned to PA Academic Standards	Stand-alone Field Tests	PSSA Aligned to PA Common Core Standards
2012-13	Math Gr. 3-8 Reading Gr. 3-8 Writing Gr 5, 8 Science Gr. 4, 8	English Language Arts Gr. 3-5	
2013-14	Math Gr. 6-8 Reading Gr. 6-8 Writing Gr. 8 Science Gr. 4, 8	English Language Arts Gr. 6-8	Math Gr. 3-5 ELA Gr. 3-5
2014-15	Science Gr. 4, 8		Math Gr. 3-8 ELA Gr. 3-8

Special Education Students

- Students enrolled in general education courses will follow the Keystone guidelines for those courses, unless otherwise stated in their IEP.
- Students who qualify for the Pennsylvania Alternative State Assessment (PASA) will continue to take the PASA (No keystones).
- Students receiving instruction in support rooms (modified courses) will follow a modified testing and re-testing schedule. Students will also complete any local assessments as part of a course.

English as a Second Language Students

Appropriate testing accommodations will be made for ESL students, and will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Three separate accommodations are allowed:

1. Word-to word translation dictionaries, without definitions and without pictures (for Keystone Algebra or Keystone Biology only; not for any part of the Keystone Literature test or on any part of the Keystone English Composition tests)
2. Qualified interpreters/sight translators (Keystone Algebra and Keystone Biology only; not for any part of the Keystone Literature Exam or on any part of the Keystone English Composition (except for the essay prompts Keystone English Composition tests)
3. Spanish/English Mathematics, Science, Algebra, and Biology tests

We are currently working with our ESL department and will provide more details soon.

Things to Remember

- Current 12th graders had one more opportunity to take the PSSA.
- Students currently in grades 9-11, you must demonstrate proficiency on the Literature and Algebra Keystone to graduate
- For students currently in the 8th grade, you must demonstrate proficiency on the Literature, Algebra and Biology Keystone to graduate
- Once you have passed a Keystone, you do not have to take it again.
- Students have multiple opportunities to take Keystones.

In future years, pending state funding, additional Keystone Exams will be administered. We will keep parents updated as this information is shared with us.