



BOYERTOWN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

BOYERTOWN AREA SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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The New Role of Keystone Assessments as End-of-Course Assessments

Context:

In the Fall of 2018, the Pennsylvania House, Senate, and Governor approved Senate Bill 1095 which delays the usage of Keystone Exams as a graduation requirement until the school year 2021-2022 (the Class of 2022). The Bill also outlines one of four pathways a student may earn his or her diploma as it pertains to the Keystone Exams and the district graduation requirements. Click [here](#) for an easy to understand summary of the Bill and its implication.

Graduation Requirements Pathway Options:

Below is a chart that explains the different pathways by which students can satisfy the graduation requirements outlined in SB 1095. Please note both the variety of options available for students via the Bill but also the emphasis that each pathway places on either scoring proficient on Keystone Assessments or passing the class that is designated as a Keystone preparation course.

Option 1: Keystone Proficiency Pathway Scoring proficient or advanced on each Keystone Exam (Biology, Literature, Algebra)	
Option 2: Keystone Composite Pathway <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Pass each Keystone class (Biology, Literature, Algebra)•Earn satisfactory composite score on the three Keystone Exams (at least one proficient and no less than basic)	Option 3: Alternate Assessment Pathway <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Pass each Keystone class (Biology, Literature, Algebra) and one of the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Obtain a satisfactory score on any one of several standardized tests (SAT, PSAT, ACT, ASVAB, AP)•Completion of dual enrollment course•Completion of pre-apprenticeship program•Acceptance into 4-year College or University
Option 4: Evidence Based Pathway <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Pass each Keystone class (Biology, Literature, Algebra)•One of the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attainment of established score on: ACT <u>WorkKeys</u>, SAT subject test, AP• Acceptance into institution of higher education other than a 4-year• Attainment of an industry-recognized credential• Completion of dual enrollment course•Two additional pieces of evidence:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One or more of the options above• Completion of service learning project• Proficient or Advanced on a Keystone Exam• Letter guaranteeing full-time employment• Completion of an internship or cooperative education program• Compliance with NCAA's core courses for college-bound student athletes with minimum 2.0 GPA	Option 5: Career and Technical Education (CTE) Pathway <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Pass each Keystone class (Biology, Literature, Algebra)•Attainment of an industry-based competency certification•Demonstrate a high likelihood of success on an approved industry-based competency assessment•Readiness for continued meaningful engagement in the CTE program of study



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Keystone Assessment Background information:

The Keystone exams are an end-of-course assessment in Biology, Algebra I, and English 10. Each exam is aligned to the PA Common Core Eligible Content and is designed to evaluate student success in learning the skills and knowledge associated with the study of each of those subject areas. The intention of the Keystone Exam is to serve as a graduation requirement and method of feedback for students, parents, and schools. The Keystone Assessments also serve as a very valuable resource to provide one snapshot of a student's mastery of specific course material.

New Use of Keystone Assessment:

Beginning in the 2019 - 2020 school year, all students enrolled in a course that leads to a Keystone Assessment (Biology, Algebra I, and English 10) will use each student's Keystone Assessment score as a replacement for a traditional EOCA. The Keystone exam score will be counted as one-fifth of the students' final grade for the class.. So, for example, students who are completing English 10 in the upcoming year will take the Keystone Assessment for English Literature, and their score on that assessment will be calculated into their final grade (counting as 20%) for their English 10 course.

Students at BASH who take a Keystone exam are not required to take an End of Course Assessment (EOCA aka- "final exam") in that course due to concern of repetitive testing as well as the importance that these exams now serve as a potential pathway to complete graduation requirements. As demonstrated above, while the exams still have an impact on graduation, it should be noted that there are other, alternative pathways that remain open for graduation should a student not reach the benchmark of proficiency on any Keystone Assessment.

Frequently Asked Questions:

- **Why are Keystones now counted as a grade?**

All courses at BASH incorporate a form of an EOCA to assess a students' overall mastery of course material, as well as to prepare students for collegiate level exams and work-place certification tests. In order to avoid administering another high-stakes



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exam for our students in Keystone courses, we are electing to use the score that the student earns on their Keystone exam as their EOCA/ final exam grade.

- **Do other schools do something similar to this?**

Yes, we have been in communication with other schools who implement the Keystone exam as a final exam grade. Through our collaboration with them, as well as discussion between our administration, department chairs, and Keystone teachers, we feel we can successfully integrate this assessment method at BASH.

- **How will the school convert the Keystone score to a traditional school grade?**

On the score report that the school receives, there is a conversion chart that converts the Keystone score (on a scale from 1200-1800) to a traditional percentage out of 100%.

- **How will the Keystone exam affect a student's final grade?**

A Keystone exam will account for 20% of a student's final grade. In addition, since the Keystone exam assesses year-long achievement, students in a Keystone course will not be required to take a midterm exam (as required in other courses).

- **Based on previous years' data, how might this affect the students?**

Based on the 2019 test results and grades:

- ❖ Bio- 1 more student would have failed the class if counted as an EOCA
- ❖ Bio- 3 more students would have passed the class if counted as an EOCA
- ❖ ELA- 1 more student would have failed the class if counted as an EOCA
- ❖ Alg- 5 more students would have failed the class if counted as an EOCA.

Based on the 2018 test results and grades:

- ❖ Bio- 15 more students would have failed the class if counted as an EOCA
- ❖ Bio- 6 more students would have passed the class if counted as an EOCA
- ❖ ELA- 3 more students would have failed the class if counted as an EOCA



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- ❖ ELA- 2 more students would have passed the class if counted as an EOCA
- ❖ Alg- 7 more students would have failed the class if counted as an EOCA
- ❖ Alg- 1 more student would have passed the class if counted as an EOCA

The 2017 results were very similar, though we do not have exact numbers to share.

Overall, these results are similar to traditional classes where a student's pass/failure level is dependent upon EOCA performance.

- **How will students who have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) be affected?**

Students with an IEP will still receive instruction that follows their individualized learning plan and the accommodations used throughout the course of the year for both their instruction and test administration. Students will continue to utilize the same testing accommodations that they receive during testing (e.g. small group, read-aloud directions and/or questions, transcription, etc).

- **How will a student's report card look on June 7 when they are posted, but the Keystone exams have not been delivered to schools and calculated into a student's final grade?**

A "K" will serve as a placeholder in the final grade category on the report card. The 4th quarter grade will be calculated and posted on the report card.

- **When will the student and family be notified of the final grade?**

Traditionally, Keystone exam scores have been delivered to schools in early July. The school has no control or say when the state releases the scores to the schools. Over the summer, within a week or two after receiving the scores, the appropriate class grades will be updated to reflect the final grade. Once complete, these grades will be posted on the Campus Parent Portal (CPP) for students and parents/guardians. If a student has failed the course due to the Keystone exam, a BASH administrator will make contact by phone and/or email.



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- **Will the plan to make the Keystone count as an EOCA be announced to parents?**

Yes. It is in the Program of Studies, however we plan to advertise to the students and families at the start of the 2019/2020 school year.

- **Does Boyertown school district require Keystone Exam participation for graduation?**

No. We encourage all students to take the exam, as it is a measure of student ability and success compared to the PA Common Core Standards and other PA students, however it is not a requirement.

- **If a parent opts a student out of Keystone Exams, will that student take a traditional teacher created EOCA to fill the EOCA grade? If not, how will the final grade be determined?**

The student will take an EOCA that will mimic the Keystone exam. The student will be required to show up on the days of Keystone exams and will take the EOCA. Students will complete two modules of the assessment to complete that will be a mixture of multiple-choice and open-ended questions.

- **Does Boyertown School District require proficiency on the Keystone Exam for graduation.**

No, but according to Bill 1095, it is one of several pathways that a student can take to earn their diploma.

- **If a parent opts a student out of Keystone Exams, is there any consequence determined by the Boyertown School District? For example, will a student who is opted out of a Keystone Exam be required to complete a PDE created Project Based Assessment (PBA), take a Keystone class, or in general have another consequence?**



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No. The result of opting out will result in taking an EOCA that will be similar to the Keystone exam during the Keystone testing time. Students who do not take the Boyertown created final exam will be treated like any other student who misses a final exam and will receive a 0% for this portion of their final grade. The state does not receive these results as it is a locally developed and administered assessment.

- **If a student fails the Keystone Exam, does he or she have to retake the course?**

No. If a student passes a course (with the Keystone score averaged in), but does not score proficient or advanced, the student does not need to retake the course.

- **If a student fails the Keystone Exam, does her or she need to retake the exam?**

The student *may* have the option to retake the Keystone exam in the winter following their first attempt in order to pass the exam and/or improve their overall final grade in the course (if he/she failed the course). If this is the case, the student will receive remediation support before taking the exam. The student's grade will be recalculated based on the highest score the student achieved. Only students who score basic or below will be permitted to retake the Keystone exam.

- **What happens if I fail the course?**

Just like any other course, the student will be allowed to take a summer credit recovery course (upon teacher recommendation *and* at parent/guardian expense) or repeat the course during the next school year. Since the results for the Keystone Assessment are typically released in July, students will be given extended time to complete the summer school credit recovery course if needed. A third option is available to students who feel that they can pass the course with a higher score on the re-take. A student can choose to go through remediation in the fall and retake the exam. If the new score on the Keystone Assessment allows for the student to pass the course, the student will retroactively receive credit. (This third option is recommended



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for students who are close to passing the course and would be helped by a higher Keystone exam score.)



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