

KEYSTONE EXAM and PROJECT BASED ASSESSMENT POLICY

What follows is information taken directly from PDE regarding the Keystone Exams and Keystone Project Based Assessment (PBA). Please be aware that all public and charter schools in the state of PA must comply with these regulations from PDE. For more information regarding the Keystone Exams and/or PBA, please view the documents posted to our school website from PDE titled “Keystone Exams Parent Overview” and “PBA Keystone Project FAQ.” PDE released these documents to schools, and PDE is currently in the process of developing a parent informational document about the PBA that Charter Arts will post as soon as we have access to it.

Introduction from PDE FAQ:

“Keystone Exams are state-developed end-of-course assessments. Pursuant to Chapter 4 regulations, each Keystone Exam is designed in modules that reflect distinct, related academic content common to the traditional progression of coursework. The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) has developed a project based assessments system (PBA) that is aligned with the modules for each Algebra 1, Biology, and Literature Keystone Exam for students who are unable to demonstrate proficiency on a Keystone Exam or Keystone Exam module. Successful completion of a PBA aligned to the Keystone Exam or Keystone Exam module on which a student did not demonstrate proficiency shall satisfy the Chapter 4 Keystone Exam graduation requirements.” In the FAQ, PDE further clarifies that students are only qualified to participate in the PBA once they have taken the content-related course and were unsuccessful in achieving a score or proficient on the Keystone Exam after at least two attempts.

“If upon inspection, parents or guardians find the Keystone Exam (or portion of) to be in conflict with their religious beliefs and wish their students to be excused from the assessment, the right of the parents or guardians will not be denied upon written request that states the objection to the applicable school district superintendent, charter school chief executive officer or AVTS director.” Later in the FAQ, PDE further clarifies that “students who opt out for religious reasons must participate in the PBA; thus the transcript will reflect the earned score on the PBA,” (PDE FAQ).

“Based upon Chapter 4 regulations, the information presented on a transcript shall include the highest performance level demonstrated by a student on the associated Keystone Exam, validated local assessment, or project based assessment at the time the transcript is produced. If a student receives a satisfactory mark on the PBA, the transcript reflects a proficient performance level. Note: This requirement takes effect with the 2016-2017 graduating class,” (PDE FAQ).

What does this mean for a student with an IEP?

All students with an IEP are required to take the Keystone Exam at least once to fulfill their participation in the statewide assessment to comply with federal regulations. If students with IEP’s take the Keystone Exams and do not attain proficiency, the students can retake Keystone Exams, complete the PBA, or

complete IEP goals. Together the IEP team makes the determination of how a student with an IEP meets graduation requirements. However, the IEP team cannot write into a student's IEP that he/she doesn't have to participate in the Keystone Exam, as participation is both a state and federal requirement. Only after a student does not earn a score of proficient can the IEP team meet to discuss alternate plans for the student to meet graduation requirements. As outlined in the PDE FAQ: "Students may move to the project after one attempt of the Keystone Exam if the IEP so states. As written in the IEP, all SDI included in the student's IEP applies ... The IEP team determines the criteria the student will meet regarding graduation requirements."

PDE Keystone Parent Test Review Policy

"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 to the school district superintendent or charter school CEO prior to the beginning of the exam(s) to request to excuse their child from the exam(s)," (PDE Assessment Coordinator Handbook).

Parents must complete this review and write a letter to the CEO requesting exemption every time the Keystone Exams are given. Again, as stated above, if a parent chooses to opt their child out of Keystone Exams for religious reasons, the child is then required participate in the PBA process. No exceptions will be granted. More information about the PBA process can be found in the PDE FAQ.

Charter Arts Parent Review Policy Details

- Parents must contact Carise Comstock, Dean of Academic Affairs, Curriculum, and Instruction, to request the opportunity to review the Keystone Exams. Parents will be able to review the exam no earlier than two weeks prior to the testing dates for each exam due to the PDE shipment dates of the testing materials. To make the request to review the exam(s), email: ccomstock@charterarts.org
- Prior to reviewing the Keystone Exam(s), parents must sign a "Parent Confidentiality Agreement" in accordance with 22 PA Code 4.4 to ensure the security and confidentiality of the assessment. This document ensures that parents agree to not "discuss, disseminate, or otherwise reveal the content of the assessment materials to anyone, including my own child(ren)" (PDE).
- Carise Comstock and/or Administration will escort parents/guardians during their visit to review the exam, and parents/guardians will not be allowed to be alone with students or with the test at any time during their visit, in order to ensure student safety and test security. Additionally, parents/guardians will not be allowed be in possession of cell phones, cameras, or other recording devices while they are reviewing the exam(s).
- After reviewing the exam(s), if a parent/guardian wishes to request that their child be excused from the exam(s), s/he must submit a written request to Charter Arts CEO Diane LaBelle. To make this request, email: dlabelle@charterarts.org

Charter Arts Keystone Exam Student Testing Code of Conduct

Students ARE expected to:

- Listen to, read, and follow all directions given by testing administrators and proctors.
- Ask questions if directions are not clear.
- Read each question carefully before answering. Make sure to completely fill in the bubble for the answer that you have chosen and erase completely any answers that you change.
- Make sure that you don't skip any spaces or fill in the wrong sections in your test booklet.
- Keep your eyes on your own test.
- Check to make sure that you have completed all test items in each section before closing your test booklet or submitting your final responses online.
- Report any suspected cheating to your teacher or principal.
- Read for pleasure quietly after giving your testing documents to your test administrator or proctor.

Students are NOT ALLOWED to:

- Bring notes or textbooks to the test.
- Bring any electronic devices (e.g. cell phones) other than an approved calculator, if applicable, to the test. Electronic devices will be collected from students prior to entering the testing location and returned upon completion of each exam.
- Share a calculator with others.
- Talk during the testing session.
- Talk with others about questions on the test during or after the test.
- Take notes about the test to share with others.
- Leave an online test session until the session is complete or until instructed to do so.
- Take breaks during the exam.
- Students are only allowed to leave the room during an exam for an emergency situation (i.e. Fire Alarm or Emergency Evacuation).

Consequences for disrupting testing and/or breaking any of the above rules may include, but are not limited to:

- A "Do Not Score" label will be placed on the exam, and the student will need to retake the entire exam. School administration will contact the parent immediately.
- Student detention
- In-school and/or out-of-school suspension
- "Responsibility resulting in personal liability for damages caused by a breach of test security, including but not limited to liability and/or costs associated with any of the following: retesting students; recalculating student/school/district achievement data; developing/producing new test materials to replace compromised test materials; and investigations relating to the breach of test security" (PDE Assessment Coordinator Handbook).

Charter Arts Emergency Testing Procedures

- If an emergency were to occur, student test takers are to immediately evacuate the test site. The test administrator will be the last to leave the testing area.
- Administration will determine when it is safe for students to return to the building and testing site as per our regular safety procedures/policies. (This process will be followed regardless of whether testing occurs in the Black Box Theater, the ESS dept., or a classroom setting.)
- When this determination has been made, administration and/or the test coordinator will return to the test site prior to student arrival.
- Tests will be collected to ensure test security.
- Student test takers will then be allowed to re-enter testing site.
- Test administrators will then redistribute the tests and continue to proctor the exam.
- Depending upon the emergency, it is possible that testing may need to be suspended for the remainder of the day. If this is the case, the testing coordinator will secure the collected tests and wait for further direction from school administration.
- School administration, assessment coordinators, test administrators, and proctors must maintain test security to the best of his/her ability during an emergency disruption.

Letter from PDE regarding testing violations:

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 it is 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, is a violation of the federal Copyright Act. Penalties for violations for 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.

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. One step or rule required in all schools is that electronic devices are not permitted at test sites. Electronic devices include cell phones, smartphones, E-readers, Nooks, Kindles, iPads, 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. 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.

If a student 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, you will be contacted by the school. Students that ignore this directive will be subject to the schools' 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. In addition, the electronic device will be held by school staff and the device's stored photographs will be searched. School staff will also ask for permission to search other functions of the electronic device. If a photograph of the PPSSA or Keystone Exam is discovered or if permission to

search other functions of the electronic device is refused, the device will be held by school staff and, because 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.

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.

If you have any further questions about the Keystone Exams or the Project Based Assessment, please review the other documents posted to our website or visit www.pde.org.

Additionally, you may contact Charter Arts District Assessment Coordinator and Dean of Academic Affairs, Curriculum, and Instruction, Carise Comstock at ccomstock@charterarts.org.