

December 18, 2019

Dear Parents / Guardians,

On January 8-10 and 13-14, many of our high school students will be participating in the Keystone Exams. These tests are assessments done at the end of particular courses. They are required for students who had Mathematics (Algebra I), Science (Biology), and English (Literature) classes and who have yet to score a level of “Proficient” in these tests. The tests are designed to determine proficiency in these subject areas. The results give us useful information to help us evaluate curriculum, teaching, student engagement, and effort. These tests are also part of the mandated requirements issued by the commonwealth. The test scores will also be reported on student transcripts. Students will be scored as Advanced, Pass, Basic, or Below Basic. To be considered Proficient, a score of Advanced or Pass is needed.

The Algebra Keystone test will be offered on January 8 for those students who have completed the course and for those students who have not yet scored at the Proficient level. Students not being tested will report to school for a regular school day. The busses will run at the regular time.

As a parent or guardian, you have the right to review the Keystone exams prior to the examination period. This review must be done on January 6 or 7 or December 23. Reviews on December 23 require an appointment. Appointments are not needed for January 6 and 7.

If you review the tests and believe that there is a conflict with your religious beliefs, you must notify the Superintendent of Schools in writing outlining the conflict. Here is his address ...

Dr. Alan Lonoconus
Interim Superintendent of Schools
680 Fourth Street
Palmerton, PA 18071

You can also contact him via e-mail: alonoconus@palmerton.org

During the actual tests, students are not permitted to have any electronic devices. If they enter the classroom with a device, we are required by the commonwealth to collect it. We do not have the option of simply telling them to put it in their locker. We are required to collect it. The device will be returned after the exam is completed. Here is the related statement from the Pennsylvania Department of Education ... “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 easily be compromised.” “Penalties for violations of 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.” Please remind your child of this restriction.

We have been identifying ways to ensure that our students have optimal test taking conditions. You can certainly help us in this area. As a parent, please make sure that your child gets plenty

of rest each night before the test. Also, please make sure that they eat a good breakfast before coming to school.

As always, students will be able to have bottled water during the testing process. We will also provide a small snack to the students along with pencils and erasers. The school will be providing calculators to the students for the tests. If a student brings his/her own calculator, it will have to be approved by a teacher.

And finally, we ask that you make sure that your child is in school on the test days. Make-ups are not conducive to positive test taking results. Your child will be notified of the testing schedule.

If your child does not score at or above the “Proficient” level, we might have to alter their school schedule as part of a remediation effort. We will receive the test scores in March.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Paula A. Husar
Principal

cc:	A. Lonoconus	Interim Superintendent
	V. McHugh	Guidance Counselor (Grades 9 and 12)
	M. Schaffer	Guidance Counselor (Grades 10 and 11)
	D. Heaney	Director of Technology & Curriculum and Instruction