

February 21, 2021

Dear Parents / Guardians,

On February 22-25 and March 1-4, many of our high school students will be participating in the Keystone Exams. These tests are assessments done at the end of the particular courses. They are required for students who have had Mathematics (Algebra I), Science (Biology), and English 10(Literature) classes and who have yet to score a level of “Proficient” in these tests. These tests were cancelled in the Spring due to the COVID Pandemic. This year, they were delayed from their normal dates in January. 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, Proficient, Basic, or Below Basic. For the Class of 2023 and beyond, students need to be Proficient or Advanced.

The Algebra Keystone test will not be offered this winter as our Algebra course is a full year course. It would be better for us to test this subject at the end of the course, not mid-year. Students who have to retake this particular test because they did not reach the Proficient level for Algebra will also do this in the Spring.

Those students who are currently all virtual are also required to take the tests. Special arrangements will be made to have these students present in school on a number of Fridays to avoid contact with the other students. (Fridays are usually virtual days for all of our students.) Virtual students will be given the option to come in and take both sections of the test on one Friday or come in on two Fridays. If you decide to have your child do both sections of the test in one day, they may bring a lunch or a bagged lunch can be provided.

The Friday options are February 26, March 5, and March 19. Please contact the guidance office to set up testing times for your child.

We are always trying to find ways to ensure that our students have optimal test taking conditions. This is much more difficult this year due to our learning platform changes resulting from the COVID situation. All of these tests will be taken in the auditorium. They will be proctored by the guidance counselors and the principal. As a parent, you can help by making 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.

During the actual tests, students are not permitted to have any electronic devices. If they enter the auditorium 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.

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.

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

For the winter tests, we will receive the test scores / results in April. If your child does not score at or above the “Proficient” level, we may have to alter their school schedule as part of a remediation effort.

As a parent or guardian, you have the right to review the Keystone exams. Please make an appointment with the guidance office to review the test on Friday, February 19, or Friday, February 26.

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 her address.

Dr. Jodi Frankelli
Superintendent of Schools
680 Fourth Street
Palmerton, PA 18071

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

Sincerely,

Paula A. Husar
Principal

cc:	J. Frankelli	Superintendent
	J. Schuler	
	V. McHugh	Guidance Counselor (Grades 9 and 10)
	M. Schaffer	Guidance Counselor (Grades 11 and 12)