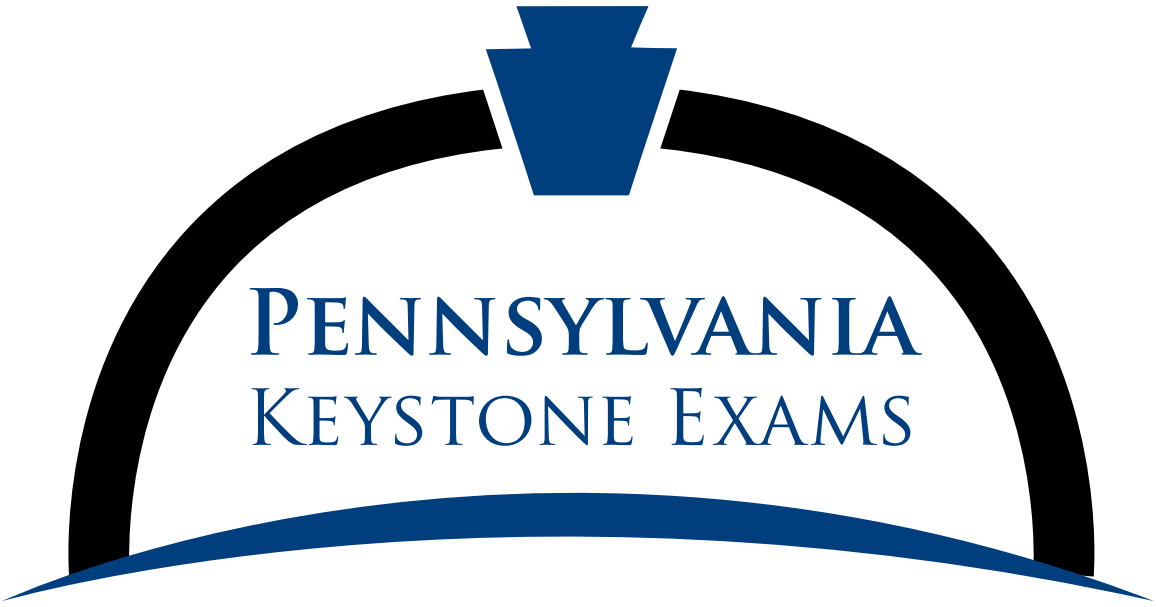
Pennsylvania
Department of Education



Summer 2026 Keystone Exams

Handbook for Assessment Coordinators

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PART I – IMPORTANT INFORMATION

A. Summer Keystone Biology

The Biology assessment is not aligned to the new STEELS standards for the 2026 summer Keystone Exams. The Summer Biology test is aligned to Pennsylvania's former Science Standards ("legacy" standards). Participation is limited to students who are retaking the Biology test to improve their best score calculation from a Biology assessment taken in Winter 25–26 or earlier.

STEELS aligned and "legacy" aligned assessments cannot be combined to provide a best-score-to-date calculation.

The STEELS aligned assessment cannot be combined with previous Biology assessment results to generate a best score to date. All students taking the 2026 spring Biology assessment will be considered first-time testers, regardless of whether they have taken the Biology test previously.

If a student wants to attempt to improve a best-score calculation from the previous ("legacy") Biology test, an assessment coordinator must choose the Legacy Standards Assessment form for the student. To assign this specific Biology form, the assessment coordinator must select the Legacy Standards accommodation within the Student Management section of the DRC INSIGHT Portal.

B. Paper-Based Secure Materials

Students who are eligible to test on paper will need to have a Print on Demand test printed locally. See the *Accommodations Guidelines* on the PDE website to determine eligibility for Print on Demand Paper/Pencil Testing. Students needing a Print on Demand test will need to have the appropriate accommodation marked on the student's record. This is done through the Student Management section of the DRC INSIGHT Portal.

Accessing the Print on Demand test is done through the Test Management, Manage Test Sessions section of the DRC INSIGHT Portal. Note: To print an assessment, the Portal user must have an account and the "Test Session – Print Test" permission. PDE recommends this permission stay with the DAC except for extenuating circumstances. When printing, SACs must use 8.5 × 11 paper and choose to "fit" the PDF to the paper. SACs should separate the modules into two sections and give TAs the module-specific section when assessed.

Students who require a paper version of the large print or Braille assessment can order these through the Additional Materials Ordering system. Students using a large print or Braille test will need to have the appropriate accommodation marked on the students' records so that the proper form is used during the transcription process.

After all paper testing (large print, Braille, or Print on Demand), student responses must be entered into the DRC INSIGHT system before the test window closes. PDE recommends that the transcription occur while the student is in the testing room so the student can check their work. If this is not possible, the transcription should occur as soon as possible and must occur within 24 hours of the test session. Two individuals must handle the transcription: either the SAC and a TA who has been trained by the SAC or two TAs trained by the SAC. Students' responses are copied exactly as they appear, including errors. All paper-based secure materials must be securely destroyed by the LEA after transcription is completed.

C. PIMS Created Test Sessions

DRC will pre-populate all schools' online test sessions based on information provided to DRC from PIMS. Schools can edit and delete these test sessions in the DRC INSIGHT Portal as needed.

With the PIMS-based solution, teachers will not be linked to the pre-populated test sessions. However, PDE strongly encourages schools to upload teachers to the DRC INSIGHT Portal and link them to the pre-populated test sessions. This will help schools meet PDE's requirement for all sites to keep record of the Test Administrator for each student. This information must be recorded and kept on file for three years.

D. Administration Manuals

Building Principals, District Assessment Coordinators (DAC), and School Assessment Coordinators (SAC) who coordinate the administration of the assessments must become familiar with this handbook and the *Directions for Administration Manual*s. The purpose of this handbook is to provide guidelines and procedures for testing. It includes details regarding test security, student participation, and managing the assessments. The *Directions for Administration Manual*s provide step-by-step instructions for administering the assessments.

School staff may make copies (in full or in part) of this handbook and the *Directions for Administration Manual*s. PDF versions of these documents can be found on the PDE website at https://www.pa.gov/agencies/education/programs-and-services/instruction/elementary-and-secondary-education/assessment-and-accountability/keystone-exams and also on the DRC INSIGHT Portal at pa.drcedirect.com.

E. Testing Windows

Below are key dates for the 2026 Summer Keystone administration. For additional dates, see the DRC INSIGHT Portal announcements page.

DATE	ACTIVITY
June 29, 2026	Test Setup Opens
June 29, 2026	Additional Material Window Opens
July 13, 2026	Secure Materials and Print On Demand Access Begins
July 27–31, 2026	**Testing Window**

F. Contact Information Concerning Questions

Many test engine, setup, and administration questions can be answered by contacting PA Customer Service.

Contact	Telephone	Email address
PA Customer Service	800-451-7849	pacustomerservice@datarecognitioncorp.com

If you have specific concerns for PDE, refer to the table below.

Topic or Subject	Contact Person / Telephone	Email address
Test Security/Irregularities	Division of Assessment and Accountability	ra-edirregularities@pa.gov
General PSSA and Keystone Exam Testing Questions	Division of Assessment and Accountability	ra-ed-pssa-keystone@pa.gov
Religious Opting Out of Testing	Division of Assessment and Accountability	ra-ed-pssa-keystone@pa.gov
Testing Accommodations (IEP and 504, Regular Education, EL)	Dr. Beth Gannon – 717-346-9399	ra-eduniqueaccom@pa.gov
ELA, Keystone Literature Exam	Dr. Beth Gannon – 717-346-9399	egannonrit@pa.gov
Mathematics, Keystone Algebra I Exam	Dr. Megan Clementi – 717-783-6543	mclementi@pa.gov
Science, Keystone Biology Exam, Notify Changes in Testing Dates and/or Times, Testing Window Exceptions	Craig Weller – 717-525-5825	crweller@pa.gov
Division Chief	Brian Truesdale – 717-214-5433	btruesdale@pa.gov

If a test security violation is suspected, contact the DAC or SAC immediately. If you believe the DAC or SAC may have involvement in the violation, immediately contact the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) directly at ra-edirregularities@pa.gov. The email should include a detailed subject line. Please ensure that you only utilize the email account provided here for security violations. **Please do not send a question to multiple email accounts.** This causes a delay in response.

G. Test Security

The Pennsylvania Keystone Exams are a measure of individual student achievement conducted by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). Any deviation from the exam procedures outlined in this manual (including, but not limited to, group work, teacher coaching, teaching or releasing of the performance tasks or exam questions, using old non- released Pennsylvania assessment items as preparation tools, etc.) is strictly prohibited and is considered a violation of exam security. Those individuals who divulge exam questions, falsify student scores, or compromise the integrity of the state assessment system in any manner may be subject to professional disciplinary action under the Educator Discipline Act, 24 P.S. § 2070.1a et seq, including a private reprimand, a public reprimand, a suspension of their teaching certificate(s), a revocation of their teaching certificate(s), and/or a suspension or prohibition from being employed by a charter school. In this regard, an educator is any individual who holds public or private academic school certification and all charter and cyber charter school staff members and contracted educational providers who would be required to hold certification if they served in a traditional public school.

Students may not discuss, disseminate, or otherwise reveal the assessment content to others. This includes talking with others about questions on the test during or after the test. Students will be subject to discipline based on the Local Educational Agency's (LEA) policy and procedures. Students should be assured that they may discuss the testing process or issues of concern with their parents/guardians.

In order to ensure validity and security of the Keystone Exams, all District Assessment Coordinators (DAC), School Assessment Coordinators (SAC), Test Administrators (TA), and Proctors should read and understand the *Handbook for Secure Test Administration*. The *Handbook for Secure Test Administration* is Appendix A of this handbook and is a standalone document that can be downloaded from the Pennsylvania Department of Education website. In addition, Coordinators, TAs, and Proctors must complete the online Pennsylvania State Test Administration Training (PSTAT) annually (each school year), found at www.pstattraining.net.

1. TEST SECURITY CERTIFICATIONS

It is required that each District Assessment Coordinator, School Assessment Coordinator, Principal, Test Administrator, Proctor, Translator, Interpreter, Scribe, Secretarial staff, Custodian, and any individual who handles secure assessment materials sign a *Test Security Certification* The *Test Security Certification*s must be signed after the assessments have been administered.

a. The District Assessment Coordinator *Test Security Certification* is provided in Appendix B of this handbook. Each DAC is responsible for photocopying and signing a certification by the end of the testing window. This certification covers security for all assessments administered during the testing window.

The District Assessment Coordinator must collect all of the Test Administrator/Proctor, School Assessment Coordinator/Principal, and General *Test Security Certification*s from each testing site. If anyone (TA/ Proctors, SAC/Principal, or others) who had access to the Keystone Exam assessments and refused to sign a corresponding *Test Security Certification* the DAC must report it to the Chief School Administrator who will report it to PDE at ra-edirregularities@pa.gov. The *Test Security Certification*s are maintained for a minimum of three years. The signed *Test Security Certification*s should not be returned to Data Recognition Corporation.

b. The School Assessment Coordinator and Principal *Test Security Certification* can be found in Appendix B of this handbook. This certification covers security for all assessments administered during the testing window. The SAC and the Principal must sign and date the appropriate *Test Security Certification* by the end of the administration window. It is the responsibility of the DAC to obtain the SAC's and Principal's signature and return the form to the Chief School Administrator who must retain the certifications (paper or electronic) for a minimum of three years. The signed *Test Security Certification*s should not be returned to Data Recognition Corporation.

c. The Test Administrator/Proctor *Test Security Certification* is provided in Appendix B of this handbook. This certification covers security for all assessments administered during the testing window. Prior to the administration of the assessment, the SAC must distribute copies of this certification to all TAs and Proctors involved in the administration of the Keystone Exams. Prior to receiving any assessment materials or participating in the administration of the Keystone Exams in any way, the TA/Proctor must read and understand the Test Administrator/Proctor *Test Security Certification*. Post-administration, the TAs/ Proctors must sign and return their individual certification to the SAC who should in turn provide all of the certifications collected to the DAC. Each TA/ Proctor must sign one certification annually at the end of the Keystone administration window. The DAC should return the certifications to the Chief School Administrator who must retain the certifications for a minimum of three years. The DAC may want to retain a copy of the certifications for their records in addition to the originals provided to the Chief School Administrator. The signed *Test Security Certification*s should not be returned to Data Recognition Corporation.

d. The General *Test Security Certification* is provided in Appendix B of this handbook. This certification is for any individual (custodian, secretary, etc.) who will handle secure assessment materials or have access (including keys) to the materials during the testing window and who is not covered by any of the other certifications. The executed General *Test Security Certification* must be retained for a minimum of three years by the Chief School Administrator. The signed *Test Security Certification*s should not be returned to Data Recognition Corporation.

i. The SAC must report to the DAC any TAs/Proctors or anyone else who had access to the assessments and refused to sign or who modified a corresponding *Test Security Certification* before signing.

ii. When reporting to the DAC, include names and reason(s) for refusal or modification.

iii. When testing is completed, if an individual does not execute the appropriate *Test Security Certification*, the Chief School Administrator must provide the Department of Education's Bureau of Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction with a written explanation of the reason or reasons why the certification was not executed. The explanation must be provided within five days of the refusal and must include a description of the action taken by the Chief School Administrator in response to the failure to execute the *Test Security Certification*.

The written explanation should be sent to ra-edirregularities@pa.gov.

2. REPORTING IRREGULARITIES

TAs must report testing irregularities/security breaches to the SAC, principal, or the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The SAC must report the testing irregularities/security breaches to the DAC or the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The DAC must report any suspected violations of testing protocol to the Pennsylvania Department of Education immediately.

Irregularities and/or allegations should be reported to PDE via ra-edirregularities@pa.gov. The email should include a detailed subject line. Only utilize the email account provided here for security violations.

3. RECORDING EXCESSIVE LOGINS

An excessive login occurs when a student logs into a module more than twice. Excessive logins by the same student to an online assessment are available in a report that is accessible to both the district and PDE in the DRC INSIGHT Portal. LEAs are required to document any legitimate reasons for these multiple logins, such as system issues or internet loss, and districts are required to keep a record of them in the event there are questions regarding excessive logins.

H. Use of One-to-One Student Devices for Online Testing

If the LEA staff wishes to incorporate student computers and student devices for their online testing, the one-to-one device must be configured to the school's Central Office Services – Service Device (COS SD).

The COS SD configuration is an absolute requirement to prevent unauthorized student access to a PSSA or Keystone Exams test administration outside of the school building that houses the COS SD. It is incumbent upon any school that utilizes one-to-one devices to ensure that the COS SD configuration has been applied to the devices. Failure to ensure the devices are properly configured will be viewed as a violation of PDE's test security policies.

The one-to-one student device policy can be located on the DRC INSIGHT Portal. If there are any questions regarding the configuration of the COS SD, contact PA Customer Service at 800-451-7849.

PART II – DISTRICT ASSESSMENT COORDINATOR (DAC), SCHOOL ASSESSMENT COORDINATOR (SAC), AND TEST ADMINISTRATOR (TA) RESPONSIBILITIES

A. District Assessment Coordinator Responsibilities

1. PENNSYLVANIA STATE TEST ADMINISTRATION TRAINING

Any person who functions as a DAC must annually complete the DAC, SAC, and TA online training modules found in the Pennsylvania State Test Administration Training (PSTAT). The PSTAT is found at www.pstattraining.net. These interactive courses are a key component that DACs are required to perform to oversee the administration of the PSSA and Keystone Exams. The DAC must ensure that SACs register and complete their trainings. A certificate of completion will be issued to the DAC and SAC when the courses are completed. These certificates (paper or electronic) should be kept on file for three years.

2. TRAINING RESPONSIBILITIES

The DAC is responsible for coordinating all training (including all employees providing assistance to the DAC) that takes place in the LEA and for determining specifics related to test administration such as a schedule and other LEA-level administrative aspects of the testing. Whereas the DAC is responsible for ALL training in the LEA, the primary training done by the DAC directly is for School Assessment Coordinators (SACs) and LEA-level staff who handle and/or have access to secure test material. Additional information on specific responsibilities is included in Appendix A.

Every DAC must conduct in-person training of the SACs before the SACs conduct in-person training of the TAs. The following topics must be included with LEA-selected topics:

a. Test Administrator (TA) Training Plan, which includes giving the SACs ample time to distribute the *Directions for Administration Manual*s to TAs. TA training orientation sessions should be scheduled within the two weeks prior to the assessment window.

b. District assessment schedule

c. Distribution of parent information

d. Student Participation

e. Test Security Policies

f. Test Sessions for online testing

g. Procedures for the collection and destruction of paper on which students have written

h. Transcription policies and secure destruction of accommodated materials

i. Online Tools Training and Tutorials

j. Technology Communication Plan

3. HANDBOOK FOR SECURE TEST ADMINISTRATION

Read the *Handbook for Secure Test Administration* in Appendix A concerning the DAC, SAC, and TA responsibilities.

B. School Assessment Coordinator Responsibilities

The SAC is responsible for implementing all aspects of the test administration including the schedule and other LEA-level administrative testing responsibilities.

1. TEST ADMINISTRATOR AND PROCTOR QUALIFICATIONS

a. Employed or contracted (either directly or indirectly via a provider) by the LEA

b. Completed the annual Pennsylvania State Test Administration Training (PSTAT)

c. Trained by the SACs each school year

d. Have not been prohibited from being a TA by PDE or LEA

TAs are responsible for the test administration, including but not limited to distributing and collecting test materials, answering student questions, monitoring students, attending to a secure test administration, and related test administration duties. The DAC and/or SAC may assign multiple TAs to the same test administration room. Proctors are to support the TAs but are not to be in the room without the TA. The primary function of a Proctor is to monitor the students.

PDE strongly encourages schools not to allow teachers to be TAs of their own students. As such, PDE recommends that other teachers serve as TAs, or that a Proctor be in the testing room with the teacher if the teacher acts as the TA for the students they instruct.

Student teachers may be present during the administration of the assessments as part of their professional experience; however, they may not serve as either TAs or Proctors unless they are employed by the LEA. Student teachers must complete the PSTAT and attend the SAC training. Individuals with a similar status to student teachers who are not employed by the LEA, such as interns, are also not allowed to serve as TAs or Proctors.

Therapeutic Support Staff (TSS) and Personal Care Aides (PCA) may be present in the room during the administration of the assessments if they are trained by the SAC and complete the PSTAT. The TSS and PCA must be employed by an LEA or IU either directly or through a contracting agency. However, TSSs and PCAs must not act as a TA or Proctor. After the test has been administered by the TA, the TSS or PCA must sign the *General Test Security Certification*.

2. PENNSYLVANIA STATE TEST ADMINISTRATION TRAINING

Any person who functions as a SAC must annually complete the SAC and TA online training modules found in the Pennsylvania State Test Administration Training (PSTAT). The PSTAT is found at www.pstattraining.net. These interactive courses are a key component that SACs are required to perform to oversee the administration of the PSSA and Keystone Exams. A certificate of completion will be issued to the SAC when the courses are completed. This certificate should be kept on file for three years.

SACs must ensure that their TAs register and complete the required PSTAT TA online modules prior to overseeing the administration of the PSSA or Keystone Exams. SACs are responsible for collecting, via print out or electronically, TA certifications.

3. TRAINING COMPONENTS

The SAC is responsible for providing in-person, school-specific training at least one week prior to the scheduled assessment dates. Teachers, counselors, administrators, and paraprofessionals who will be acting as TAs and/or Proctors should attend the school-level training. SAC training session for TAs must include the following topics:

a. **Assessment Schedule**—Be certain that TAs and Proctors know the assessment schedule.

b. **Administration Preparation**—TAs and Proctors receive and study the *Directions for Administration Manual*s and the *Handbook for Secure Test Administration* (Appendix A) prior to training.

c. Students with Special Needs—Explain which students are to be included in the assessment and what special accommodations may be provided for these students.

d. Interpreters—The following guidance is provided in collaboration with the Bureau of Special Education regarding sign language interpreters: A separate TA is required for test settings where an educational sign language interpreter has been assigned to interpret allowable Keystone and PSSA test material for a student(s). The SAC must ensure that the educational sign language interpreter receives assessment training and completes the PSTAT. The interpreter must sign the Confidentiality Agreement for Educational Sign Language Interpreter found in Appendix C (also found in the *Accommodations Guidelines*) prior to viewing any of the secure materials and sign the General *Test Security Certification* found in Appendix B after completion of the Keystone Exam administration. The word "reviewed" in the third paragraph should be crossed out before the interpreter signs the certification.

e. Entering Student Responses into the Test Engine (transcription)—This occurs when student responses are written outside of the online test and must be entered into the test engine. Transcription is required for all students who use large print, Braille, or Print on Demand versions. All transcription must be completed by a qualified School Assessment Coordinator or Test Administrator. The transcriber may not make corrections for spelling, punctuation, or grammar or change student responses in any manner. There must be more than one certified assessment coordinator or Test Administrator in the room when transcription is occurring. Ideally, transcription will occur in the testing session and the student will have an opportunity to review their work. If this is not possible, the paper/pencil test or written response may be transcribed later, but as soon as possible and no longer than 24 hours after the test session has concluded. All transcription must occur before the close of the testing window (5 p.m. on the final day of testing). The School Assessment Coordinator will need to utilize the student's test ticket for transcription. All large print, Braille, or Print on Demand tests and written responses must be stored as secure materials until transcription is complete. Once transcription is complete, all tests and written responses must be securely destroyed. The transcribers must sign the *Test Security Certification* form (located in the *Handbook for Assessment Coordinators*).

f. Assessment Conditions—Emphasize the importance of good assessment conditions (e.g., a comfortable, quiet room without music or other distractions) and a positive approach to the assessment.

g. Electronic Devices—All unapproved electronic devices (cell phones, smartphones, smartwatches, smart glasses, cameras, earbuds, etc.) are to be collected as students enter the testing site. To ensure students and parents/guardians are aware of this policy the letter found in Appendix D should be provided to parents/guardians before testing. District personnel, school personnel, and students must understand that the integrity of the test must not be compromised.

A student observed actively engaged with an unapproved electronic device is defined as using the device. A student not observed using the unapproved electronic device, but in possession of an unapproved electronic device or found to have placed the unapproved electronic device where the student could easily access it, is considered the same as using an unapproved electronic device. An electronic device anywhere else in the room where a student cannot access it (e.g., in a backpack in the back of the room) should not be considered possession. Students are not permitted to use devices to listen to music while testing. Students who connect earbuds to a cell phone are considered in possession of an electronic device, even if the device is not is close proximity to the student and the student needs to re-test.

The consequences for and responses to a student using an unauthorized electronic device during the test administration include the following:

i. Students using or possessing an unapproved electronic device must retake the assessment module during the same administration testing window to receive a score.

ii. The unapproved electronic device must be confiscated and, in the presence and with the permission of the parent or guardian, the device must be examined to ensure that no information or material regarding the assessment is present.

iii. Any data (photos, images, text, internet searches, etc.) that constitutes a violation of the security or integrity of the test must be copied and reported to the Department of Education immediately at ra-edirregularities@pa.gov.

iv. Students with unapproved electronic devices that the student cannot access where the security or integrity of the test has not been compromised do not have to be reported to the Department of Education.

v. The student should be disciplined in accordance with LEA policy, and that discipline may vary depending on whether test material has been compromised.

vi. The parents and students may be responsible for the cost of replacing compromised items.

h. Use of Calculators—Review and follow the Pennsylvania Calculator Policy in Appendix E.

Desmos online calculators are available to students who are completing the Algebra I and Biology exams. Students may use handheld calculators which comply with the PDE Calculator Policy as well. More information can be located at https://www.desmos.com/state-pdfs/PA_Desmos_Calculators.pdf.

i. Use of Dictionaries, Thesauri, Spell- or Grammar-Checkers—Ensure that all TAs and Proctors are made aware that the use of these items is not permitted on any module of the Keystone Exams. Ensure all background applications, such as Grammarly, are disabled on all testing devices.

Note: As an accommodation for English Learners (EL), students may use word-to-word dictionaries that translate a native language to English (or English to a native language) without definitions or pictures when completing the Algebra I and Biology assessments only.

j. Classroom Displays—Explain that the *General Description of Scoring Guidelines* and the Algebra I formula sheets may be displayed in the testing room. During test administration, students can access the documents through the test engine. Students should be given the opportunity to practice accessing the reference materials within the Online Tools Training prior to the test administration. Printed copies of the formula sheets will also be shipped to each LEA. These copies should be made available for each student during testing. The Scoring Guidelines and formula sheets are also available for download on the PDE website at https://www.pa.gov/agencies/education/programs-and-services/instruction/elementary-and-secondary-education/assessment-and-accountability/keystone-exams.

k. Make-up Sessions—Review the school entity's make-up procedures. For more details, see page 31, "Make-up Sessions."

l. Scratch Paper—Remind TAs and Proctors that scratch paper must be provided to students for use during the assessments. Blank paper, graph paper, and grid paper are allowed. Collect all scratch and/or grid paper and any other paper on which students have written at the end of each test session and return it to the SAC to be destroyed.

m. Response Space (character limit)—Emphasize that students are limited to the response space provided in the test engine. The character limit for each Open-Ended (OE) item provides sufficient space for students to provide thorough responses. Students and teachers can familiarize themselves with the character limits by practicing the Online Tools Training prior to test administration. https://portal.te.drcedirect.com/PA

n. Code of Conduct—Instruct TAs to review the *Code of Conduct for Test Takers* (Appendix F) with all students in advance of the testing day. Prior to starting the assessment, students will be required to indicate that they understand the *Code of Conduct for Test Takers* that their TA (or other school personnel) has reviewed with them. TAs must be prepared to answer any questions about the Code of Conduct so that all students can acknowledge their understanding of the requirements. The *Directions for Administration Manual*s will provide instructions for how students will confirm their understanding of the *Code of Conduct for Test Takers*.

o. Security—Emphasize that all test materials, test tickets, and content must be kept secure at all times prior to, during, and after the assessment. Remind TAs that computer monitoring software and other background applications must be disabled during testing, including Grammarly, spell checking, suggested words, etc.

p. Teacher of Record—To prevent any suspicion of testing anomalies, PDE strongly encourages school entities not to allow teachers to be TAs and/or Proctors of their own students for the content area in which they teach. As such, PDE recommends that other teachers serve as TAs and/or Proctors, or that a Proctor be in the testing room with the teacher if the teacher serves as a TA for the students they instruct. PDE requires each LEA to keep record of the Test Administrator for each student.

q. Sign Language Interpreters—In collaboration with the Bureau of Special Education, the following guidance is provided: A separate TA is required for test settings where an educational sign language interpreter has been assigned to interpret allowable Keystone and PSSA test material for a student(s). The SAC must ensure that an educational sign language interpreter receives assessment training and completes the PSTAT. The interpreter must sign the Confidentiality Agreement for Educational Sign Language Interpreter found in Appendix C (also found in the *Accommodations Guidelines*) prior to viewing any of the secure materials and sign the General *Test Security Certification* found in Appendix B after completion of the Keystone Exam administration. Before signing the certification, cross out the word "reviewed" in the third paragraph.

r. Online Tools Training and Tutorials—Provide guidance on how test administrators are to give students ample time to review the online tutorials and practice with the Online Tools Training items. TAs may not answer questions regarding how students interact with the test platform, use the tools, or enter responses during test sessions. Students must be familiar with the platform before the test session. TAs may only suggest students use the help feature which is available during the entire assessment.

s. Technology Communication Plan and Troubleshooting—Develop and deliver a district-level technology communication plan for how classrooms will handle device issues before and during testing. The plan should provide School Assessment Coordinators with details and instructions for how Test Administrators can troubleshoot technology issues and when they are to contact the SAC or Technology team. The plan should also outline the information that will be needed by Data Recognition if the issue needs to be escalated to DRC customer service: student ID, student login information, testing device details, and test session details. See page 18 for more information.

4. HANDBOOK FOR SECURE ADMINISTRATION

Read the *Handbook for Secure Test Administration* in Appendix A concerning the SAC and TA responsibilities.

C. Test Administrator (TA) Responsibilities

Any person who functions as a TA or will be assisting test administration in any capacity must complete the Pennsylvania State Test Administration Training (PSTAT) at www.pstattraining.net. This interactive course is designed as an individual, one-to-one training that provides key components to administering the PSSA and/or Keystone Exams. A certificate of completion will be issued to the TA when the course is completed. Test administrators must provide an electronic or paper copy of the certification to the SAC.

In addition, teachers, counselors, administrators, and paraprofessional who will be acting as TAs and/or Proctors along with staff handling or having access to secure test material must attend an in-person, school-level training held by the SAC at least one week prior to the start of the testing window.

During Keystone test administration, TAs must actively monitor at all times. TAs must not engage in any activity which may distract them from their assigned test monitoring duties. Such activities include, but are not limited to: (1) working on a computer, (2) reading, (3) using a cell phone, (4) grading papers, (5) having conversations not related to monitoring, and (6) planning lessons.

Test Administrators should read the TA responsibilities from the *Handbook for Secure Test Administration* in Appendix A.

PART III – STUDENT PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES FOR ALL ASSESSMENTS

A. Code of Conduct

The *Code of Conduct for Test Takers* (Appendix F) provides requirements that students must follow before, during, and after each assessment. TAs must review the Code of Conduct with all students and ensure students understand the Code of Conduct before testing day. TAs must be prepared to answer any questions about the *Code of Conduct for Test Takers* so that all students can acknowledge their understanding of the requirements. Students should be assured that they may discuss the testing process or issues of concern with their parents/guardians.

Prior to starting the assessment, students will be required to indicate that they understand the *Code of Conduct for Test Takers* that was reviewed with them by their Test Administrators (TAs) (or other school employees).

Students will indicate they understand the *Code of Conduct for Test Takers* by starting the online exam.

B. General Student Participation in the Assessment

In order to satisfy federal accountability requirements, all students must participate in the Algebra I, Biology, and Literature Keystone Exams by spring of their grade 11 year. Districts have the option of testing students for federal accountability purposes during any administration. Because the Keystone Exams are designed as end-of-course exams, with few exceptions, the Keystone Exam should be taken at the end or near the end of the related course. Students going from grade 10 directly to grade 12 will be counted for grade 11 accountability while in grade 12. These students need to complete the Keystone Exams by the spring of grade 12. Students completing the Keystone Exams prior to grade 11 will have their results banked until they reach grade 11. Students who previously completed the Keystone Exams and earned a score of Proficient or Advanced are permitted to retake the assessment only when a written request is made to the LEA.

A student who has transferred to Pennsylvania from another state and has passed that state's graduation assessment for Algebra, Biology, or Literature may be eligible to have the non-Pennsylvania proficiency apply to the Keystone Exams graduation requirement. The decision shall be made by the school principal. If the decision is made to accept the out-of-state assessment, please contact PDE, ra-ed-pssa-keystone@pa.gov, before the assessment administration for additional information.

Foreign exchange students are to be included in the Keystone Exam testing based on federal guidelines. In a few cases foreign exchange students may qualify for English Learner (EL) services. The foreign exchange students being served via an EL program will be treated as EL students when administering the Keystone Exam.

C. Participation of Students With Accommodations

All students with disabilities, except those participating in the Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA), should be provided the same allowable accommodations in the state assessment environment as provided for in their 22 PA Code Chapter 14 or Chapter 711 Individualized Education Program (IEP) or their 22 PA Code Chapter 15 Service Agreement regarding their instruction. For more information, refer to the *Accommodations Guidelines* found on the PDE website at https://www.pa.gov. In the search box, type "accommodations" and hit enter. From the search results list, choose "*Accommodations Guidelines* for PSSA and Keystone Exams – 2026."

D. Court/Agency Placed Student Participation Information

Court/agency placed students are required to participate in the assessments regardless of whether the student has an IEP or 504 plan. Students who have been court or agency placed into a non-public setting (e.g., Private Residential Rehabilitation Institution (PRRI) or other juvenile delinquency institution, mental health, drug and/or alcohol treatment facility) are required to participate in the assessments. Requirements for Keystone Exam participation for these students are the same as the requirements for general education students.

Court/agency placed students should be identified within the portal under 'Student Management' > 'Manage Students'> 'Testing Codes.'

Students attending alternative education programs, IU programs, PRRIs, or Approved Private Schools placed by the school or district should not be identified as court/agency placed.

If a student is attending an alternative setting, the alternative setting should set up the test sessions and administer the assessment.

E. Procedures for Non-Assessed Students

If a student does not participate in an assessment, the student must be included in a test session and have a non-assessed code selected within the student's information found under the Student Management/Manage Students section of the DRC INSIGHT Portal. The non-assessed information does not override student responses. If a student attempts at least 5 items in a module, that module will receive a score regardless of any non-assessed fields that are coded.

Students not participating in the assessment must be coded under one or more of the following categories:

1. **Student had a recent medical emergency:** This applies only to rare circumstances in which a student cannot take or finish taking the assessment during the entire testing window, including make-up dates, due to a recent significant medical emergency. In these situations, the student has remained enrolled at the school, yet the medical circumstances might prohibit the student from participating in the assessment during the testing window. For example, this might include a situation in which a student is recovering from a recent car accident. In order to mark the student as not tested due to a "recent medical emergency," a note from a doctor excusing the student from participation or hospital documentation must be on file with the LEA.

   Special Circumstance: If a student has been diagnosed with a concussive injury and there is medical documentation within two weeks of the start of the testing window that states the student may not participate in standardized testing, school personnel must select "Student had a recent medical emergency." In all other instances involving concussive injuries and student non-participation due to illness/health issue, the student should be coded as "Other."

   The "recent medical emergency" option allows schools to omit such students when calculating student participation rates. This will ensure that schools whose accountability status might be affected by such situations will not be improperly designated. Keep in mind that if a student is receiving education services (school enrollment, hospital, treatment facility, homebound, etc.) during the testing window, the student must be given the opportunity to participate in the Keystone Exams at the location the student is receiving the educational services.

2. **Student had an extended absence for the entire testing window.** Schools must make every effort to ensure that all students who experience absences during the testing window are able to participate in the assessments during the school's make-up sessions. Students who are non-assessed due to an absence without make-up will have a negative effect on the school's participation rate and can potentially have a negative impact on the school's accountability status.

   If a student is absent from school for an extended period that continues beyond the last day of the PDE-established testing window, school personnel must select "Student had an extended absence for the entire testing window."

3. **Student's parent/guardian requested in writing that the student be excluded from participation after reviewing the assessment and determining it to be in conflict with the parent's/guardian's religious beliefs:** Chapter 4 of Title 2 of the Pa. Code (22 Pa. Code 4.4) provides for the right of any parent/guardian to excuse a child from the state assessment if, upon inspection of the testing materials, the parent/guardian finds the assessment to be in conflict with the parent's/guardian's religious beliefs. This is the only basis under Chapter 4 rules for a parent/guardian to excuse a child from the statewide assessments.

   a. Sites will be provided with Parental Review test tickets for review by parents and guardians. These test tickets will allow parents/guardians to view the same online test that will be administered across the LEA. The review must be conducted on district property and district personnel must always be present. Proper security and confidentiality of the assessment must be maintained at all times. The test engine is available from 6:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

   b. Parents and guardians must sign the Parent Confidentiality Agreement prior to examining test materials. A copy of this must be locally maintained. (Do not send this statement to PDE or DRC.) Parents and guardians may not photograph, write down, or in any other manner record any portion of the assessments, including directions. The Parent Confidentiality Agreement can be found in Appendix C.

   c. If after reviewing the test, parents/guardians find the test to be in conflict with their religious beliefs and wish their student(s) to be excused from the test, the parents/guardians must provide a written request to the Superintendent or Chief Executive Officer that states they do not want their child tested because the test conflicts with their religious beliefs. If a parent/guardian requests their child be opted out for religious reasons any time during testing the request should be honored.

   d. If the student is excused from the assessment due to parental or guardian request, school personnel must provide an alternative learning environment for the student during the assessment and select "Student's parent/guardian requested in writing that the student be excluded from participation after reviewing the assessment and determining it to be in conflict with the parent's/guardian's religious beliefs."

   e. Students who do not participate in the assessment due to parental request will negatively affect the school's participation rate and can potentially have a negative impact on the school's accountability status.

4. **Student's parent/guardian chose to exclude the student from participation based on reason(s) other than conflict with religious beliefs,** even though there is no provision for this exclusion in Pennsylvania regulation. Even though PDE does not recognize parental refusal as an allowable exclusion, if a parent refuses to have a child participate in the assessment and does not provide a reason in accordance with Chapter 4 rules, school personnel should select "Student's parent/guardian chose to exclude the student from participation based on reason(s) other than conflict with religious beliefs, even though there is no provision for this exclusion in Pennsylvania regulation." LEAs should check with their solicitor to determine if they will accept refusals, and if they do, determine the procedures to be followed. Students who do not participate in the assessment due to parental refusal will negatively affect the school's participation rate and can potentially have a negative impact on the school's accountability status.

5. **Other:** Although there is no other apparent reason for student non-participation in the assessment, this category is provided for the rare exception. The most notable exception is student refusal to participate at the time of testing. Refusal represents a defiant act on the student's part despite school personnel's every effort to obtain compliance. If you have exhausted all options and believe you have a case that fits into this category, select "Other." Indicating that a student did not participate in the assessments due to "other" reasons will negatively affect the school's participation rate and can potentially have a negative impact on the school's accountability status.

F. Student Withdrawal/Enrollment During the Testing Window

If a student completes both Module 1 and Module 2 before withdrawing, no action needs to be taken. Both modules will be scored and reported at the tested school; however, the new school can access the student's scores using the Feeder Report functionality of the Data Interaction System.

If a student withdraws after completing only one module, the test should be submitted as is so the student's work can be scored. DRC will report the results from the single module. If a school receives a new student who needs to complete a module that was not attempted, that school will need to contact the previous school to obtain the student's login credentials (test ticket). This is necessary because students can only be issued one ticket per subject, per administration. PDE policy allows schools to transfer ticket information securely for this specific purpose. If there are any questions about ticket transfers, contact PA Customer Service.

If a student starts a module but does not complete it before withdrawing, contact PA Customer Service.

G. Testing of Suspended and Expelled Students

Students who have been suspended from daily classroom attendance, but remain on the school's enrollment, should be administered the assessments. The location of the testing (at a school within the district or via homebound instruction) is a district decision. If the district chooses not to test the suspended student, the assessment should be coded as non-assessed due to extended absence.

Students who have been expelled from school and who have been completely removed from the district's enrollments do not need to be administered the assessments. However, if the student remains on the district's enrollment after the expulsion (e.g., the student is placed in an alternate education facility, program, or setting), it is the district's responsibility to ensure that the student is tested.

H. Home Education Students (Home-Schooled)

If the parent/guardian of a home-schooled student requests that the student take the Keystone Exams, the school district must allow the student to take the assessment at the school building the home-schooled student would normally attend or at another central location agreed to by the school district and the parent/guardian. The device issued to the student for testing purposes must be an LEA-owned device.

Parents/guardians of home-schooled students who plan to request that their students take the Keystone Exams with accommodations are subject to the same procedures and timelines as public school students. According to the law, it could take several months for the determination to be made that a student is eligible for administration of the Keystone Exams with accommodations.

Information about home education in Pennsylvania, including the Pennsylvania law on home education and related statutes, regulations, frequently asked questions (and answers), and a list of home education organizations serving Pennsylvania families, is available on PDE's website at https://www.pa.gov/en/agencies/education.html (keyword search "home education").

Note: Home-schooled students need a PAsecureID to test. The *Home Education and Private Tutoring Guide* on PDE's website will provide further instruction on how to obtain an ID for a home-schooled student if needed. Full-time home education students should be identified as "Student is home-schooled and assessed at parental request."

I. First-Year English Learner

All students, including EL students, who are enrolled in a Keystone-related course are required to participate in the Algebra I, Biology, and Literature assessments for accountability and/or graduation purposes.

Participation in the Literature assessment is optional for students identified as English Learners who are in their first (cumulative of time in the U.S.) year of enrollment in a U.S. school.

If the first-year EL student was not in Grade 11 when enrolled in the Keystone Literature course and did not participate, the student will need to take the exam by the end of their 11th-grade year to achieve a score that can be used for accountability.

If the first-year EL student is in Grade 11 and voluntarily participates in Literature, the student's participation will be included for accountability but not the student's performance.

For first-year EL students in Grade 11, participation in the Algebra I and Biology assessments will only be used for accountability purposes.

It is incumbent upon the LEA to determine a student's first-year EL status. An eligible student will have been enrolled in a U.S. school less than or equal to 12 cumulative months by the end of the current-school-year testing window. For additional information regarding EL test administration, see the *Accommodations Guidelines for English Learners (ELs)*.

J. Participation in the Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA)

Students who are eligible to take the PASA will complete ELA, mathematics, and science during the PASA testing window. For more information on PASA, visit the PDE website at: Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA).

Students must meet specific state identified criteria in order to participate in the PASA. The IEP team must be able to answer 'yes' to all six of PA's criteria and document the data associated with this decision in section IV of the IEP. IEP teams must use the following PASA Eligibility Criteria: Decision Making Companion Tool to determine PASA eligibility. The Pennsylvania goal is to align the percentage of students taking the PASA with the federal requirement of one percent or less at the state level.

PASA Eligibility Criteria: Decision Making Companion Tool

The PASA Eligibility Criteria: Decision Making Companion Tool is a resource provided to individualized education program (IEP) teams in Pennsylvania to assist in determining eligibility for the Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA). The PASA is appropriate for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who meet all six requirements listed below. Additional considerations are provided that further define the criteria and assist the IEP team in decision making. Factors that the IEP team should not consider in eligibility determination are also identified.

The IEP team must answer "YES" to **all** six criteria in order for the student to participate in the PASA. If the answer is "NO" to any of the questions, the student must participate in the PSSA/Keystones with or without accommodations, as determined appropriate by the IEP team.

1 _____YES

Will the student be in grade 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, or 11 by September 1 of the school year during which the IEP will be operative?

Additional consideration:
The grade level listed for the student in the Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS) and the PASA digital system must correlate to the assessment decision documented in the current IEP.

2 _____YES

Does the student have significant cognitive disabilities? Pennsylvania defines significant cognitive disabilities as pervasive and global in nature, affecting student learning in all academic content areas, as well as adaptive behaviors and functional skills across life domains.

Additional consideration:
A significant cognitive disability is not directly defined by a Chapter 14 disability category. Typically students with a primary disability category of Specific Learning Disability or Speech Language Impairment DO NOT meet the definition of a significant cognitive disability. Generally, a student with a signifcant cognitive disability may be characterized as having intellectual functioning below average – cognitive measures of intelligence 2.5 to 3.0 standard deviations below the mean.

3 _____YES

Does the student require intensive, direct, and repeated instruction in order to learn and generalize academic, functional, and adaptive behavior skills across multiple settings?

Additional consideration:
The student's course of study includes functional skills. Instruction typically occurs in a one-to-one or small group setting with opportunity to generalize and transfer skills across multiple settings.

4 _____YES

Does the student require extensive adaptation and support in order to perform and/or participate meaningfully and productively in the everyday life activities of integrated school, home, community, and work environments?

Additional consideration:
A significant cognitive disability is pervasive, affecting student functioning across all academic, social, and community settings. The student is expected to require intensive and ongoing supports after graduation.

5 _____YES

Does the student require substantial modifications to the general education curriculum?

Additional consideration:
Substantial modifications change the content expectation by a significant reduction in depth, breadth, and complexity of grade-level standards as exemplified in the Alternate Eligible Content.

6 _____YES

Does the student's participation in the general curriculum differ substantially in form and/or substance from that of most other students? Students found eligible to take the PASA must have measurable annual goals and short-term objectives reflected in the IEP.

Additional consideration:
Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities likely require objectives, materials, prompting hierarchies, and teaching modalities different from the general education curriculum. The student's goals and objectives typically reflect the Alternate Eligible Content.

PASA eligibility determinations are NOT based on:

- IQ score or disability category alone (i.e., All students with an intellectual disability do not automatically qualify for the alternate assessment.)
- English Learner (EL) Status
- Poor attendance
- Expected poor performance on the general assessments
- Educational environment or instructional setting
- Low reading or achievement level
- Anticipated disruptive behavior or emotional duress
- Impact of scores on accountability system
- Administrative decision

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PART IV – TEST ADMINISTRATION PREPARATION

A. DRC INSIGHT Secure Application

1. DRC TEST ENGINE

DRC INSIGHT is the secure, online testing application that must be installed on every device being used for testing. The application is supported on Windows, macOS, Linux, iPad, and Chrome OS operating systems. The downloads for the software installation are found on the DRC INSIGHT portal under Downloads. Technology Coordinators need the Online Testing – Secured Resources permission to download the secure application to each device.

The installation of DRC INSIGHT is typically completed by district or school technology staff and is often completed over the summer after any system updates have been released. Technology staff should be directed to the *Technology User Guide* on the DRC INSIGHT Portal for detailed instructions, specifications, and information. District or school technology that have specific questions about launching and supporting DRC INSIGHT should review the training and resources materials located on the DRC INSIGHT Portal under General Information > Documents or should contact DRC Customer Service.

2. CENTRAL OFFICE SERVICES – SERVICE DEVICE (COS-SD)

The Central Office Services (COS) software is a web-based management tool for the DRC INSIGHT online testing system. It allows administrators to centrally manage test content, configure testing devices, and monitor the overall testing environment from a single dashboard. The system includes the COS Service Device (COS-SD) that handles content hosting and delivery to testing devices, reducing the need for direct connection to DRC servers for every test which reduces internet bandwidth requirements.

The COS-SD prevents testing from occurring outside the LEA network. It is required for sites with one-to-one devices.

The number of COS-SDs is dependent on the planned number of simultaneous testers and intensive accommodations like Audio.

Technology coordinators should collaborate with the assessment office to schedule assessments based upon the number of students, the number of devices, the operating systems, and network capacity.

3. COMMUNICATION PLAN

A communication plan outlines the roles, responsibilities, and procedures for addressing technical or logistical issues during test administration. This ensures that problems are resolved quickly to minimize disruption and maintain test security.

The following steps and components should be considered when creating an online testing communication plan.

1. **Prepare for and prevent common issues** – Proactive preparation is key to a smooth testing experience.
    - **Conduct pre-test checks:** The technology coordinator should perform thorough checks on all devices and the network. Ensure monitoring software and background applications, are disabled and all devices are fully charged.
    - **Prepare a contingency plan:** Develop a plan for a range of disruptions, such as a localized network outage versus a school-wide internet failure.
2. **Identify key personnel and define roles** – Clear roles are critical. Identify and assign specific duties to the following team members:
    - **Assessment coordinator:** The lead point of contact who oversees the entire testing process and is responsible for reporting issues to DRC.
    - **Test Administrators:** Teachers or other staff responsible for test administration. They are the first line of defense for in-room issues and should know the procedures to deal with problems and the actions to keep problems from escalating.

- **Technology coordinator:** The designated contact for all technical issues, including network, hardware, and software problems.

3. **Establish communication protocols** – Create a clear process for how information should be shared when an issue arises.

   Issue escalation and reporting:

   - **Step 1:** The Test Administrator identifies an issue, records the relevant details (e.g., student name, test session, and error message), and attempts a basic, approved troubleshooting step.
   - **Step 2:** If the issue is not resolved, the Test Administrator reports it to the technology coordinator.
   - **Step 3:** The technology coordinator attempts a resolution and, if successful, confirms with the Test Administrator. If the issue is unresolved, it is escalated to the assessment coordinator.
   - **Step 4:** The assessment coordinator reports the issue to DRC.

   Communication methods:

   - **Internal alerts:** For urgent issues affecting multiple students, the assessment coordinator can use a designated group message (e.g., chat, email group) to alert Test Administrators and administrators.
   - **Online tracking system:** All issues should be logged in a tracking system, such as a spreadsheet or ticketing system, to document the problem, the resolution, and the time taken.
   - **Real-time updates:** The assessment coordinator should provide periodic updates to relevant staff during a major event.

4. **Create communication templates for different audiences** – Standardize messaging for clarity and consistency when communicating issues to various groups.

   For Test Administrators and Proctors:

   - **Troubleshooting guide:** A concise, step-by-step document with common issues and resolutions (e.g., "Student's test freezes").
   - **Checklists:** Pre-test and post-test checklists to ensure all steps are followed.
   - **Reporting form:** A form for Test Administrators to complete when an irregularity occurs, ensuring all necessary details are captured.

B. Student Preparation

As you prepare for online testing, schools must develop a plan for students to familiarize themselves with the functionality of the online testing platform and to interact with the different types of questions. The Online Tutorials and the Online Tools Training provide this opportunity. Students must know how to answer multiple-choice, technology-enhanced, and open-ended questions prior to the assessment. During the actual assessment, test administrators should direct students to use the help feature by clicking the "?" button. If additional assistance is needed, test administrators may help students with the tools.

1. TUTORIALS

The Online Tutorials are a set of videos that present visual and verbal descriptions of the different features within the online test engine. Students should view the tutorials before accessing the Online Tools Training (OTTs). The tutorials take about 15–20 minutes and introduce the features of the test platform and the item types students will respond to on the test. Students will see multiple-choice, evidence-based selected response, open-ended, and technology-enhanced items.

Teachers should review the tutorial at least once before showing it to the students. Students do not need to interact with the platform while viewing the tutorial videos. The teacher can play the tutorials for the entire class, and students should be allowed to re-watch the tutorials as needed. A common practice in many schools is to schedule a time for students to watch the tutorials followed by time for the students to try out what they've learned by completing the OTTs. District and/or school personnel should determine how best to view the assessment-specific

and subject-specific tutorials to ensure students receive an introduction to all tools. The following options are available to view the tutorials.

Access the Tutorials via the PDE website:

1. Go to https://www.pa.gov/agencies/education/programs-and-services/instruction/elementary-and-secondary-education/assessment-and-accountability/online-assessment-resources
2. Select the **Online Tutorials** drop-down menu
3. Select the **PA Online Testing (drcedirect.com)** link
4. Select INSIGHT Training
5. Click Online Tutorials

Access to the Tutorials via the DRC INSIGHT Portal:

1. Login to the DRC INSIGHT Portal
2. Go to the My Applications dropdown and click on **General Information**
3. Select the **Test Tutorials** tab

Access to the Tutorials via DRC INSIGHT Online Assessments test engine:

1. Open the DRC INSIGHT Online Assessments test engine
2. Select INSIGHT Training
3. Click Online Tutorials

Access to the Tutorials via the publicly accessed link:

1. Go to the DRC INSIGHT Portal
2. Within the Welcome text, scroll to Online Tools Training section
3. Click the link https://portal.te.drcedirect.com/PA

2. ONLINE TOOLS TRAINING

The Online Tools Training (OTT) represents the format and structure of actual test items and tools that students will experience during online testing and gives them an opportunity to practice using the tools and features available. Within some OTT items, there are practice hints to help guide students as they explore the different tools.

Teachers should review the items within the OTTs at least once before students complete the training. There is an OTT available for each Pennsylvania assessment, subject, and grade. Schools should provide ample opportunity for students to practice the OTTs. PDE strongly recommends that students have a sufficient amount of practice to answer all types of questions. The OTTs provide examples of multiple-choice, technology-enhanced, open-ended, and TDA questions.

When students are completing the Online Tools Training, administrators should be able to:

- Answer questions about test content, testing tools and procedures, and technology.
- Help students log in, navigate, adjust volume, and adjust headphones as needed.

Access the Online Tools Training via the PDE website:

1. Go to https://www.pa.gov/agencies/education/programs-and-services/instruction/elementary-and-secondary-education/assessment-and-accountability/online-assessment-resources
2. Select the **Online Tools Training** drop-down menu
3. Select the **PA Online Testing (drcedirect.com)** link
4. Select INSIGHT Training
5. Click Online Tools Training

Access to the Online Tools Training via DRC INSIGHT Online Assessments test engine:

1. Open the DRC INSIGHT Online Assessments test engine
2. Select INSIGHT Training
3. Click Online Tools Training

Access to the Online Tools Training via the publicly accessed link:

1. Go to the DRC INSIGHT Portal
2. Within the Welcome text, scroll to Online Tools Training section
3. Click on the link https://portal.te.drcedirect.com/PA

3. DESMOS CALCULATOR

The DRC INSIGHT test engine uses the DESMOS online calculator. If a student needs another calculator model, the calculator must adhere to the PDE calculator policy found in Appendix E.

DESMOS calculators are available free online, and students can use these calculators for schoolwork. The DESMOS calculators that have been programmed for Pennsylvania state assessments are located at www.desmos.com/testing/pennsylvania.

C. Preparing Student Records

Every student must be in a test session to complete an assessment, including students who take paper versions of the test (large print, Braille, Print on Demand). Test tickets are generated from the test sessions and are the means by which students take the test or by which school personnel transcribe student work from paper tests. All student management and test setup work is completed within the DRC INSIGHT Portal. Access to the portal is granted to the District Assessment Coordinators who manage permissions for School Assessment Coordinators and Test Administrators. Step-by-step instructions on how to manage student records and create test sessions are provided in the *DRC INSIGHT Portal User Guide* that can be accessed from the DRC INSIGHT Portal with or without permissions (General Information > Documents). Additional training and instructional videos for creating test sessions can be found on the Pennsylvania Assessments Training site located at: https://sites.google.com/datarecognitioncorp.com/psa-assessments/home.

1. STUDENT RECORDS FOR TESTING

Student records are found under the Student Management section within the DRC INSIGHT Portal.

Student records provided to DRC from PIMS (from the assessment-specific precode templates) are automatically uploaded to the DRC INSIGHT Portal with all associated student demographic data.

Student records that were not included in the PIMS file need to be manually uploaded to the portal before a student can be added to an online test session. When adding a student record, the student's name, date of birth, and

PAsecureID must match PIMS to ensure accurate reporting. Student records manually uploaded to the portal that do not match the subsequent PIMS data for reporting (e.g., manually uploading "Bella" will not match with "Isabella" in PIMS) could negatively impact reporting.

2. ACCOMMODATIONS

Accommodations are applied within the student record under Student Management. Online accommodations must be selected prior to any tickets being printed to ensure students have their accommodation when testing. Applying the correct accommodation is critical to ensure a student receives a needed accommodation during the test (Spanish, Audio, Continuous Magnification, Color Chooser, or Refreshable Braille). It is also critical for a student who uses a paper accommodation (Print on Demand, large print, or Braille). Selecting the paper accommodation prior to printing test tickets will ensure that the online form matches the paper form in which the student responds. This ensures that a student's responses from the paper test can be transcribed accurately into the online test engine.

An accommodation will not be available during online testing unless it is printed on a student's test ticket. If a student begins an assessment without a needed accommodation, the test will need to be regenerated to add the accommodation and the student's responses will be lost. If a student completed the assessment without the needed accommodation, contact PDE for additional direction. **Rosters MUST be checked prior to printing test tickets.**

The following are the accommodations that need to be selected prior to testing:

- Spanish (SPAN)
- Audio (AU)
- Audio for Full Literature (AUFL)
- Continuous Magnification (MAG)
- Color Chooser (CT)
- Refreshable Braille (REFBRAILLE)
- Print on Demand (POD)
- Paper Braille (PAPERBR)
- Paper Large Print (LP)

Other accommodations, such as setting and timing accommodations, can be selected before or after the student has completed testing.

Before any accommodations are applied, the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Accommodation Guidelines document must be consulted by all educators that are responsible for assigning assessment accommodations. This document provides specifics on each allowable accommodation. The document is available on PDE's website at https://www.pa.gov. In the search box, type "accommodations" and hit enter. From the search results list, choose "Accommodations Guidelines for PSSA and Keystone Exams – 2026."

Below are important notes regarding accommodations:
Paper Large Print and Paper Braille – Two steps are required: (1) Add the accommodation so the appropriate online form for transcription is delivered; and (2) Order the physical booklet from the Additional Materials Ordering system.

Print on Demand (POD) – The Print on Demand accommodation must be selected to gain access to the POD form and to ensure the correct online form is delivered for transcription. A PDF of the Print on Demand test is generated for each student with the special print accommodation. The PDF will be accessible no earlier than two weeks prior to the start of the test administration, regardless of when the accommodation is added or the test ticket is printed. The SAC should separate the printed document into the two separate modules and distribute only the module needed by the student that day. The printed copy should be stored in a secure location until distributed on the day of testing and must be returned to the School Assessment Coordinator after each testing session. School Assessment Coordinators should provide the Print on Demand Guidelines document (from the DRC INSIGHT Portal) to the Test Administrator responsible for proctoring a POD test.

Spanish – Students who require a Spanish-language test must have the Spanish accommodation selected. When a student has the Spanish accommodation, the test will be entirely in Spanish. This includes buttons, test directions, and help files. Students taking a Spanish test will have access to English text as a reference for the items via a pop-up window. Students can reposition the pop-up window to allow the student to see both the Spanish and English text at the same time. The Spanish Directions for Administration manual required for administering the test and Spanish formula sheets are available for download from the DRC INSIGHT Portal, PDE's website, or through the additional materials system. Spanish DFAs and formula sheets will not automatically be shipped to any LEA using the Spanish assessments.

Refreshable Braille – Students who use refreshable Braille must have the accommodation selected to ensure the online form they receive supports the refreshable Braille functionality. If a student who uses refreshable Braille requires paper graphics, the School Assessment Coordinator must order the appropriate graphic packets from the Additional Materials Ordering system.

Online Tools Training – Students who use online accommodations should be given time to practice these accommodations prior to testing. Online accommodations are available within the Online Tools Training (OTTs), and the OTTs will confirm that an accommodation meets a student's accessibility needs. The accommodated OTTs are visible links within the overall Online Tools Training section of the test engine.

3. TEST SESSIONS AND TEST TICKETS

Test session creation and test ticket preparation is managed in the DRC INSIGHT Portal under Test Management.

The student records received from PIMS will be placed into online test sessions. These pre-populated test sessions will use the homeroom field as part of the test session name. The other variables are assessment and grade (e.g., "Jones – Algebra Period 2"). The pre-populated tests sessions can be edited or deleted as needed. Using the Multiple Test Sessions Upload function, new sessions can be created allowing students to move to a new session.

The creation of a test session generates the test tickets and rosters that are used for online testing login. Once test sessions are created, the test tickets and rosters will be immediately available. A test ticket contains student login information and is a secure item that needs to be securely stored. It should be printed near to the time it will be distributed to the Test Administrators. Each module of a test will have a separate test ticket with a unique password. This will require tickets to be printed for each module. Test tickets are secure materials and must be kept secure at all times prior to, during, and after the assessment.

Prior to test administration, SACs must view the roster to confirm the list of students testing within the session. The assessment coordinator should also review, before printing, that the students' names, PAsecureIDs, dates of birth, and accommodations are accurate. Updates need to be made prior to the printing of the Test Tickets. Test tickets for individual students may need to be reprinted if a change is made to a student's accommodation.

4. TRANSFER STUDENTS

Students who transfer to your school before or during the test window can be added to your existing test sessions. Transfer students are typically loaded under Student Management at their previous schools because of the timing when PIMS snapshot data is used to populate students in the DRC INSIGHT Portal.

There are two options to add a transfer student to a test session.

1. Include the transfer student in a data file and use the DRC INSIGHT Portal's functionality to 'Upload Multiple Test Sessions.'

2. Open an existing test session and add the transfer student manually. To find a transfer student, enter only the student's PAsecureID in the 'Search for Available Students' field.

If the transfer student is included in a test session at the student's previous school, you will need to use the Upload Multiple Test Sessions option to have the student removed from the previous school's test session(s).

If the transfer student does not exist under Student Management for a previous school, an error message will be noted. The student will need to be added to your school under Student Management.

D. Managing Test Sessions and Tickets

1. STUDENT STATUS DASHBOARD

During test administration, assessment coordinators have access to the Student Status Dashboard found under the Student Management section of the DRC INSIGHT Portal. This dashboard displays student testing status to help manage non-assessed students, make-up sessions, and extended time.

2. LOCKED TEST TICKETS

Unlocking a ticket allows a student to re-start an incomplete module of a test on a subsequent day (test tickets lock overnight). This is needed when a student has exited their test without completing the assessment, most commonly due to a student going home ill and completing the assessment during a makeup session. The test ticket will need to be unlocked on the day the student completes the makeup. Unlocking the test will not affect student responses, notes, or flags that were previously saved. DACs can unlock test tickets.

Note: If the student completed the assessment but did not exit the test normally (i.e., they closed their computer without selecting the final Submit button), the test ticket will show a locked status. These tickets **DO NOT** need to be unlocked and resubmitted. The student responses have been sent to DRC and will be scored.

DACs and SACs must keep a record of all test tickets which are unlocked and include the reason as part of the record.

3. REGENERATE ACCESS AND USE

All District Assessment Coordinators have been granted permissions to regenerate test tickets. PDE strongly recommends that this permission be kept with the DAC except for extenuating circumstances. DACs should record and keep on file the names of other district personnel who are granted the permission.

Regenerating a test ticket permanently deletes all student work and responses. A regeneration is necessary only when a student needs to start a module over. The regeneration will remove all student responses, notes, and flags. **DACs should use great caution when regenerating a test so that student work is not mistakenly deleted.** Regenerations are completed at the module level. If a single module is regenerated, the student will receive new login credentials (test ticket) for the same test form. If a student needs to retake the entire test with a new form number, each completed module must be regenerated and the student needs to be removed from and re-added to a test session.

An example of a reason to regenerate a test would be if a student starts (or completes) a module of the test using another student's test ticket.

Another example of this rare intervention would be a student who starts (or completes) a test without the needed accommodation and feels they need to retest with the accommodation enabled. To receive the accommodation, the student's completed module(s) needs to be regenerated, the accommodation needs to be selected for the student, and the student needs to be removed/re-added to a test session. This will allow the student to start over with the correct accommodated form.

If a cell phone violation requires a test module to be regenerated, see page 8 for additional information.

Record all regenerated tests and keep on file.

E. Managing Materials

1. MATERIALS PRINTED AND AVAILABLE AS ADDITIONAL MATERIAL ORDERS

The Additional Materials window will open four weeks prior to the testing window, giving sites time to place orders prior to testing. During this window, sites can order *Directions for Administration Manual*s and Algebra I formula sheets, including Spanish versions.

Requests for large print and Braille materials must also be submitted through the Additional Materials window. Students must have the appropriate accommodation selected in the DRC INSIGHT Portal. Because these materials are secure, they will arrive no earlier than two weeks prior to the start of the testing window, regardless of when the order is placed.

All DACs are assigned permissions to access the Additional Materials system within the DRC INSIGHT Portal. DACs are responsible for assigning the permissions to other personnel who need access to the Additional Materials system to order materials. Materials ordered from DRC after 2:00 p.m. Eastern Time will be shipped on the following business day.

2. PRINT ON DEMAND TEST MATERIALS

Paper versions of the Keystone Exams are available for the very small percentage of students who require paper testing as part of their IEPs/504 plans. Paper versions of the tests will be available via the Print on Demand accommodation only—DRC will not provide paper versions of the standard (non-accommodated) tests. Schools with students who need a Print on Demand test must mark the accommodation on the student's record in the DRC INSIGHT Portal to gain access to the Print on Demand form and to ensure the correct online form is delivered for transcription. The student must be placed in a test session and the student's text ticket must be retained for transcribing the student's work into the online test engine.

The DAC or SAC will need to access and print a PDF of the Print on Demand test. The PDF will be accessible no earlier than two weeks prior to the start of the test administration, regardless of when the accommodation is added or the test ticket is printed. School Assessment Coordinators should provide the Print on Demand Guidelines document (from the DRC INSIGHT Portal) to Test Administrators responsible for proctoring a POD test.

Accessing the Print on Demand test is done through the Test Management, Manage Test Sessions section of the DRC INSIGHT Portal. To print an assessment, the Portal user must have a user account and the Test Session – Print Test permission.

To generate a PDF for printing, do the following:

1. Click the Manage Test Sessions tab from the Test Management menu and enter search criteria to locate the student's test session.
2. Click the Show Sessions button.
3. Click the Print Test/Item icon for the applicable test session.
4. A grid displays showing the students marked with the appropriate accommodation.
5. Print using the printer icon under the Action column. When printing, SACs must use 8.5 × 11 paper and choose to "fit" the PDF to the paper.

3. TRANSCRIPTION OF PRINTED MATERIALS

After testing, student responses for Print on Demand, large print, and Braille versions must be transcribed into the INSIGHT Test Engine before the test window closes. PDE recommends that the transcription occur while the student is in the testing room so the student can check their work. If this is not possible, the transcription should occur as soon as possible and must occur within 24 hours of the test session. Two individuals must handle the transcription: either the SAC and a TA who has been trained by the SAC or two TAs trained by the SAC. Students' responses are copied exactly as they appear, including errors. All transcription must occur before the close of the testing window (5 p.m. on the final day of testing).

Follow these steps to transcribe student answers:

1. After the student has completed the test on paper, use a device that has INSIGHT installed and log in using the student's test ticket.

2. Begin transcribing student responses. Transcribe the student's responses as faithfully and as completely as possible repeating any errors in spelling or sentences using the following guidelines:

   - Do not transcribe erased or crossed out words or marks.
   - If a student's response consists of incomprehensible squiggles, marks, etc., which clearly are not words or word fragments, leave the item blank.
   - If a student's response is wholly or partly illegible, enter "ILLEGIBLE" for the entire response or for the part where applicable.
   - If all or part of a student's response is written in any language other than English, note "WRITTEN IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE" where applicable.
   - If part of a student's response cannot be entered into the INSIGHT Test Engine, leave that part blank.
   - If no part of a student's response can be entered, leave the entire item blank.

     Important Note: The large print and POD paper tests contain items that are equivalent to the online Technology Enhanced items. The paper items are formatted so that the student responses can easily and accurately be transcribed into the corresponding online TE item.

3. Once you have finished, select End Test and Submit.

4. Return the Print on Demand test materials to the School Assessment Coordinator for secure destruction.

4. MANAGING SECURE MATERIALS

Printed test tickets are secure materials and should be kept secure at all times. All tickets should be collected from the Test Administrators and securely and promptly destroyed per PDE policy. Test tickets should be printed as close to the test administration as possible and no earlier than two weeks prior to the test window.

Print on Demand, large print, and Braille materials must be kept in a pre-selected, locked, secure storage at all times. These materials must never be left unattended or in open areas. TAs must not be given access to these secure materials before the administration day. TAs should only be given access to secure test materials immediately preceding test administration. All Print on Demand, large print, and Braille materials must be returned immediately to the pre-selected, locked, secure storage area after each testing session.

Once all testing is complete and student responses have been transcribed into the online test engine, all Print on Demand, large print, and Braille materials must be securely destroyed by the SAC.

Do not return secure test materials to DRC.

PART V – PREPARATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE ASSESSMENTS

A. Scheduling the Assessment

PDE allows flexibility for LEAs to choose specific testing dates that work within the PDE-established testing windows. All LEAs are required to provide PDE with the specific dates and times (AM or PM) it has selected for administering the Keystone Exams. LEAs were required to submit this information for each of their schools through the DRC INSIGHT portal.

When possible, the first days of the PDE-established testing window should be used for administering the assessment. Scheduling the assessment to occur at the beginning of the window will allow the school more flexibility if any unusual circumstances delay the anticipated start date. It may be advisable to postpone the assessment if a large percentage of the school population is absent on any selected day or days, or if a disruption or event (such as a bomb threat, fire in the school, plumbing or heating problems, death of a classmate, etc.) may have caused a level of distress that could result in students performing below their capabilities. LEA personnel are urged to keep the best interests of the students in mind when making a determination to reschedule assessment dates. Administering the assessment in the early portion of the assessment windows should eliminate most scheduling problems. If your LEA must change previously submitted testing times, the DAC or SAC must contact PDE with the updated schedule.

The following chart outlines the Keystone Exams schedule guidelines and provides estimated times for each module by subject.

ALGEBRA I, BIOLOGY, AND LITERATURE KEYSTONE EXAMS Suggested Assessment Times (in Minutes)				
Module	**Number of Items & Test Times**	**Algebra I**	**Biology**	**Literature**
Module 1	Number of Items	23 MC/TE, 4 CR	32 MC/TE, 4 CR	23 MC/TE, 4 CR
	Student Testing Time (mins.)	75	72	73
	Administration Time (Pre-test & Post-test)	10–15	10–15	10–15
	Total Administration Time (Estimated Time in Minutes)	85–90	82–87	83–88
Module 2	Number of Items	23 MC/TE, 4 CR	32 MC/TE, 4 CR	23 MC/TE, 4 CR
	Student Testing Time (mins.)	75	72	73
	Administration Time (Pre-test & Post-test)	10–15	10–15	10–15
	Total Administration Time (Estimated Time in Minutes)	85–90	82–87	83–88

- MC refers to multiple-choice questions.
- TE refers to technology-enhanced questions.
- CR (constructed-response) questions include short-answer questions and extended constructive-response questions.

The assessments should be given in regular classroom settings, but other settings may be used based on school needs and available facilities. Appropriate test conditions optimize the chance for greater accuracy of the student performance. To the extent possible, all students participating in a subject-specific assessment in a school should begin at the same time. Staggered start times may be necessary due to availability of computers, iPads, and/or Chromebooks.

B. Parent/Guardian Notification of the Assessments

A sample parent/guardian Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Document that covers all the assessments has been included in Appendix D of this handbook to use as is or to revise to specific school needs. This information must be distributed to the parent or guardian of each student enrolled in the school(s) about three weeks prior to the assessment.

Please note that the district or school is responsible for duplicating the flyers. Copies are not provided, except for the samples in this handbook. If a district newsletter is regularly published, include the information in the newsletter. However, if history indicates that parents/guardians do not regularly read the newsletter, direct mail or email may ensure delivery to parents and guardians.

C. Electronic Device Notification Letter

Unapproved electronic devices that could compromise the security of the assessment, including cell phones, smartphones, smartwatches, smart glasses, earbuds, etc. are NOT permitted. LEAs must notify and ensure that all students and parents/guardians fully understand the policy regarding electronic devices, including cell phones.

If it is discovered during the testing or after testing is complete that a student used a cell phone or other unapproved electronic device during the administration of the test, the school's discipline policy will be followed, the student's responses will be deleted by regenerating the exam module, and the student will have to retake another form of the assessment.

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 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. 17 U.S.C. § 101 et seq.

A parent letter regarding electronic devices has also been included in Appendix D. PDE strongly encourages LEAs to distribute this letter as a means to ensure that all students and parents/guardians fully understand the policy regarding electronic devices in the testing rooms.

D. Preparing Students Prior to the Assessment

Inform students of the scheduled assessment sessions in advance, perhaps at the time the informational flyers are sent to parents/guardians. Explain to the students why they are being given the assessments and how the results will be used. Students should realize that doing their best is important, but school personnel should not place undue pressure on students that could cause harmful stress. Students may also be informed that their parents/guardians and teachers will be receiving the results.

Inform students of the following:

1. School/district personnel must discuss the *Code of Conduct for Test Takers* with all students prior to the scheduled assessment time. It is essential that students understand the importance of each point in the Code of Conduct before testing begins. (Please refer to Appendix F of this handbook.)
2. They are permitted to use scratch/grid paper.
3. They may use their own calculators (or school-supplied, if applicable) provided that testing mode or exam mode is activated prior to the exam session and the calculator complies with the PDE Calculator Policy, found in Appendix E.

In addition, PDE encourages districts to inform students BEFORE TESTING of the locally determined ramifications/sanctions for student misconduct during the Keystone Exams. This includes, but is not limited to, sanctions associated with:

1. cheating;
2. sharing and/or reproducing of test content; and
3. possessing cell phones, cameras, smartwatches, smart glasses, or any other unauthorized electronic devices during the administration of the assessment. Students must be informed of this policy in advance and should be encouraged to leave such items at home on administration days. The TA must collect all such devices that were not left at home prior to distributing assessment materials and shall return them upon completion of the assessment.

E. PAsecureID List

The Pennsylvania Department of Education requires that all SACs generate a list(s) of students by PAsecureID to show all students taking the assessment and their Test Administrator.

Each list should indicate which students are being assessed by which Test Administrator (TA) and Proctor. The list should include the school name, Test Administrator, PAsecureID, grade, subject being administered, and year. Lists should include any changes including substitute teachers serving as TAs, and TAs administering make-up and/or extended time sessions. All lists (paper or electronic) must be retained at the district/school for three years and be available when requested by PDE. Even though the PAsecureID must be recorded, students' names may also be included for LEA use; however, all lists used to communicate with PDE must not have students' names.

Below is a sample layout.

School Name	Test Administrator and Proctor	PAsecureID	Subject	Administration
PA School	Mr. Trenholm	9876543210	Biology	Summer 2026
PA School	Mr. Trenholm, Mr. Weller	4567891230	Algebra I	Summer 2026

F. Seating Charts

The Pennsylvania Department of Education requires that each TA develop a seating chart for the students to whom the TAs administered the assessment. TAs are to return seating charts to the SAC. SACs are to maintain copies of the seating charts for three (3) years. TAs should assign seats based upon the form number and should ensure that students with the same form do not sit within eyesight of one another. Students must not be able to view other students' work while testing. The test administrator must ensure students sit far enough apart. The availability of a seating chart could become instrumental when investigating possible student cheating.

G. Preparing the Classroom Prior to the Assessment

Good organization of assessment materials and well-executed procedures will help the administration proceed smoothly. Student seating must be arranged to prevent student interaction during the exam sessions. During the assessment sessions, keep disturbances to a minimum. A quiet, calm atmosphere is essential for concentration on the task. Place a Do Not Disturb sign on the door(s) to the classroom to indicate that an assessment session is taking place.

Remove or cover with opaque material all classroom instructional materials or any other materials that may assist students with answering items on the assessment. For example, posters about math rules or times tables should be covered or removed from the room on the assessment days.

Note: These are general examples. Any materials that may contain content that could be tested must be removed or covered.

DO NOT DISPLAY:

1. vocabulary words and/or definitions
2. examples of problems or answers
3. instructions on how to use a calculator
4. tips on how to write responses and/or solve problems
5. illustrations or drawings of geometric shapes, algebraic equations, graphs, or number lines

H. Administering the Assessments

The assessments consist of two modules per subject. Each module must be scheduled as a separate exam session and the modules must be administered in sequence. As the Keystone Exams are untimed, there may be instances in which the actual testing times may take longer than the recommended testing time. **Modules must NOT be scheduled back-to-back in the morning (or in the afternoon).** Instead, the modules must be divided across two days or divided across the morning and afternoon of the same day. For example, do not schedule both Module 1 and Module 2 testing events for a Keystone Exam during the same morning. Rather, schedule Module 1 testing for a morning, and schedule Module 2 testing either the afternoon of the same day or the following day. In all cases, individual modules must be completed within one school day. Any student requesting additional time should be allowed extra time on the day the assessment was started.

Each module of an assessment has a separate test ticket. Login information is different for each module. The test ticket for the module being administered should be the only ticket handed to a student at the time of testing. The TA should collect all test tickets once students have logged in and begun testing. TAs must return all test tickets to the SAC and the SAC must shred all test tickets.

Students taking the Algebra I exam should receive a paper copy of the formula sheet. These formula sheets are also available to the students within the online test.

a. Students may not share calculators during the assessment.

b. Consult the PDE Calculator Policy, located in Appendix E, for additional information.

TAs may instruct students to show them the review page prior to exiting the assessment. If the TA observes unanswered questions on the review page, the TA may instruct the student to go back and finish answering all the questions. If a student has already exited the assessment, the student may not log back into the assessment.

I. Managing Extended Assessment Sessions

Students should complete all tasks to the best of their abilities; however, not all students will finish the assessment at the same time. Use the flexibility of the time limits to the students' advantage. Students should not feel rushed and no student should be penalized due to working slowly. However, a student should not be given an opportunity to waste time. TAs must collect scratch paper and any other paper on which the students may have written as students finish testing. Students who finish early may sit quietly, read for pleasure, or read non-content-related materials until all students have finished. Reading for pleasure includes magazines along with fiction text such as novels, short stories, poetry, etc. Reading anything that may include information related to the content area being assessed is not allowed. Written work/drawing/coloring of any kind is prohibited to ensure students are not recording secure test content.

Students may request extended time if they indicate that they have not completed the task. Such requests should be granted if the TA finds the request to be educationally valid. Not permitting ample time for students to complete the assessment may impact student and school performance. Students requiring time beyond the time provided for

the majority of the student population may be allowed to continue immediately following the regularly scheduled session in another setting. Students should not be permitted to continue a module of the assessment after a significant lapse of time from the original session.

Students with special requirements (i.e., physical, visual, auditory, or learning disabilities as defined by their IEPs or service contracts) and students who work slowly may require extended time. Special assessment situations should be arranged for these students. Requests for extended time should be granted if the TA finds the request to be educationally valid. Students should be permitted to continue immediately following the regularly scheduled session in another setting. (Extended time sessions do not have to be in another location.)

When allowing extended assessment sessions for a portion of the student population:

1. **Do not** allow students to attend a lunch period with other students if the lunch period occurs between the original session and the extended session.
2. **Do not** allow students to attend any classes between the original assessment session and the extended session.
3. **Do not** allow any overnight extensions.
4. **Do not** allow students to return to an unfinished module after indicating they have completed that module.
5. **Do not** allow the extended assessment session to be administered without monitoring. It is the SAC's responsibility to make arrangements for a TA to monitor extended assessment sessions.
6. **Do not** allow students to move to extended time location without supervision of a TA.

   Students should press the Pause button when moving to an extended time location. The 20 minute timer will begin. The students' answers, highlighting, and notes are saved in the platform. Once the student arrives in the extended time location, the student should press resume. Students may carry computers to an extended-time location under the supervision of the TA. Students are not required to carry their computer to the extended-time location. TAs should ensure the students do not research answers or change answers as part of carrying computers to the extended-time session/location.

J. Make-Up Sessions

If a student is absent during a testing session, the student should complete the assessment in the same module as the rest of the testing population. The module that was missed due to absence should be made up in a separate session.

1. There is not a separate window to facilitate make-up testing. Schools should administer make-ups as soon as possible throughout the Keystone Exams testing window. In all cases, schools should follow the procedures established by their district when scheduling make-up testing.
2. If a student becomes ill (as determined by a school nurse, health room aide, principal, etc.) during the administration of a module of the assessment and the student is unable to complete the module, the student may complete that module during a make-up session upon returning to school, starting with the item the student was completing when the illness occurred. The student's test ticket will need to be unlocked, and the student must be monitored closely so that responses to previous items are not changed. Students completing a test with an overnight delay need to be actively monitored to ensure they do not work on completed items.
3. If a student's testing device experiences a technical glitch that cannot be resolved in time for the student to continue testing within the scheduled session, the student may begin or complete that module during a make-up session, starting with the item the student was completing when the disruption occurred. The student's test ticket will need to be unlocked if the make-up session occurs on a subsequent day, and the student must be monitored closely so that responses to previous items are not changed.

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Appendix A:

Handbook for Secure Test Administration

Handbook for Secure Test Administration

Security Statement

State assessments rely on the measurement of individual achievement. Any deviation from procedures meant to ensure test validity and security (e.g., group work, teacher coaching, teaching or release of any test items, use of previously administered Pennsylvania assessments as preparation tools) is strictly prohibited and will be considered a violation of test security. Local Education Agency (LEA)/school personnel with access to the assessment materials must not review, discuss, disseminate, or otherwise reveal the contents to anyone. (This prohibition excludes the *Item and Scoring Samplers* available on the Pennsylvania Department of Education's (PDE's) website.)

Any action by a professional employee or commissioned officer that is willfully designed to divulge test questions, falsify student scores, or compromise the integrity of the state assessment system will be subject to disciplinary action under the Educator Discipline Act, 24 P.S. §§ 2070.1a *et seq*, which may include a private reprimand, a public reprimand, a suspension of the employee's teaching certificate(s), a revocation of the employee's teaching certificate(s), and/or a suspension or prohibition from being employed by a charter school.

Training and Test Administration Procedures

The purpose of this handbook is to assist in the training of LEA/school personnel to properly and securely administer state assessments. This handbook is also an important and valuable resource in implementing online testing.

Roles and Responsibilities: Training

The District Assessment Coordinator (DAC) is responsible for completing all of the Pennsylvania State Test Administration Trainings (PSTATs) provided by PDE for the DACs, SACs, and TAs/Proctors. DACs must complete the Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) training and any DAC specific training provided by the PDE. The DAC is then responsible for coordinating all training that takes place in the LEA and for determining specifics related to test administration such as a schedule and other LEA-level administrative aspects of the testing. The DAC is responsible for ALL training in the LEA with primary responsibility for the direct training of SACs. In some LEAs the DAC may train the LEA-level staff who handle and/or have access to secure test material.

The SAC receives training from the DAC and must also complete both the PSTAT training for SACs and for TAs/Proctors. The SAC is then responsible to oversee all aspects of test administration in a building, including training Test Administrators (TAs), proctors, and other building level staff.

The TAs/Proctors must complete the PSTAT training for TAs/Proctors and training provided by the SAC. The TAs/Proctors are responsible for administering the assessment and monitoring students during the assessment.

Translators, interpreters, and scribes must complete the PSTAT training for TAs/Proctors and must also complete the training offered by the school/district.

The *Handbook for Assessment Coordinators* provides more information related to training.

Roles and Responsibilities: Test Administration

The following lists the general roles and responsibilities for DACs, SACs/Principals, TAs/Proctors, and general personnel before, during, and after test administration. The lists are not exhaustive but provide a general overview of the most important responsibilities of each individual in test administration. In some cases the responsibilities may overlap between or among DACs, SACs, and/or TAs/Proctors. In these cases it is the responsibility of the DAC to determine who has the primary responsibility and is accountable for specific duties, especially when duties may be shared.

A. DISTRICT ASSESSMENT COORDINATOR TEST SECURITY GUIDELINES

General Statement: Administer the assessment using the best practices and with fidelity to the administrative guidelines; keep the assessment materials secure and confidential; prevent any dishonest or fraudulent behavior in the administration and handling of the assessment; and promote a fair and equitable testing environment in order to obtain reliable and valid student scores.

Before Test Administration – DAC

Complete the PSTAT trainings for the administration of the assessments annually.

Complete the *Accommodations Guidelines* training annually.

Update DRC INSIGHT portal accounts for LEA and school users.

Review the *Handbook for Assessment Coordinators* (HAC), *Directions for Administration* (DFA), *Accommodations Guidelines*, *Online User Guides* and other test-related documents necessary to conduct training for test administration.

Review the LEA's policy/procedures for home-schooled students.

Review the LEA's policy/procedures for handling cyber-charter schools' requests to test their students.

Develop and maintain the LEA's procedure for parental requests to view tests (religious exemptions).

Develop and maintain the LEA's procedure for handling breaks during test administration and keeping test tickets secure.

Develop and maintain the LEA's procedure for handling disruptions during test administration and keeping test tickets secure.

Develop and maintain the LEA's procedure for handling emergencies during test administration.

Develop the LEA's master test schedule (including make-ups) that falls within PDE established test windows for each administration and include it in training. Ensure that the test schedule is developed so that sections/modules are administered in sequence.

Develop a training agenda and train SACs and other LEA-level staff involved in test administration or the handling of secure material prior to conducting any of their assigned work. (See *Handbook for Assessment Coordinators* for more information). PDE has developed a PowerPoint which DACs may elect to use as a framework for training SACs. The PowerPoint is located at https://www.pa.gov/agencies/education/programs-and-services/instruction/elementary-and-secondary-education/assessment-and-accountability/keystone-exams.

Ensure that SACs are trained on the test accountability and security information contained in the *Handbook for Assessment Coordinators*.

Ensure that SACs are trained on the *Accommodations Guidelines*.

Ensure that all individuals involved in the handling of assessment materials and/or the administration of the assessment are instructed in test security protocols and procedures.

Ensure that any individual who will administer and/or proctor the assessment completes the online PSTAT annually (each school year).

Ensure that all individuals involved in the handling and/or administration of the assessment receive instruction that all assessment materials are to be kept secure and precisely accounted for in accordance with the procedures specified in the *Handbook for Assessment Coordinators*.

Ensure that SACs receive instruction on the policy regarding all electronic devices (cell phones, smartphones, smartwatches, smart glasses, cameras, etc.).

Ensure that all individuals who assist in the administration of the assessment and all individuals who have access to the secure assessment materials have been made aware that they are not in any manner to alter or cause the alteration of any examinee response.

Ensure all individuals who administer the assessment understand they may not guide or explain how to answer questions to students during the assessment. TAs may help students with online tools problems during the assessment.

Communicate to students, parents, and the community that which the assessment does and does not measure, when and how it will be administered, and how the results will be used. Refer to the *Handbook for Assessment Coordinators* for a sample Parent Letter.

Notify and ensure that all students and parents/guardians have been provided the policy regarding all electronic devices (cell phones, smartphones, smartwatches, smart glasses, cameras, etc.).

Consider having a teacher other than the teacher-of-record administer the assessment to students. If local circumstances do not allow that option, consider assigning a Proctor to be in the classroom with the TA. (In some circumstances LEAs have been directed by PDE not to use the teacher-of-record to administer the assessment to students they instruct in the present school year.)

Report any items not received.

Distribute materials to SAC(s) (ship-to-district).

During Test Administration – DAC

Monitor testing sites to ensure administration of the assessments in accordance with PDE policies and procedures.

Ensure that sections/modules are started and completed in the same day as per the LEA testing schedule.

Instruct all school staff to minimize distractions, including intercom announcements.

Immediately report suspected testing irregularities/security breaches to the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Irregularities and/or allegations should be reported to PDE via ra-edirregularities@pa.gov.

After Test Administration – DAC

DACs should not use test tickets to look at items or to change answers.

Sign the *Test Security Certification* (*District Assessment Coordinator*). The DAC should sign the *Test Security Certification* at the end of each testing window.

Failure to keep items secure constitutes a breach in security, the consequences of which can be severe, up to and including remuneration should it be determined loss of or misappropriation of materials has compromised the integrity of test items.

B. SCHOOL ASSESSMENT COORDINATOR AND/OR BUILDING PRINCIPAL TEST SECURITY GUIDELINES

General Statement: Maintain the security and integrity of all assessment materials, prevent any dishonest or fraudulent behavior in the administration and handling of the assessment, and promote a fair and equitable testing environment in order to obtain reliable and valid student scores.

Before Test Administration – SAC

Attend the annual training for SACs provided by the DAC.

Complete the PSTAT training for SACs and for TAs/Proctors annually.

Review DFA's, the *Handbook for Assessment Coordinators*, and *Accommodations Guidelines*.

Develop a building level master test schedule (including make-ups) that falls within PDE established testing windows for each administration and include it in training. Ensure that the test schedule is developed so that sections are administered in sequence.

Develop an agenda and train TAs/Proctors and other building level personnel (review the *Handbook for Assessment Coordinators* for more information). PDE has developed a PowerPoint which SACs may elect to use as a framework for training TAs. The PowerPoint is located at https://www.pa.gov/agencies/education/programs-and-services/instruction/elementary-and-secondary-education/assessment-and-accountability/keystone-exams.

Ensure that all individuals involved in the handling of assessment materials and/or the administration of the assessment receive instruction regarding test security protocols and procedures.

Ensure that all TAs/Proctors receive a copy of the TA/Proctor *Test Security Certification*.

Ensure that all individuals who will administer and/or proctor the assessment complete the Pennsylvania State Test Administration Training (PSTAT). Translators, interpreters, and scribes must complete the PSTAT training for TAs/Proctors and must also complete the training offered by the school/district.

Ensure that all individuals involved in the handling and/or administration of the assessment receive instruction that all assessment materials are to be kept secure and precisely accounted for in accordance with the procedures specified in the *Handbook for Assessment Coordinators*.

Ensure that all TAs/Proctors are instructed on the policy regarding electronic devices (cell phones, smartphones, smartwatches, smart glasses, cameras, etc.).

Ensure that all individuals who assist in the administration of the assessment and all individuals who have access to the secure assessment materials are instructed that they are not in any manner to alter or cause the alteration of any examinee response.

Create and maintain the PAsecureID list that shows the connection between the student and test administrator(s) (refer to the *Handbook for Assessment Coordinators* for specific instructions).

Ensure all students are scheduled for the appropriate assessment. Ensure the students have the correct test ticket for subject and section or module.

Ensure that students testing have prior experience with the online practice test and tools.

Maintain a contingency plan for breaks and for disruptions during testing.

Ensure monitoring software or spyware is disabled or removed from computers, iPads, and Chromebooks to be used for testing.

Ensure all instructional materials that could aid students in answering test items are covered with opaque material or removed from classrooms and hallways.

Make sure the testing environment is secure and educationally appropriate.

Know the required accommodations and those allowable accommodations for each student with an IEP or 504 Service Plan and/or for each English Learner being assessed and communicate this to the appropriate personnel.

Provide the appropriate testing environment for each student requiring an accommodation.

Inventory materials received in ship-to-district sites. If additional materials are needed, notify the DAC. In a ship-to-school site the SAC should order additional materials, if needed.

Place a "Testing—Do Not Disturb" sign on doors where testing is occurring.

During Test Administration – SAC

Develop and maintain a procedure for distribution and collection of secure test materials to TAs each day utilizing a sign-out/sign-in process. The TA should count the test tickets in the presence of the SAC or the SAC's designee.

Ensure that TAs are following proper testing protocols.

Make sure students are supervised at all times during testing and all breaks. This supervision requirement includes those students who need additional time to complete any test session.

If there is a disruption (e.g., fire alarm, power outage) ensure the safety of students at all times, and take appropriate precautions concerning the security of the test tickets.

Ensure secure processes and procedures for extended time. Students may carry computers to an extended-time location under the supervision of the TA. Students are not required to carry their computer to the extended-time location.

Make sure that sections/modules are started and completed in the same day.

Minimize distractions, including intercom announcements.

Ensure test tickets are stored in a locked area with controlled and limited access.

Report suspected testing irregularities/security breaches to the DAC. If the DAC is unavailable for an extended time or has any involvement in the testing irregularity, the SAC must contact PDE directly. The SAC should report test security violations or irregularities to PDE via ra-edirregularities@pa.gov.

After Each Testing Session – SAC

Collect all materials from TAs excluding copies of the DFA.

Account for all student test tickets daily. The SAC or the SAC's designee should count the test tickets in the presence of the TA.

Store testing materials in a locked, secure location.

Destroy scratch/grid paper, rough drafts, online administration test tickets, and any other paper on which students have written.

After Test Administration – SAC

SACs should not use test tickets to look at items or to change answers.

Failure to keep items secure constitutes a breach in security, the consequences of which can be severe; up to and including remuneration should it be determined loss of or misappropriation of materials has compromised the integrity of test items.

Sign the *Test Security Certification* (*School Assessment Coordinator and Principal*). The SAC should sign the *Test Security Certification* at the end of each testing window.

Ensure all TAs, Proctors, Translators, Interpreters, Scribes, and other individuals with access to secure testing materials sign the *Test Security Certification*. If someone cannot or does not sign the *Test Security Certification*, immediately report that fact to the Chief School Administrator to report to the Department of Education. Allegations should be referred to ra-edirregularities@pa.gov.

C. TEST ADMINISTRATOR/PROCTOR TEST SECURITY GUIDELINES

General Statement: Maintain the security and integrity of all assessment materials, prevent any dishonest or fraudulent behavior in the administration and handling of the assessment, and promote a fair and equitable testing environment in order to obtain reliable and valid student scores.

Before Test Administration – TA/Proctor

Attend the annual training for TAs/proctors provided by the SAC.

Annually (each school year) complete the PSTAT.

Review the *Directions for Administration Manual* for the test to be administered.

Read and understand the *Test Security Certification*.

Remove or cover with opaque materials all classroom instructional materials or any other materials that could aid students in answering test items.

Make sure the testing environment is secure and educationally appropriate.

Review the *Code of Conduct for Test Takers* with students prior to the day of testing and respond to all student questions.

Review the *Calculator Policy* and ensure calculators (other than calculators provided within the online testing engine) meet the requirements of the *Calculator Policy*. Clear the calculator memory before and after each test session/module. For calculators with exam mode capability, place the calculator in exam mode. Students are not to be assigned either task.

Know and prepare to appropriately implement the required accommodations for each student with an IEP or 504 Service Plan and for each English Learner being assessed in your room.

Review with students the possible local sanctions the district will enforce for student misconduct (e.g., cheating and recording test questions).

During Test Administration – TA/Proctor

Collect cell phones, smartphones, smart glasses, and other unauthorized electronic devices as students enter the testing site.

Ensure students are seated for optimal security and at the assigned workstation.

Appropriately implement required accommodations.

During the administration of the PSSA grades 4–8 mathematics assessment, collect all used scratch/grid paper and any other paper on which students have written after the non-calculator portion to ensure students have not recorded non-calculator items on scratch/grid paper. Provide new scratch/grid paper to students.

Actively monitor students. TAs should take positions with the best vantage points and continually move around the testing site to ensure students are adhering to the instructions given and are in the correct session. TAs/Proctors must not be engaged in off task activities such as working on electronic devices, talking with colleagues, or grading student work.

Make sure students are supervised at all times during testing and all breaks. This supervision requirement includes those students who need additional time to complete any test session.

If there is a disruption (e.g., fire alarm, power outage) ensure the safety of students at all times, and take appropriate precautions concerning the security of the test tickets.

Collect test tickets as soon as students have logged into the assessment.

Students who finish early may sit quietly, read for pleasure, or read non-content-related materials until all students have finished. Reading for pleasure includes magazines along with fiction text such as novels, short stories, poetry, etc. Reading anything that may include information related to the content area being assessed is not allowed. Written work/drawing/coloring of any kind is prohibited to ensure students are not recording secure test content.

Immediately report suspected testing irregularities/security breaches to the SAC/Building Principal.

After Each Testing Session – TA/Proctor

Return all scratch/grid paper, rough drafts or any other paper on which students have written to the SAC to be destroyed.

Account for all student test tickets daily and return all secure testing materials to the SAC immediately after the testing session each day. The SAC or the SAC's designee should count the test tickets in the presence of the TA.

Failure to keep items secure constitutes a breach in security, the consequences of which can be severe, up to and including remuneration should it be determined loss of or misappropriation of materials has compromised the integrity of test items.

Clear the memory of calculators and set the calculators in testing or exam mode before and after each testing session.

After Test Administration – TA/Proctor

Sign the *Test Security Certification* (*Test Administrator/Proctor*) and return it to the SAC. The TA/Proctor should sign the *Test Security Certification* at the end of each testing window.

D. GENERAL TEST SECURITY GUIDELINES

The assessments rely on the measurement of individual achievement. Any deviation from assessment procedures is strictly prohibited and will be considered a violation of test security.

School administrators, teachers, and any other education personnel who are involved in the assessment program must maintain the security of all assessment materials at all times.

Because the assessment must remain secure, teachers/TAs should not have assessment materials in their possession at any time other than during the actual assessment administration.

Before Test Administration

DO NOT:

Review student item responses except for purposes as stated in the *Directions for Administration Manual* and any of the accommodations guidelines documents. Knowledge or review of test items is not necessary for valid test administration and is prohibited.

Note: Interpreters may have access to test materials three days prior to test administration to prepare for accurate interpretation of the test per the *Accommodations Guidelines*.

Reveal any part of copyrighted materials to anyone.

Copy or otherwise reproduce any part of copyrighted materials.

Review and/or provide answers to test items to students. This includes using any of the test items for instructional purposes.

Possess unauthorized copies of state tests.

Assist in, direct, aid, counsel, encourage, or fail to report immediately any of the actions prohibited in this document.

During Test Administration

DO NOT:

Leave students unattended with testing materials or permit any student to leave the testing site with testing materials for any reason.

Permit students to have unauthorized electronic devices in their possession or accessible to them.

Discuss, disseminate, or otherwise reveal contents of the test to anyone.

Possess secure test materials at any time other than during the actual administration of the test. TAs should be given the secure materials immediately prior to the administration of the test, and the materials must be collected and counted by the SAC immediately after the testing session ends each day.

Coach or provide feedback to students (e.g., answer any questions pertaining to the content of the test, review rough drafts, or give students feedback of any kind including indicating items students may not have answered correctly). This prohibition applies to, but is not limited to, Personal Care Aides (PCA), Therapeutic Support Staff (TSS), or any other one-on-one aide who is assigned to a student.

Define or clarify a word in a test item.

Deviate from any of the read-aloud rules for any portion of the assessments. (The *Pennsylvania Read-Aloud and Scribing Guidelines for Operational Assessments* can be found on the PDE website.)

Read aloud any part of the assessments that will cue the correct answer(s) or provide a hint for the test taker.

Read-aloud the parts of the assessment that are not permitted to be read-aloud.

Return a test ticket to any student after the student has completed the test, unless approval is granted by PDE, or for the reasons noted in the following sentence. Test tickets will be returned to students for makeup sessions for absences and for students who go to another testing site for extended time.

Alter, influence, or interfere with a test response in any way.

Assist in, direct, aid, counsel, encourage, or fail to report any of the actions prohibited in this document.

Play music while students are taking the test.

After Test Administration

DO NOT:

Discuss, disseminate, or otherwise reveal the contents of the test to anyone.

Keep/save, copy, reproduce, or use any test, test item, specific test content, or examinee responses to any item or any section of a secure test in any manner inconsistent with the instructions provided by and through the Pennsylvania Department of Education. This includes using any of the test items for instructional purposes.

Review student responses.

Read or review test items.

Alter, influence, or interfere with a test response in any way.

Discuss or provide feedback regarding test items.

Copy or reproduce any portion of the secure test materials or prepare/provide answer keys.

Make false or misleading statements about assessment results, including inappropriate interpretations, inaccurate reports, or unsubstantiated claims.

Make any alteration to a student's test.

Assist in, direct, aid, counsel, encourage, or fail to report any of the actions prohibited in this document.

DO:

Immediately report suspected testing irregularities/security breaches. TAs/Proctors should report to the SAC/Building Principal; SACs should report directly to the DAC. In either case if the appropriate coordinator, whether SAC or DAC, is unavailable for an extended time or has any involvement in the testing irregularity, contact PDE directly. Irregularities and/or allegations should be reported to PDE at ra-edirregularities@pa.gov.

Sign the *Test Security Certification* (*General*). Those involved with testing should sign the *Test Security Certification* at the end of each testing window.

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Appendix B:

Keystone Test Security Certifications

2026 Summer Keystone Test Security Certification

(District Assessment Coordinator)

District: _____

School: _____

AUN: _____

Pennsylvania
Department of Education

Maintaining the security and integrity of all assessment materials, preventing any dishonest or fraudulent behavior in the administration and handling of the assessment, and promoting a fair and equitable testing environment are essential in order to obtain reliable and valid student scores. In that regard, I certify the following:

Prior to the administration of the assessment, all individuals involved in the handling of assessment materials and/or the administration of the assessment received instruction regarding test security protocols and procedures. Additionally, prior to the administration of the assessment, any individual who administered and/or proctored the assessment completed the Pennsylvania State Test Administration Training and all School Assessment Coordinators were trained on the Test Accountability and Security information contained in the *Handbook for Assessment Coordinators*. Furthermore, prior to the administration of the assessment, all individuals involved in the handling and/or administration of the assessment and all individuals who had access to any assessment materials were informed that the assessment materials are secure, confidential, and proprietary documents owned by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. These individuals were made aware that they were neither to review, discuss, disseminate, describe, or otherwise reveal the contents of the assessment to anyone nor were they to remove any assessment materials from the school building. They were also made aware that they were not to keep, copy, reproduce, release, or use any assessment, assessment question, specific assessment content, or examinee response to any item or any section of the secure assessment in any manner that is inconsistent with the instructions provided by or through the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Prior to the administration of the assessment, all individuals involved in the handling and/or administration of the assessment received instruction that all assessment materials were to be kept secure and precisely accounted for in accordance with the procedures specified in the *Handbook for Assessment Coordinators*. Further, prior to the administration of the assessment, all individuals who assisted in the administration of the assessment and all individuals who had access to the secure assessment materials were made aware that they were not to in any manner alter or cause the alteration of any examinee response.

All assessment materials have been used and secured in accordance with the directions contained in the *Handbook for Assessment Coordinators*.

I have not reviewed, discussed, disseminated, described, or otherwise revealed the contents of the assessment to anyone. I am not aware that any individual has reviewed, discussed, disseminated, described, or otherwise revealed the contents of the assessment to anyone. I have neither removed any assessment materials from the school building unless I was specifically authorized to administer the assessment to a student on homebound instruction nor am I aware that any individual has removed any assessment materials from the school building unless specifically authorized to administer the assessment to a student on homebound instruction.

I have not kept, copied, reproduced, released, or used any assessment, assessment question, specific assessment content, or examinee response to any item or any section of the secure assessment in any manner that is inconsistent with the instructions provided by or through the Pennsylvania Department of Education. I am not aware that any individual has kept, copied, reproduced, released, or used any assessment, assessment question, specific assessment content, or examinee response to any item or any section of the secure assessment in any manner that is inconsistent with the instructions provided by or through the Pennsylvania Department of Education. I have neither provided any examinee with an answer to an assessment question or in any way influenced an examinee's response to any assessment question nor am I aware that any individual has provided any examinee with an answer to an assessment question or in any way influenced an examinee's response to any assessment question. I have not in any manner altered or caused the alteration of any examinee response. I am not aware that any other individual has altered or has caused to have altered any examinee response in any manner.

I understand that I am responsible for the secure administration of the assessment in my school district and for the return of all secure assessment material and that any breach in assessment security could result in the invalidation of assessment results, professional discipline, and/or criminal prosecution.

I understand that false statements herein are made subject to the penalties of 18 Pa.C.S. § 4904.

Assessment Coordinator Name	Assessment Coordinator Signature	Date of Signature

2026 Summer Keystone Test Security Certification

(School Assessment Coordinator and Principal)

District: _____

School: _____

AUN: _____

Pennsylvania
Department of Education

Maintaining the security and integrity of all assessment materials, preventing any dishonest or fraudulent behavior in the administration and handling of the assessment, and promoting a fair and equitable testing environment are essential in order to obtain reliable and valid student scores. In that regard, I certify the following:

Prior to the administration of the assessment, all individuals involved in the handling of assessment materials and/or the administration of the assessment received instruction regarding test security protocols and procedures. Additionally, prior to the administration of the assessment, any individual who administered and/or proctored the assessment completed the Pennsylvania State Test Administration Training. Furthermore, prior to the administration of the assessment, all individuals involved in the handling and/or administration of the assessment and all individuals who had access to any assessment materials were informed that the assessment materials are secure, confidential, and proprietary documents owned by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. These individuals were made aware that they were neither to review, discuss, disseminate, describe, or otherwise reveal the contents of the assessment to anyone nor were they to remove any assessment materials from the school building. They were also made aware that they were not to keep, copy, reproduce, release, or use any assessment, assessment question, specific assessment content, or examinee response to any item or any section of the secure assessment in any manner that is inconsistent with the instructions provided by or through the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Prior to the administration of the assessment, all individuals involved in the handling and/or administration of the assessment received instruction that all assessment materials were to be kept secure and precisely accounted for in accordance with the procedures specified in the *Handbook for Assessment Coordinators*. Further, prior to the administration of the assessment, all individuals who assisted in the administration of the assessment and all individuals who had access to the secure assessment materials were made aware that they were not to in any manner alter or cause the alteration of any examinee response.

All assessment materials have been used and secured in accordance with the directions contained in the *Handbook for Assessment Coordinators*.

I have not reviewed, discussed, disseminated, described, or otherwise revealed the contents of the assessment to anyone. I am not aware that any individual has reviewed, discussed, disseminated, described, or otherwise revealed the contents of the assessment to anyone. I have neither removed any assessment materials from the school building unless I was specifically authorized to administer the assessment to a student on homebound instruction nor am I aware that any individual has removed any assessment materials from the school building unless specifically authorized to administer the assessment to a student on homebound instruction.

I have not kept, copied, reproduced, released, or used any assessment, assessment question, specific assessment content, or examinee response to any item or any section of the secure assessment in any manner that is inconsistent with the instructions provided by or through the Pennsylvania Department of Education. I am not aware that any individual has kept, copied, reproduced, released, or used any assessment, assessment question, specific assessment content, or examinee response to any item or any section of the secure assessment in any manner that is inconsistent with the instructions provided by or through the Pennsylvania Department of Education. I have neither provided any examinee with an answer to an assessment question or in any way influenced an examinee's response to any assessment question nor am I aware that any individual has provided any examinee with an answer to an assessment question or in any way influenced an examinee's response to any assessment question. I have not in any manner altered or caused the alteration of any examinee response. I am not aware that any other individual has altered or has caused the alteration of any examinee response in any manner.

I understand that I am responsible for the secure administration of the assessment in my school(s) and for the return of all secure assessment material and that any breach in assessment security could result in the invalidation of assessment results, professional discipline, and/or criminal prosecution.

I understand that false statements herein are made subject to the penalties of 18 Pa.C.S. § 4904.

Name	Signature	Date of Signature

2026 Summer Keystone Test Security Certification

(Test Administrator and Proctor)

District: _____

School: _____

AUN: _____

Maintaining the security and integrity of all assessment materials, preventing any dishonest or fraudulent behavior in the administration and handling of the assessment, and promoting a fair and equitable testing environment are essential in order to obtain reliable and valid student scores. In that regard, I certify the following:

Prior to the administration of the assessment, I completed the Pennsylvania State Test Administration Training, and I understand that the assessment materials are secure, confidential, and proprietary documents owned by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

I have not reviewed, discussed, disseminated, described, or otherwise revealed the contents of the assessment to anyone. I have not removed any assessment materials from the school building unless I was specifically authorized to administer the assessment to a student on homebound instruction. I have not kept, copied, reproduced, released, or used any assessment, assessment question, specific assessment content, or examinee response to any item or any section of the secure assessment in any manner that is inconsistent with the instructions provided by or through the Pennsylvania Department of Education. I have not provided any examinee with an answer to an assessment question or in any way influenced an examinee's response to any assessment question. I have not in any manner altered or caused the alteration of any examinee response.

I understand that any breach in assessment security could result in the invalidation of assessment results, professional discipline, and/or criminal prosecution.

I understand that false statements herein are made subject to the penalties of 18 Pa.C.S. § 4904.

Administrator/Proctor Name	Administrator/Proctor Signature	Date of Signature

2026 Summer Keystone Test Security Certification

(General)

District: _____

School: _____

AUN: _____

Maintaining the security and integrity of all assessment materials, preventing any dishonest or fraudulent behavior in the administration and handling of the assessment, and promoting a fair and equitable testing environment are essential in order to obtain reliable and valid student scores. In that regard, I certify the following:

I understand that all assessment materials are secure, confidential, and proprietary documents owned by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

I have neither reviewed, discussed, disseminated, described, or otherwise revealed the contents of the assessment to anyone nor have I removed any assessment materials from the school building. I have not kept, copied, reproduced, released, or used any assessment, assessment question, specific assessment content, or examinee response to any item or any section of the secure assessment in any manner. I have not provided any examinee with an answer to an assessment question or in any way influenced an examinee's response to any assessment question. I have not in any manner altered or caused the alteration of any examinee response.

I understand that any breach in assessment security could result in the invalidation of assessment results, professional discipline, and/or criminal prosecution.

I understand that false statements herein are made subject to the penalties of 18 Pa.C.S. § 4904.

Name	Signature	Date of Signature

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Appendix C:

Confidentiality Agreements

Pennsylvania
Department of Education

Parent Confidentiality Agreement

In accordance with 22 Pa. Code § 4.4 and 22 Pa. Code § 4.51 and to ensure the security and confidentiality of the statewide assessment system, when any individual inspects a Pennsylvania System of School Assessment or Keystone Exam pursuant to 22 Pa. Code §§ 4.4 and 4.5, the individual must attest to the following:

As a parent/guardian of a child who will sit for a Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) and/or Keystone Exam during the current school year, I understand that I have the right to review the relevant PSSA and/or Keystone Exam, but that this review shall not compromise the security or validity of the assessment(s) in any way.

I further understand that the content of the statewide assessments is the secure, proprietary property of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Education (PDE). Therefore, I agree not to discuss, disseminate, or otherwise reveal the content of the assessment materials to anyone, including my own child or children.

I understand that violation of these terms could result 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/school district achievement data; developing/producing new test items/materials to replace compromised test items/materials; and investigations relating to the breach of test security.

I further understand that false statements herein are made subject to the penalties of 18 Pa.C.S. § 4904 (relating to unsworn falsification to authorities).

Name (Print): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Witnessed by: _____ Date: _____

Pennsylvania
Department of Education

Confidentiality Agreement for Educational Sign Language Interpreter

Test security and student confidentiality are of the utmost importance to the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and it is the Department's obligation to protect information about tests and students in the assessment process. Such information includes performance tasks, multiple-choice items, scoring rubrics, and student responses used in the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment. The nature and quality of an individual student's performance must not be released.

Educational sign language interpreters may review test materials up to three days prior to test administration. Test materials must be reviewed in a secure location supervised by the principal or test coordinator. Materials may not be removed from the secure location. Filing or retaining any notes beyond the testing window or making copies of any kind is strictly prohibited. The principal and/or test coordinator must receive and securely destroy any notes required by the educational sign language interpreter to administer the test.

These assessments rely on the measurement of individual achievement. Any deviation from the assessment procedures outlined in this manual [group work, teacher coaching (e.g., paraphrasing, explaining, giving suggestions about test items), pre-teaching or pre-release of the performance tasks or assessment items, use of old Pennsylvania assessments as preparation tools, etc.] is strictly prohibited and will be considered a violation of test security. Any action by a professional employee or commissioned officer that is willfully designed to divulge test questions, falsify student scores or compromise the integrity of the state assessment system will be subject to disciplinary action under sections 1259-1267 of the School Code (24 P.S. Sections 12-1259-12-1267).

We are certain that you share our concern that all items and students' responses be handled in a professional and confidential manner. By signing this agreement, you acknowledge that you have read and understand this Confidentiality Agreement and agree to abide by these requirements.

Name (Print): _____ Title: _____

Address: _____ Telephone: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature (Principal or
Assessment Coordinator): _____ Date: _____

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Appendix D:

Information for Parents/Guardians

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 is it 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 of secure assessment material, is a violation of the federal Copyright Act. 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 (17 U.S.C. § 101 et seq.).

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. Electronic devices such as but not limited to cell phones, smartphones, smartwatches, smart glasses, E-readers, Nooks, Kindles, 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 are not permitted in any testing site. Please speak with your child and let your child 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 consequences.

You will be contacted by the school if your child is discovered using and/or having a cell phone or other unapproved electronic device during the administration of the PSSA or Keystone Exams. Students who ignore this directive will be subject to the school's 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. The electronic device will be held by school staff, and the device's stored photographs and other functions will be examined with your permission. You may request to be present when the electronic device is examined. If a photograph of the PSSA or Keystone Exam is discovered or if permission to search other functions of the electronic device is refused, the device will be held by the school staff. 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 and further action may be taken.

If, after testing is complete, it is discovered that a student used and/or had a cell phone or other unapproved electronic device during the administration of the test, the school's discipline policy will be followed and the student's test will not be scored.

Information for Parents or Guardians

Pennsylvania Keystone Exams

What are the Keystone Exams?

The Keystone Exams are end-of-course assessments designed to evaluate proficiency in academic content. Beginning with the class of 2022–2023, students must demonstrate proficiency on the Algebra I, Literature, and Biology Keystone Exams to graduate or fulfill one of the other pathways provided to graduate. Students will be offered multiple opportunities to take the Keystones throughout their high school career.

Who will participate in the Keystone Exams?

In 2012–13, the Algebra I, Literature, and Biology Keystone Exams replaced the 11th-grade Pennsylvania System of School Assessments (PSSA) in math, reading, and science for purposes of student, educator, and school accountability. Students should take the Keystone Exams at or near the end of a Keystone-related course. The students' results are banked until their junior year for accountability purposes and until their senior year for graduation purposes. Some students who previously completed a Keystone-related course but did not take the Keystone Exam will also participate for accountability purposes. All students who take a Keystone Exam may retake the exam.

When will the exams be offered?

The Keystone Exams will be administered three times each year—winter, spring, and summer. Specific administration dates will be published by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Who decided what Keystone Exams should measure?

Groups of educators from across Pennsylvania chose the areas of knowledge on which the Keystone Exams are based. The groups included teachers, supervisors, curriculum directors, and college specialists. Other groups of Pennsylvania educators also reviewed, edited, and approved exam questions.

What is assessed on the Keystone Exams?

Pennsylvania adopted the Pennsylvania Core Standards, standards aligned with expectations for success in college and the workplace. The Keystones are designed to measure these standards.

How long is a Keystone Exam administration?

There is no time limit for a student to complete a Keystone Exam. Each Keystone Exam should take the typical student two to three hours to complete. There are two modules on each test, and each module (or Test Session) of the Keystone Exam should take one to 1.5 hours to complete. Districts can administer the Keystone Exam modules across two days or divided across the morning and the afternoon of the same day.

What are the available formats for administering the Keystone Exams?

The Keystone Exams are available in an online format. Districts will be using the online format for the administration and for makeup exams.

Will students have an opportunity to experience online testing before taking a Keystone Exam online?

Tutorials and online training programs have been developed for the Keystone Exams. The PA Online Assessment Student Tutorial uses pictures, motion, and sound to present visual and verbal descriptions of the properties and features of the PA Online Assessment system. Students are allowed to repeat the Student Tutorial as often as desired and needed. The Online Tools Training (OTT) provides an introductory experience using the PA online assessment software allowing students to observe and try out features of the PA online assessment software prior to the actual assessment. Within the OTT, students also have the opportunity to practice typing responses in a narrative format, graphing functions, interacting with technology-enhanced questions, and entering equations using an equation builder tool. The online exam also has a "Help" feature that is available to the student during the exam.

What types of questions are on the Keystone Exams?

The Keystone Exams will include multiple-choice, technology-enhanced, and constructed-response, or open-ended, questions. For each Keystone Exam, approximately 60 percent to 80 percent of the total score will be from multiple-choice and technology-enhanced questions and 20 percent to 40 percent of the total score will be from constructed-response questions.

How are the written responses to constructed-response questions scored?

The written responses for constructed-response questions are scored by evaluators trained in applying a pre-determined scoring system. Scores are based on content only. Spelling and punctuation are not included as part of the scoring process. Most constructed-response questions require students to show their work or explain their reasoning. These Keystone Exam questions will ask students to explain, analyze, describe, or compare. Some questions will also require students to perform calculations or create graphs, plots, or drawings.

How are the results reported?

Keystone Exam scores will be processed as quickly as possible and provided to the districts.

Two copies of the individual student report for all Keystone Exams will be sent to the school districts and charter schools. One copy should be sent home to parents/guardians; the other is kept by the school/district.

School-level reports will be used for curricular and planning purposes. School districts and charter schools may publish the results of Keystone Exams for each school. The state will also release school-by-school exam data.

May parents see the Keystone Exams?

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. 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 a letter indicating they have a religious objection to the school district superintendent or charter school CAO to request their child be excused from the exam(s).

Report Testing Irregularities

Parents/guardians who believe that a testing irregularity may have occurred may email ra-edirregularities@pa.gov to report the incident.

For additional information about the Keystone Exams, visit the PDE website at https://www.pa.gov/agencies/education/programs-and-services/instruction/elementary-and-secondary-education/assessment-and-accountability/keystone-exams or contact your school district.

Appendix E:

Pennsylvania Calculator Policy

PENNSYLVANIA CALCULATOR POLICY

If a student chooses to use a calculator (other than the online options) on the Keystone Exams or PSSA in sections where the calculator is permitted, the student must adhere to the guidelines listed below. It is incumbent upon the School Assessment Coordinator to ensure that all calculator policies are implemented and followed, including making sure calculators have no programs or other data stored in their memory other than those that are factory installed. Please note that if a student wants to restore the deleted programs, the student will need to back up these programs prior to the assessment. In addition, the memory must be cleared on the calculator prior to and following each test session of the assessment. This task must be completed by the Test Administrator or Proctor. Students are not to complete this task.

Calculators with testing mode or exam mode must have the testing mode or exam mode activated prior to the exam session by the Test Administrator or Proctor. Directions to activate testing mode or exam mode are provided on the PDE website.

The following are not permitted for the PSSA or Keystone Exams:

- Devices that have a primary purpose other than functioning as a calculator such as cell phones, smartphones, smartwatches, smartglasses, laptops, tablets, etc.
- Calculators with infrared, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, or other beaming or wireless capabilities, unless the beaming or wireless capabilities are disabled
- Calculators with built-in Computer Algebra Systems (CAS)
- Calculators that make noise, have paper tape, need to be plugged in, or talk; these specific calculators can only be used as a required accommodation as stated in the Accommodations Guidelines
- Calculators shared by students during a test session
- Any and all non-factory (add-on) programs or information stored in the calculator

This calculator policy is intended to be a general description of what is not allowed. It is not meant to be an exhaustive list of specific calculators, devices, or technologies that must not be used on the PSSA or Keystone Exams. Please note that as technology changes, this policy may also change.

Appendix F:

Code of Conduct for Test Takers

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR TEST TAKERS

DO . . .

- Listen to, read, and follow all directions given.
- Ask questions if you do not understand the directions.
- Read each question carefully, especially multiple-choice items that ask for the "best answer." Also, be sure to read any open-ended items carefully before responding.
- Keep your eyes on your own test.
- Answer each test item.
- Check that you have completed all the test items before you submit your final responses online.
- Report any suspected cheating to your teacher or principal.

DO NOT . . .

- Have notes in your possession during the test.
- Have any unapproved electronic devices (cell phones, cameras, smartphones, smartwatches, earbuds, smart glasses, etc.) in your possession during the test. Note, you may have approved calculators, if applicable, during the test.
- Share a calculator with others.
- Use a calculator when not permitted.
- Talk with others about questions on the test during or after the test. (Students should be assured that they may discuss the testing process or issues of concern with their parents/guardians.)
- 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.
- Use social media to post information about the test and/or test items.

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Summer 2026 Keystone Exams
Handbook For Assessment Coordinators

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