



# Coatesville Area School District

Inspiring. Educating. Advancing.

3030 C.G. Zinn Rd. Thorndale, PA 19372 | [casdschools.org](http://casdschools.org) | 610-466-2400

---

April 29, 2024

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Keystone Exams are end-of-course assessments designed to measure student proficiency in Algebra I, Biology and Literature. During the 2023-2024 school year, if your child was enrolled in a Keystone course, they will be scheduled to take one or more of the Keystone Exams or needs to take an exam to satisfy a graduation pathway.

Students are required by the PA Department of Education to meet one of the 5 graduation pathways criteria to graduate. In accordance with Act 158, statewide graduation requirements take effect with the class of 2023. Act 158 provides five options for meeting graduation requirements: (1) Keystone Proficiency Pathway, (2) Keystone Composite Pathway, (3) Alternate Assessment Pathway, (4) Evidence-Based Pathway, and (5) Career and Technical Education Pathway. Options 1 and 2 are based on the Keystone Exams.

If you choose to opt your child out from the assessments due to religious reasons, please follow this process:

## Excusal from the keystones

Chapter 4 of Title 22 of the Pa. Code (22 Pa. code 4.4) provides for the right of any parent/guardian to excuse his/her child from the state assessment if, upon inspection of the testing materials, he/she finds the assessment to conflict with his/her religious beliefs. This is the only basis for a parent/guardian to excuse his or her child from the statewide assessments.

Procedure for parent/guardian to request that student be excused from the PSSA/Keystone Exam(s): 1. The parent/guardian needs to initiate contact with Dr. Anthony Rybarczyk, Assistant Superintendent with a request for his/her student to be excused from the assessment(s).

2. Two weeks prior to the assessment(s), the Assistant Superintendent will schedule an appointment for the parent/guardian to come in and view the exam(s). The parent/guardian must sign the Parent Confidentiality Agreement provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education prior to viewing the exam. No written notes, video, or pictures can be taken of the material. The objection process is not complete until the parents/guardians view the exam(s) in the school. If the parent/guardian wants the student to be excused from several exams (i.e. ELA and Math), then the parent/guardian will need to view all exams.

3. The parent/guardian submits a written request to the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Cathrine Van Vooren, with a copy to the building principal, stating a request to have his/her child opt out of the assessment due to a religious objection. The letter must list the specific name(s) of each assessment about which there is an objection.

4. A parent/guardian will need to make this request each year he/she wishes the student to be excused and he/she will need to view the exam(s) each year as well.

---

**Superintendent: Catherine Van Vooren, Ed. D.**

5. The Assistant Superintendent will confirm with the parent/guardian that the child will be excused.

The assessment scores represent a snapshot in time of student performance and should not be considered the sole indicator of student achievement. Standardized assessments, like the PSSA and Keystone exams, help Pennsylvania meet federal and state requirements, as well as provide educators, stakeholders, and policymakers with important information about the commonwealth's students and schools. Individual student scores, provided only to their respective schools, can be used to assist teachers in identifying students who may need additional educational opportunities, and school scores provide information to schools and districts for curriculum and instruction improvement discussions and planning.

For more information on Pennsylvania Keystone Assessment and the frequently asked questions, please follow the link provided below: [Pennsylvania System of School Assessment \(PSSA\)](#).

Please be mindful that vacation requests will not be honored during testing days. Thank you for your kind attention to this matter.

Please be aware that students attending cyber programs will be administered the assessment at their home schools. Transportation to and from school on the scheduled days needs to be provided by parents/guardians.

We are grateful for all you do to support the educational experiences for your children and value your contribution to the success of every student in the Coatesville Area School District!

Sincerely,

Anthony P. Rybarczyk, Ed. D.  
Assistant Superintendent  
610-466-2400