



Forest City Regional High School

100 Susquehanna Street, Forest City, PA 18421-1399
Phone: 570 785-2420 • Fax: 570 785-3785
www.fcrsd.org

November 12, 2025

Ms. Cynthia Weiss, Principal

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As we approach the Keystone Winter Retests, we want to provide you with important details. These exams provide students with an opportunity to highlight their academic growth from year to year. Additionally, they serve as a valuable tool for our school community, offering clear data that reflects our collective commitment to education.

A proficient or advanced score on each of the Keystone exams brings students closer to meeting the requirements of Act 158, which outlines the “Pathways to Graduation” mandated by the state. Achieving these scores not only fulfills a key graduation requirement but also provides underclassmen with greater flexibility when selecting courses for the following year. Students who perform well on the Keystones have more opportunities to enroll in Advanced Placement (AP) courses, allowing them to challenge themselves academically and better prepare for future college and career endeavors.

Testing Schedule

		Make Up Sessions
Keystone Algebra - one AM session each day	December 8, 2025 December 9, 2025	Afternoons of December 10 & 11th.
Keystone Literature- one AM session each day	December 10, 2025 December 11, 2025	Afternoons of December 12 & 15th.
Keystone Biology - one AM session each day	December 15, 2025 December 16, 2025	Afternoon of December 16th & morning and afternoon of 17th.

Test Preparation Support

Our teachers are dedicated to helping students succeed on these assessments. To support their preparation, instruction will focus on key concepts in class, and additional review opportunities will be conducted during our Lunch & Learn sessions. We encourage all students to engage in these learning activities to enhance their understanding and confidence.

Testing Policies and Expectations

To ensure a smooth testing experience, we will meet with students to clearly outline expectations and review important policies, including:

The Forest City Regional School District is an equal opportunity institution and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, and/or handicap in its activities, programs or employment practices as required by the Title VII, Title XI, Section 504, and the Age Discrimination Act. If you feel your rights were violated, please contact the Business Manager at 570 785-2406.

- **Code of Conduct:** Students must adhere to all testing guidelines to maintain the integrity of the assessments.
- **Cell Phone/Electronics Policy:** Per state regulations, all electronic devices, including cell phones and smartwatches, are strictly prohibited during testing.
- **Calculator Policy:** Approved calculators may be used on certain sections of the test, but students must follow the provided guidelines for their appropriate use.

Students who fail to follow these expectations may be subject to consequences imposed by both Forest City Regional and the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Attached to this letter, you will find these Pennsylvania Department of Education policies, as well as "Frequently Asked Testing Questions." We ask for your support in reinforcing these policies at home to help set your child up for success.

Tips for Student Success

Here are some ways you can help your child prepare for these important tests:

- **Encourage a regular sleep schedule:** A well-rested mind performs better.
- **Ensure regular school attendance:** Attending school each day helps your child stay on track with learning and test preparation.
- **Review test-taking strategies:** Encourage reading directions carefully, managing time wisely, and staying calm under pressure.
- **Support the test prep sessions at school:** Encourage your child to attend, participate actively, and take advantage of the extra help teachers are providing. Reinforce that these sessions are valuable opportunities for success.
- **Check the school-issued computer:** Make sure the device is in good working order and fully charged, so your child can complete online practice and assessments without issues.

Finally, it is critical that students attend school during scheduled testing days, please do your best to limit avoidable absences during testing. We appreciate your partnership in making this a successful testing season for our students. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,



Cynthia Weiss, Principal

The Forest City Regional School District is an equal opportunity institution and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, and/or handicap in its activities, programs or employment practices as required by the Title VII, Title XI, Section 504, and the Age Discrimination Act. If you feel your rights were violated, please contact the Business Manager at 570 785-2406.

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 both online and paper and pencil formats. Districts will determine if online, paper and pencil, or both formats will be used locally. Makeup exams will also be administered in either online or paper and pencil format.

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 75 percent of the total score will be from multiple-choice questions and 25 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 once the exams arrive at the school. Confidentiality agreements must be signed, and no copies of the Keystone Exams or notes about exam questions will be permitted to leave the school.

If, after reviewing the Keystone Exams, parents or guardians do not want their child to participate in one or all of the exams due to a conflict with their religious beliefs, they may write 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/en/agencies/education.html> or contact your school district.



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, 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 and test materials have been returned, 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.



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, PDAs, laptops, tablets, pocket organizers, 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.



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.
- Be careful when marking your answers so that you do not skip spaces or fill in the wrong sections.
- Make sure to completely fill in the bubble for the answer(s) you select and erase completely any answers you change.
- Keep your eyes on your own test.
- Try to answer each test item.
- Check that you have completed all the test items in the test section before closing your test booklet or submitting 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, smartphones, smartwatches, etc.) in your possession during the test. Note, you may have approved calculators, if applicable, during the test.
- Share a calculator with others.
- Use the bubbles in the answer booklet to either eliminate possible incorrect answers or possible correct answers by making marks in multiple bubbles and erasing. Mark only the bubble for the correct answer(s) you have chosen.
- 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.