

UNDERSTANDING PSSA & KEYSTONE RESULTS



A GUIDE FOR ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL PARENTS

COATESVILLE ARE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL COLLEGE & CAREER CENTER

THURSDAY, MARCH 26, 2026

WHAT ARE PSSA EXAMS?



**PENNSYLVANIA SYSTEM OF
SCHOOL ASSESSMENT**



GRADES 3–8



**MEASURES PROFICIENCY IN
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS, MATH,
AND SCIENCE**

WHAT ARE KEYSTONE EXAMS?



**END-OF-COURSE EXAMS FOR
HIGH SCHOOL-LEVEL SUBJECTS**



ALGEBRA I, BIOLOGY, LITERATURE



**SOME MIDDLE SCHOOL
STUDENTS MAY TAKE THEM IF
ENROLLED IN THESE COURSES**

WHY THESE TESTS MATTER



**Measure student
progress**



**Help schools
improve instruction**



**Provide data for
state accountability**

PERFORMANCE LEVELS

- **BELOW BASIC**
- **BASIC**
- **PROFICIENT**
- **ADVANCED**
- **GOAL: STUDENTS REACH PROFICIENT OR ADVANCED**



HOW TO READ YOUR CHILD'S SCORE REPORT

- **OVERALL SCORE AND PERFORMANCE LEVEL**
- **BREAKDOWN BY SKILL AREAS**
- **COMPARISON TO STATE AVERAGES**

1. Your student information.

Here you will find your student's name, school, district, date of testing, and grade.

2. Report information and tools.

This section provides information about the PSSA and the student report, as well as resources to learn more about your student's performances.

3. Your student's PSSA results.

This section indicates your student's performance level for the English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science assessments.

4. What do the Performance Levels mean?

This section provides a general description of the Pennsylvania Performance Levels. Student performance on the PSSA falls into four performance levels: Advanced, Proficient, Basic, and Below Basic.

PENNSYLVANIA

System of School Assessment (PSSA)

Student Report

1

Student Name:
PA Student ID:
School:
District:
Test Date:
Grade:

2 What Is the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA)?

- The PSSA is an assessment system used to measure a student's progression toward mastery of the
 - Pennsylvania Core Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics
 - Pennsylvania Academic Content Standards in Science
- For additional information, visit the Pennsylvania Department of Education's website at www.education.pa.gov

What Is Included in This report?

- This report provides information about the student's recent performances on the
 - English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science PSSA assessments
- It is not intended to summarize all aspects of student learning.

For Additional Information

- For more information about a student's performance, consult the school or the classroom teacher.
- A Report Interpretation Guide is available at www.education.pa.gov. Type "PSSA Interpretation Guide" in the search field or consult the local school district or school.

3 Student's Results

	Performance Level				Goal Range*
	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced	
English Language Arts			✓		
Mathematics			✓		
Science				✓	

*Goal Range: The goal is for all students in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to score proficient or above.

4 Performance Levels

The Below Basic Level reflects inadequate academic performance, and work at this level demonstrates a minimal command of and ability to apply the knowledge, skills, and practices represented in the Pennsylvania standards. Consistent performance at this level indicates extensive additional academic support may be needed for engaging successfully in further studies in this content area.

The Basic Level reflects marginal academic performance, and work at this level demonstrates a partial command of and ability to apply the knowledge, skills, and practices represented in the Pennsylvania standards. Consistent performance at this level indicates additional academic support may be needed for engaging successfully in further studies in this content area.

The Proficient Level reflects satisfactory academic performance, and work at this level demonstrates an adequate command of and ability to apply the knowledge, skills, and practices represented in the Pennsylvania standards. Consistent performance at this level indicates academic preparation for engaging successfully in further studies in this content area.

The Advanced Level reflects superior academic performance, and work at this level demonstrates a thorough command of and ability to apply the knowledge, skills, and practices represented in the Pennsylvania standards. Consistent performance at this level indicates advanced academic preparation for engaging successfully in further studies in this content area.



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

www.education.pa.gov

Page 1

5. What is your student's Performance Level?

This indicates your student's Performance Level for the given subject.

*Note: If your student was not tested because the subject is not applicable, "Not Applicable (NA)" will be displayed. If your student did not receive a score, "No Score (NS)" will be displayed.

6. What is your student's score?

This indicates your student's PSSA score for the given subject. Additionally, the arrow on the bar graph indicates where your student's score falls within a performance level. The scores are organized by subject and appear on pages 2 and 3 of the Student Report.

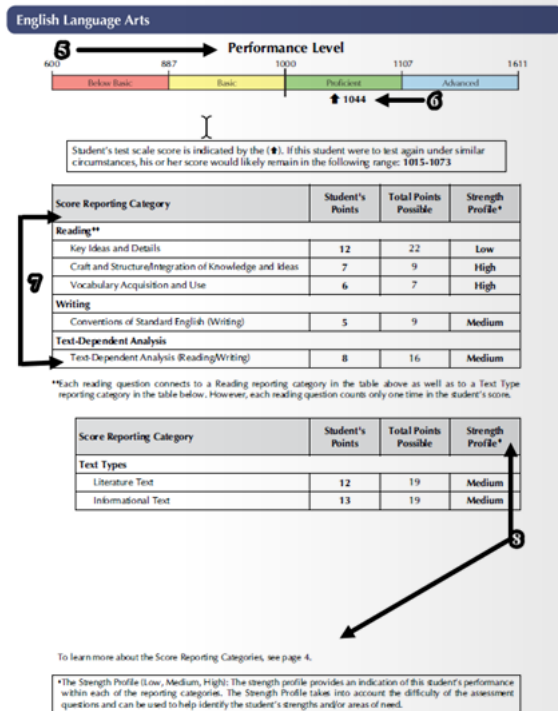
Because each subject has its own individual scale, student's PSSA scores should not be compared across tested subjects.

7. How did your student perform in each reporting category?

This indicates the total points possible and your student's performance within each reporting category. The reporting categories are described on page 4 of the Student Report.

8. Strength Profile.

The Strength Profile provides you with an indication of your student's performance within each of the reporting categories. The profile measure takes into account the difficulty of the items and can be used to help identify areas in which your student needs to improve and where he or she has performed more successfully.

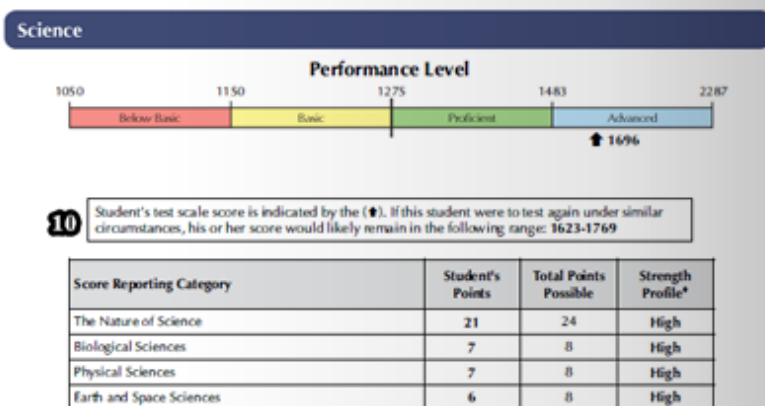
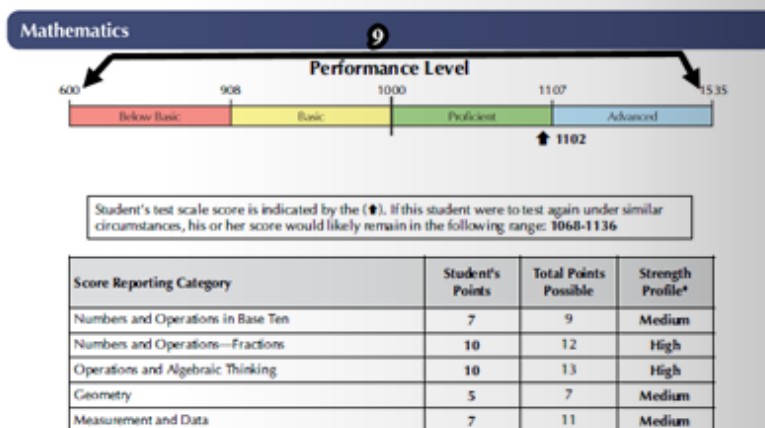


9. Minimum/Maximum Scaled Scores.

The minimum and maximum scaled scores represent the minimum and maximum scores your child could have received on each assessment. Each PSSA test has a minimum score that stays the same across years. However, the maximum score for each test can vary depending on the difficulty of the test each year (a more difficult test in any given year will have a higher maximum score).

10. Standard Error of Measure.

This range reflects the standard error of measurement (SEM) for your student's PSSA score. Specifically, it provides reasonable bounds for the range of scores that your student might receive if he or she took an equivalent version of the test. (That is, your student took a test that covered exactly the *same* content, but included a *different* set of items.) As an example, if the PSSA score was 1750 and the SEM band was 1700 to 1800, then your student would be likely to receive a score somewhere between 1700 and 1800 if a different version of the test had been taken.



DESCRIPTIONS OF PAGE 1 OF THE STUDENT REPORT

- 1 **STUDENT INFORMATION**
This section identifies the student's name, school, district, date of testing, and grade.
- 2 **SECRETARY'S GREETING**
This letter is from the Secretary of Education and describes content assessed on the Keystone Exam.
- 3 **CONTENT AREA**
This is the course or subject matter covered by the Keystone Exam.
- 4 **STUDENT'S KEYSTONE EXAM RESULT**
This table indicates the student's performance level on the Keystone Exam.
- 5 **ABOUT THE KEYSTONE EXAMS**
This is a brief summary of the Keystone Exams.



Student Report

1 Student Name: SAMPLE STUDENT 1

PA Student ID: ****75739

School: SAMPLE SHS

District: SAMPLE SD

Test Date: Summer 2020

Grade: 9

3 Content Area:  Algebra I

4 Student's Keystone Exam Result

Goal Range	
Below Basic	Basic
	✓

5 Dear Parent/Guardian:

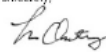
On behalf of the Pennsylvania Department of Education, I would like to thank you for taking the time to review this report. Academic success begins at home. Children with parents/guardians who are engaged in their child's academics are more likely to enjoy the learning process and succeed.

This report provides information about your child's recent performance on a Pennsylvania test known as the Keystone Exam. On this page, you can see your child's overall performance – below basic, basic, proficient or advanced.

Within this report, you will find specific information about your child's performance on the Algebra I Keystone Exam. It displays your child's Highest Total Test Scale Score to Date for Module 1 and Module 2. Module 1 assesses Operations and Linear Equations and Inequalities, and Module 2 assesses Linear Functions and Data Organizations.

For detailed information about the Keystone exams, please visit the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Standards Aligned System website at www.pdesas.org, or contact your child's school.

Sincerely,



Nore Ortega
Acting Secretary of Education

www.pdesas.org

Algebra I



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Guide to Keystone Exams Student Reports

DESCRIPTIONS OF PAGE 2 OF THE STUDENT REPORT

6 PERFORMANCE LEVEL ON TOTAL TEST

The arrow points to the student's performance level for the total Keystone Exam.

Note: If the student was not tested or did not receive a total score, an arrow pointing to the performance level is not displayed.

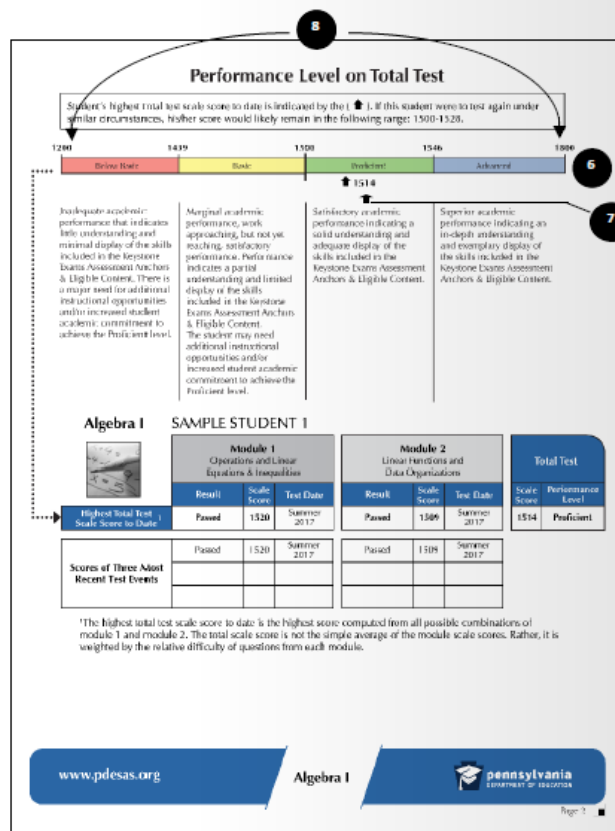
7 STUDENT'S SCORE

The Highest Total Test Scale Score to Date indicates the student's scale score for the total test. Additionally, the arrow on the bar graph indicates where the student's score falls within a performance level.

Because each content area has its own individual scale, the student's Keystone Exam scores should not be compared across content areas.

8 MINIMUM/MAXIMUM SCALE SCORES

The minimum and maximum scale scores represent the minimum and maximum scores a student could earn. Each Keystone Exam has a minimum and maximum score that stays the same across years. The Proficient score is set at 1500 for all exams.





GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE KEYSTONE EXAMS

CONTENT COVERED ON THE KEYSTONE EXAMS

Each Keystone Exam is organized into two major reporting categories known as modules. Each module is organized around specific assessment anchors and eligible content within a content area. Assessment anchors and eligible content are statements that clarify the standards assessed on each Keystone Exam and serve as one tool to align curriculum, instruction, and assessment. All questions on the Keystone Exams are aligned to the Keystone Exams Assessment Anchors and Eligible Content, which can be found on the SAS website at www.pdesas.org/Standard/Views.

FORMATS FOR THE KEYSTONE EXAMS

The Keystone Exams are available in both online and paper/pencil formats. Districts determine whether online, paper/pencil, or both formats are used locally.

TYPES OF QUESTIONS ON THE KEYSTONE EXAMS

The Keystone Exams include multiple-choice questions and constructed-response, or open-ended, questions. For each Keystone Exam, approximately 60% to 75% of the total score is from multiple-choice questions and 25% to 40% of the total score is from constructed-response questions.

PROCESS FOR REPORTING RESULTS

Two copies of the individual student report for all Keystone Exams are sent to each school district and charter school for distribution to parents, teachers, guidance counselors, and/or principals. School districts and charter schools may publish the results of the Keystone Exams school-level reports.

WHAT THE SCORES MEAN



**Identify strengths and
areas for growth**



**Not the only measure of
success**



**Used alongside
classroom performance**

HOW SCHOOLS USE RESULTS

Guide

Guide instruction

Provide

**Provide
supports/interventions**

Plan

**Plan curriculum
improvements**

HOW PARENTS CAN HELP



**ENCOURAGE
READING DAILY**



**PRACTICE MATH
SKILLS**



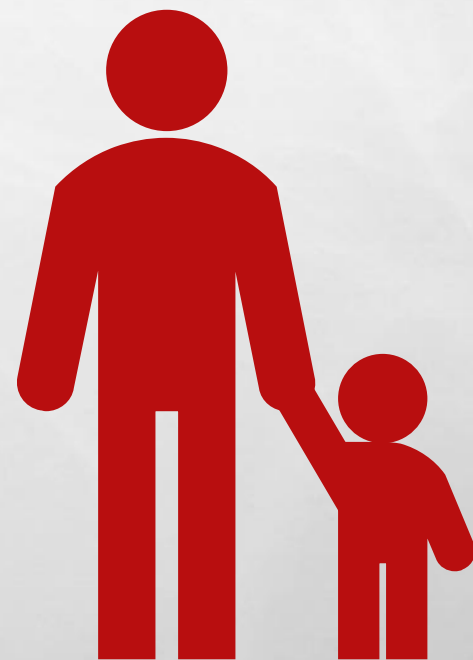
**COMMUNICATE
WITH TEACHERS**



**SUPPORT GOOD
STUDY HABITS**

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL

- **WHAT SUPPORTS ARE AVAILABLE?**
- **HOW CAN I HELP AT HOME?**
- **WHAT DOES MY CHILD NEED TO IMPROVE?**



FINAL THOUGHTS

Every child learns differently



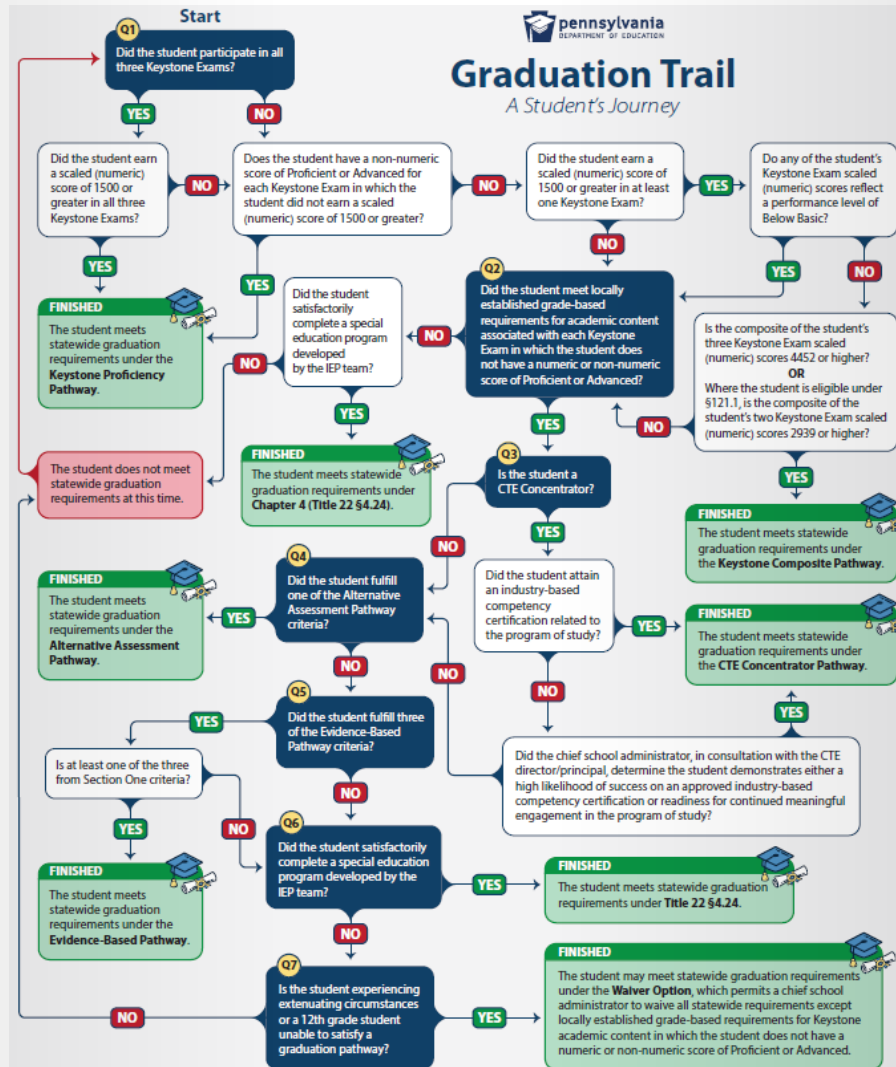
Growth over time matters most



**We are partners in your child's
success**

Graduation Trail

A Student's Journey





Pathways to
Graduation



PATHWAYS TO GRADUATION

The Pathways to Graduation Tool offers a user-friendly solution for tracking each student's progress along their graduation pathways. This tool simplifies the monitoring process by providing automatic updates and streamlined reporting directly to the Future Ready Comprehensive Planning Portal. Discover how it can enhance your ability to stay informed and keep students on track toward their educational goals.



Free and user-friendly,
ensuring a seamless and
straightforward experience.



Reports to Future Ready
Comprehensive Planning
Portal with one click.



Provides longitudinal
data analytics to view
changes over time.



System updates are
automatically applied with
legislative and policy changes,
ensuring alignment with
current regulations.



Identifies the most likely
path for a student to
complete based on current
evidence.



Easy access to reports
on students in warning,
graduating with IEP goals,
or on specific pathways.