

# PENNSYLVANIA HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: LEA GUIDE TO PROPOSED CHANGES

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*In order to graduate from a public high school in Pennsylvania, a student must meet specific requirements established by the Local Education Agency (district, charter school, or career and technical center) in which s/he is enrolled. These local requirements include graduation requirements mandated by the Commonwealth to guarantee that a Pennsylvania diploma reflects the knowledge and skills that our graduating students need to be successful in college and the workplace in an increasingly complex and challenging economy. This guide is designed to assist Local Education Agencies (LEA) in understanding how proposed changes to Pennsylvania’s Public School Code, which authorizes commonwealth graduation requirements, will impact local requirements for graduation.*

**PLEASE NOTE: The new high school graduation requirements, if approved by the State Board of Education, will apply ONLY to students graduating from high school in (or after) 2017.**

## *Proposed High School Graduation Requirements for a Student Graduating in (or after) 2017...*

- ✓ S/he WILL NOT be required to complete a culminating project (a current commonwealth requirement), unless one will be required by your Local Education Agency (LEA).
- ✓ S/he WILL be required to demonstrate proficiency in each of the content areas listed below by passing Keystone Exam, an Advanced Placement (AP) Exam, an International Baccalaureate (IB) Exam, or a local exam<sup>1</sup> in the related content area. If necessary, your LEA must provide supplemental instruction until proficiency is demonstrated or criteria are met for project-based assessment participation.

Class of 2017 Required Exams	Class of 2018 Required Exams	Class of 2019 Required Exams	Class of 2020 Required Exams
Algebra I*	Algebra I	Algebra I	Algebra I
Biology*	Biology	Biology	Biology
Literature*	Literature	Literature	Literature
		English Composition <sup>2*</sup>	English Composition
			Civics & Government <sup>2*</sup>
<i>*Exams available beginning 2012</i>		<i>*Exams available beginning 2015</i>	<i>*Exams available beginning 2016</i>

**Proposed Pennsylvania Requirements**

<sup>1</sup> Your LEA has the option to approve and independently validate an assessment other than a Keystone, AP, or IB Exam provided the assessment meets specific criteria established by the Commonwealth. Out-of-state transfer students who have passed other states’ assessments may be deemed proficient by your LEA provided the assessments meet Commonwealth guidelines.  
<sup>2</sup> The development of English Composition and Civics & Government Exams is contingent upon funding availability.

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## *Proposed Alternative for a Student Unable to Pass a Keystone, AP, IB, or Locally Approved and Independently Validated Exam...*

- ✓ S/he will be permitted to demonstrate proficiency in a content area through a project-based assessment if the student has:
  - Met the school's attendance requirements,
  - Completed the related coursework,
  - Participated in at least two years of supplementary instruction, and
  - Failed the related exam twice\*.

\* Exceptions may be made for high school seniors introduced to the coursework for the first time in twelfth grade.

## *Proposed Exemption for a Student Unable to Successfully Complete a Project-Based Assessment...*

- ✓ S/he may be deemed exempt from Commonwealth graduation requirements if the student has:
  - Failed to demonstrate proficiency on a Keystone, AP, IB, or locally approved and independently validated exam,
  - Participated satisfactorily in supplemental instructional services,
  - Failed to successfully complete a project-based assessment, and
  - Met local graduation requirements.

Waivers to Commonwealth graduation requirements will be granted by the Secretary of Education on a case-by-case basis with determinations communicated to the LEA no later than 10 days prior to graduation. Chief school administrators requesting waivers for more than 10% of a graduating class must also submit for the Secretary's approval a written improvement plan enhancing instruction, curriculum, and supplemental services in alignment to the Keystone Exams.



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## *Additional Proposed “Voluntary Use” Exams for a Student Graduating in (or after) 2017...*

IN ADDITION demonstrating proficiency in each of the content areas above,

- ✓ S/he may be required to pass an exam in one or more of the following content areas in order to fulfill local graduation requirements:

<b>Class of 2017 Additional Exams</b>	<b>Class of 2018 Additional Exams</b>	<b>Class of 2019 Additional Exams</b>	<b>Class of 2020 Additional Exams</b>	<b>Class of 2021 Additional Exams</b>
Geometry*	Geometry	Geometry	Geometry	Geometry
	US History*	US History	US History	US History
		Algebra II*	Algebra II	Algebra II
			Chemistry*	Chemistry
				World History*
<i>*Exams available beginning 2016</i>	<i>*Exams available beginning 2017</i>	<i>*Exams available beginning 2018</i>	<i>*Exams available beginning 2019</i>	<i>*Exams available beginning 2020</i>

### **Proposed Voluntary Use LEA Requirements**

Subject to funding appropriation, proposed Chapter 4 regulations provide for the development of “voluntary use” Keystone Exams. Only Keystone Exams will be offered; no related project-based assessments or validation of local assessments for these content areas will be provided by the Commonwealth.