

Penn*Link FAQ: Clarification of Senate Bill 880 Impact on Schools

On February 3, 2016, Governor Wolf signed Senate Bill 880 into law. In addition to delaying the use of Keystone Exams or the Project Based Assessments as graduation requirements until the 2018-2019 school year, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) has been charged with the following:

- Implement alternative methods for students to demonstrate proficiency for graduation in addition to the Keystone Exams, Project Based Assessment and other alternative assessments provided for in 22 Pa. Code § 4.24.
- Improve and expedite the evaluation of Project Based Assessments.
- Ensure that no student is prohibited from participation in vocational-technical education or elective courses or programs as a result of supplemental instruction as required in § 22 Pa. Code §§ 4.24 (k) and 4.51B (f).

To provide direction to LEAs, PDE provides the following Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) to clarify the implications of SB 880.

Questions may be directed to jinskip@pa.gov.

CHAPTER 4 SB 880 UPDATE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Introduction

With Senate Bill 880 signed into law by Governor Wolf on February 3, 2016, the use of Keystone Exams as a state graduation requirement or as a benchmark for the need for participation in a Project Based Assessment is delayed until the 2018-2019 school year.

The FAQs below are designed to clarify the implications of SB 880 and provide guidance for LEAs.

This Frequently Asked Questions document is designed to address the impact on students who will graduate prior to 2019.

1. Is participation in the Keystone Exams still required?

The federal requirements regarding state assessments have not changed. While students graduating prior to 2019 are no longer required to demonstrate proficiency on the Keystone Exams in order to meet the state graduation requirements, participation in the state assessments remains a federal requirement.

2. Given SB 880, what graduation requirements remain for students in the graduating classes of 2017 and 2018?

The following modified Chapter 4 requirements shall apply:

- Course completion and grades.
- Demonstration of proficiency as determined by the school district, charter school (including a cyber charter school) or AVTS, if applicable, in each of the state academic standards not assessed by a state assessment under § 4.51, § 4.51a or § 4.51b (relating to state assessment system; Pennsylvania System of School Assessment; and Keystone Exams).

Note: The paragraph above should also apply to the English Language Arts and Mathematics; Science and Technology and Environment and Ecology standards based upon the two-year delay provided by Senate Bill 880.

3. If a student is graduating prior to 2019 and has not achieved proficiency on a Keystone Exam, is supplemental instruction still required?

Schools shall offer supplemental instruction but students are not required to participate. The design of supplemental instruction remains a local decision.

4. May a school use Project Based Assessments (PBAs) as supplemental instruction?

If a student elects to receive supplemental instruction, the PBA is a viable option. Note, however, that the evaluation of the project will conclude with the tutor's evaluation. No outside evaluation will occur.

5. May a school continue to use Project Based Assessments (PBAs) for students who have not scored at a proficient level?

The PBA will be available as an option for schools; however, the evaluation of the project will conclude with the tutor's evaluation. No outside evaluation will occur. (Please note that all PBAs that have been submitted or are in progress will still be scored by PDE.)

6. If a student is graduating prior to 2019 and has not achieved proficiency on a Keystone Exam after one administration, is a retest required?

Retesting is not required; however, a student may retest. If a student does retest, the school must offer supplemental instruction prior to the retesting.

7. What requirements are in place regarding transcripts?

Chapter 4 requirements regarding transcripts are still applicable:

§ 4.24. High school graduation requirements.

Beginning in the 2016-2017 school year, the performance level demonstrated in each of the academic standards in subsections (c)—(e) shall be included on student transcripts. The information presented on a transcript must include the highest performance level demonstrated by a student on the associated Keystone Exam, validated local assessment or project-based assessment at the time the transcript is produced.

8. If a student has scored a satisfactory mark on a Project Based Assessment (PBA), may the transcript reflect a proficient mark?

If a student successfully completes a PBA, the transcript may be revised to reflect Proficient.

9. In summary, what parts of Chapter 4 are suspended?

The following highlights the impact of the moratorium on students graduating in 2017 and 2018:

- The state graduation requirement to demonstrate proficiency on the associated Keystone Exam or related Project Based Assessment is suspended.
- The administration of Project Based Assessments for students not proficient after two Keystone attempts is not required.
- Student participation in supplemental instruction is no longer required; however, a school must offer supplemental instruction as an option. (See #3 and 6 above.)

10. Looking ahead, what options will be available to students to meet the state graduation requirements after the expiration of the moratorium?

As required by SB 880, PDE has been charged with investigating and developing alternatives in addition to the use of the Keystone Exams as a requirement for graduation and shall within six

months issue a report of its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly regarding the following:

- Implement alternative methods for students to demonstrate proficiency for graduation in addition to Keystone Exams, Project Based Assessments and other alternatives provided for in Chapter 4.
- Improve and expedite the evaluation of Project Based Assessments.
- Ensure that no student is prohibited from participation in vocational-technical education or elective courses or programs as a result of supplemental instruction.

PDE will be implementing an outreach plan to solicit feedback from stakeholders across the state to accomplish these tasks.

11. If a student who is graduating in 2017 or 2018 opts out of the Keystone Exams, does he/she go on to complete a PBA?

The PBA is not required.

12. Does the 10 percent waiver apply?

Since the state graduation requirement has been suspended, the waiver does not apply.