



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA
OFFICE OF CURRICULUM INSTRUCTION & ASSESSMENT
440 North Broad Street, Suite 251, Philadelphia, PA 19130

Parental Request to View the PSSA/Keystone Exams/PASA – District Protocol

Pennsylvania Chapter 4 regulations state that a parent/guardian can have his/her student opt-out of participating in the PSSA, Keystone Exams, and/or PASA by completing ALL of the following steps:

1. At the student's school, sign a confidentiality agreement and view a copy of each test from which they want to opt-out. (Parents must view each test from which they want to opt-out their students, e.g., to opt-out of the ELA, Math, and Science PSSA, a copy of all three tests must be viewed.)
2. After signing the confidentiality agreement and viewing the test(s), mail, email, or hand-deliver a letter to Dr. Hite (hite@philasd.org) stating the desire to opt-out from specific tests for religious reasons.

Once completion of these steps has been communicated to the Office of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment (CIA), a letter approving the opt-out request will be sent to the parent/guardian.

Directions for Test Coordinators and/or Principals

Online Testing Sites

1. Schools testing online ONLY, must call DRC (1-800-451-7849) to request a paper copy of the tests to be used ONLY for parental review, if necessary. Then follow all steps for Paper & Pencil Testing Sites below.

Paper & Pencil Testing Sites

Viewing the Test

1. After receiving a parental request by paper, email, phone, or in person to view the test and/or opt-out his/her child, please communicate with the parent to schedule a viewing of the PSSA/Keystone/PASA.
 - a. Provide this opportunity at a mutually convenient date/time no earlier than two weeks prior to the start of the testing window.

i. Winter Keystone	review start: Monday, December 21	review end: Tuesday, Jan. 5
ii. PASA Reading & Math	review start: Monday, February 1	review end: Friday, Feb. 12
iii. PSSA	review start: Monday, March 28	review end: Friday, April 8
iv. PASA Science	review start: Monday, April 11	review end: Friday, April 22
v. Spring Keystone	review start: Monday, May 2	review end: Friday, May 13
 - b. Notify the parent of the location inside the school where this will take place.
 - c. Complete Question 1 of the "S12" screen on the School Computer Network (SCN)*.
2. Make a copy of the new "Parent Confidentiality Agreement & SCN Opt-out Form" document (included below & attached).

- a. The parent MUST sign this **before** viewing the test.
 - b. Translations of the Confidentiality Agreement section of the document also are available in the 8 dominant languages on the District Translations webpage. Non-English speaking parents are allowed to bring an interpreter with them while viewing the test.
 - c. BOTH the parent and the interpreter MUST sign the Confidentiality Agreement prior to viewing the test(s).
 - d. The Test Coordinator or designee must collect all Confidentiality Agreements and keep them on file at the school.
 - e. The Test Coordinator or designee will complete the bottom portion of the document and provide the document to the school staff member who is entering the information into the SCN*. (After information is entered into the SCN, the document should be returned to the Test Coordinator for filing.)
3. The Test Coordinator or designee can break the shrink wrap and pull out any *one form* of the test booklet for the subject and provide it to the parent.
 4. The Test Coordinator or designee MUST be present in the room throughout the time the parent is viewing the test booklet.
 - a. The test booklets should not be in the possession of the parent without the presence of at least one designated/responsible school staff member.
 - b. Parents cannot take notes or communicate with others during the viewing and should not possess their cell phones or other electronic devices during this time.
 - c. Test booklets for more than one subject can be viewed in one session. Many parents can view the test booklets in one viewing session.
 - d. The Test Coordinator or designee will collect the test booklets back from the parent(s) after they have been viewed, and lock the booklets back in the secure storage area.
 - e. Complete Question 2 and 5 (if relevant) of the “Parent Confidentiality Agreement and SCN Opt-out Form” and give the document to the person who will enter the information on the “S12” screen on the School Computer Network (SCN)*. (After information is entered into the SCN, the document should be returned to the Test Coordinator for filing.)
 5. **After viewing the test booklet(s), if a parent finds anything against his/her religious beliefs in the test content and decides to opt his/her child out of testing, he/she must write a letter (or send an e-mail) to the superintendent (hite@philasd.org) requesting that his/her child opt-out of the PSSA/Keystone/PASA testing. It is recommended that the principal be copied on the e-mail.**
 6. On the day(s) of testing, the school must provide alternative instructional activities for students who opted out.

Opt-Out Distinction & Bubbling Student Answer Booklet

Because the Chapter 4 regulations cite specific criteria parents must follow to have their child excused from participating in state assessments due to conflicts with their religious beliefs, there are slight distinctions in how the District will respond to out-out requests received and how student answer booklets should be completed.

1. If a parent has viewed the test/s and submitted a letter to the Superintendent requesting an opt-out of standardized testing for his/her child with religious objection as the reason, then
 - a. The student opt-out exemption is approved, and the superintendent will mail an approval letter.

- b. The school must fill the bubble next to “Student had a parental request for exclusion from the assessment” on the 1st page of the student’s answer booklet/s.
2. If a parent submits a letter to the Superintendent or school requesting that his/her child opt-out of standardized testing due to religious or non-religious reasons but *did not view* the test/s, then
 - a. The student opt-out exemption is approved but no letter will be sent from the superintendent.
 - b. The school will fill the bubble next to “Other “on the 1st page of the student’s answer booklet/s.
3. For both of the scenarios above, you must return the answer booklet as SCORABLE. Do NOT put a Do Not Score label on the booklet. Even though the students are not taking the test, you still must return the booklet as SCORABLE.

Documentation Requirements

For both scenarios above, schools must complete the following documentation.

1. Complete Question 1 and Question 2 on the S12 screen of the SCN for ALL the students for whom a written opt-out request was made (SCN S12 screen directions below).
2. Keep a copy of ALL the opt-out letters at the school in the PSSA/Keystone/PASA binder for 3 years. Make these available to any PDE monitors who visit the school, if they choose to view them.
3. If an opt-out letter was not sent to the superintendent and was received at the school ONLY, then scan and send a copy to assessment@philasd.org. Letters that are sent to the superintendent are already forwarded to CIA. Therefore, there is no need to scan and e-mail them to assessment@philasd.org.

Informing Parents

1. For any parent that provides a written or verbal opt-out request, inform him/her of the dates and procedures for viewing the tests.
2. Once a parent submits a written request to the school or the superintendent, provide written confirmation to the parent that the student will be excused from the specified state assessment. A sample form letter is included at the end of this document.
3. Approval letters from the superintendent will be sent as soon as possible only to parents who meet the criteria specified in the Opt-Out Distinction section above and after Questions 1 and 2 are completed on the S12 screen of the SCN.

***Directions for Completing the “Opt-Out from Standardized Test Info” S12 screen in the SCN**

In order for schools, the superintendent’s office, and the Office of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment (CIA) to track the required opt-out steps and communicate to each other efficiently, a new screen has been created on the School Computer Network (SCN). This screen is “S12” in the SCN and is titled “Opt-Out from Standardized Test Info”.

Below are directions and expectations for completing the S12 screen:

1. The S12 screen can only be completed by a staff member who has access to the SCN. Typically secretaries and principals have access to the SCN. For help using the SCN, contact the IT Help Desk (215-400-5555).
2. The S12 screen must be completed for each individual student who will be opting-out.
3. The S12 screen should be completed on a daily basis, assuming there is information to enter, during the two week viewing period prior to the start of the testing window. (See 1.a. above for viewing dates.) Additionally, Question 1 on the S12 screen can be completed at any time before testing, if parents indicate intent to opt-out prior to the two week viewing period.
4. Schools are required to complete Question 2 and will complete Questions 1 and 5 if relevant. CIA is required to complete Questions 3 and 4 and will complete Questions 1 and 5 if relevant.
5. After logging in to the SCN, go to Student Maintenance.
6. Enter the student’s 7-digit Student ID number. OR with the Caps Lock on, type the student’s Last Name, followed by a comma, and then the student’s First Name (or some portion of the First Name), and hit the Enter key. (Example: DOE, JANE)
7. Once the specified student is on the screen, at the bottom of the screen, type “S12”.
8. On the S12 screen, there are 5 fields/questions requiring data. Details for each question are below.
9. Question 1 – “Did Parent indicate intent to opt-out?”
 - a. Enter a “Y” or “N” for “Yes” or “No”.
 - b. Enter the date the intent was communicated to the school.
 - c. The purpose of this question is to track parents who have communicated verbally or in writing that they want to opt-out their students before they have actually viewed the test and sent a letter to the superintendent. Schools will know which parents they need to contact to set up a time to view the tests at the school. If a parent communicates opt-out intent to CIA instead of the school, CIA will complete Question 1 and alert the school.
10. Question #2 – “Did Parent view test?”
 - a. Enter a “Y” or “N” next to each specific test the parent viewed. (Reminder - Parents must view each test from which they want to opt-out their students.)
 - b. Enter the date the tests were viewed. If different tests were viewed on separate days, enter the most recent viewing date.

- c. The purpose of this question is for schools to track and to inform CIA when parents have completed the first step in the opt-out process, viewing the tests. When CIA receives opt-out letters from the superintendent's office, CIA will check on the SCN to ensure all applicable tests were viewed at the school. Approvals for opt-out that qualify as a "Parental request for exclusion from the assessment" cannot be granted until tests have been viewed and an opt-out letter has been received by the superintendent's office. If an opt-out letter was received but the tests were not viewed, the student is excused from taking the state assessment but a letter will not be sent from the superintendent, and the "Other" bubble will be completed on the answer booklet.

11. Question 3 – "Was an opt-out letter received by Superintendent?"

- a. CIA will enter a "Y" when an opt-out letter has been received by the superintendent's office. The date the letter is received will also be entered.
- b. The purpose of this question is for CIA to inform schools when parents have completed the second step of the opt-out process, submitting a letter to the superintendent. If a letter was received but tests were not yet viewed, approval for opt-out will not be granted until verification that the tests were viewed. Once the tests have been viewed, a second opt-out letter does NOT have to be sent; the original letter will suffice.

12. Question 4 – "Is opt-out approved?"

- a. Any opt-out request submitted in writing by a parent to the school or superintendent will be approved. CIA will enter "Y" for this question only when all necessary steps have been completed to qualify for the superintendent to send an approval letter and for authorization to code the "Parent request for exclusion from the assessment" bubble on the student answer booklet. If this question is left blank on the S12 screen, it means one or both steps of submitting a written opt-out request and viewing the tests was/were not completed.

13. Question 5 – "Remarks"

- a. Both schools and CIA will use this section to communicate any relevant additional details pertaining to the first four questions.

14. To obtain a list of all students who had an opt-out letter submitted to the superintendent, logon to the SCN and complete the following steps

- a. Go to Student Listings Menu
- b. Select Option 3 – Student Listings
- c. Select Option 8 – Standardized Tests Opt-Out Report
- d. Enter "P" to Print the report or "F" to create a File which can be downloaded and opened in Excel
 - i. If you select to create a file, a Dialogue Box will appear letting you know where the information will be stored. (Your information will be placed on your Desktop.)
 - ii. Once file has finished downloading, close the Dialogue box and check on your desktop for an icon that looks like a note pad with the letters.TXT at the end of the name.



Parent Confidentiality Agreement

In accordance with 22 Pa. Code § 4.4 and to ensure the security and confidentiality of the assessment, when any individual inspects a Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA)/Keystone Exam/Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA) pursuant to 22 Pa. Code §§ 4.4 and 4.5, the individual must attest to the following:

As a parent of a student who will sit for a PSSA/Keystone Exam/PASA during the current school year, I understand that I have the right to review the relevant PSSA/Keystone Exam/PASA and that maintaining the validity of the assessment is of the utmost importance. I further understand that all PSSAs/Keystone Exams/PASAs, including the content contained in each test booklet and answer booklet, are the secure, propriety property of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Education (PDE). Therefore, I agree not to discuss, disseminate, or otherwise reveal the content of the assessment materials to anyone, including my own child(ren).

I understand that violation of these terms could result in personal liability for damages caused by a breach of test security, including but not limited to liability and/or costs associated with any of the following: retesting students; recalculating student/school/school district achievement data; developing/producing new test materials to replace compromised test materials; and investigations relating to the breach of test security.

I further understand that false statements herein are made subject to the penalties of 18 Pa.C.S. § 4904 (relating to unsworn falsification to authorities).

Name (Print): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Witnessed by: _____ Date: _____

(Information below this line is for school use when entering data into screen S12 of the SCN)

SCN Opt-Out Form

Student Name _____

Student ID _____

1. Did Parent Communicate Intent to Opt-out? Y N

Date: _____

2. Did Parent View Test? Y N

Date Viewed: _____

PSSA English Language Arts Y N

PSSA Mathematics Y N

PSSA Science Y N

PASA Reading Y N

PASA Math Y N

PASA Science Y N

Keystone Algebra 1 Y N

Keystone Biology Y N

Keystone Literature Y N

5. Remarks

(Insert School Letterhead)

Date _____

Dear _____

Your request to opt-out your student, _____, from the
PSSA/Keystone/PASA (circle one) was received and is approved.

If you have any questions, please contact the school at _____.