

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I would like to provide you with an update concerning the recently mandated Keystone Examinations and how they will affect our students here at Commodore Perry. As you may be aware students will now be required by the Commonwealth to earn a score of proficient or higher on the three Keystone exams in Algebra 1, Literature, and Biology. The Keystone Exams differ from the PSSAs in that they are end of course exams as opposed to grade level exams meaning that students must take them near the conclusion of the specific course with which each test is associated.

At this time, the Keystone requirements primarily will affect the manner in which some students will progress through their mathematics courses at CP. Instead of advancing from course to course based solely on grades, students' advancement and placement will also be determined by their scores on the Keystone Algebra 1 exam. For example, if a student in Integrated Math 1 (Grade 8) does not earn a proficient score on the Keystone Algebra 1 exam, the following year, he or she will be placed in Integrated Math 1 (Grade 9) which will focus upon improving the student's demonstrated areas of need on the Keystone exam. In this manner, remediation will be provided through embedded course material as opposed to the previous method of pulling students from other classes several days per week as this method has not yielded positive results overall in mathematics. Once a student has earned a score of proficient or higher on the Algebra 1 Keystone, he or she will then advance to Integrated Math 2 and continue through the progression of courses.

Keystone remediation in the Literature content area will take students' assessment results into account and will potentially affect the section of English in which they are placed the following year (Academic, College Prep., or Honors). Remediation will be provided primarily in English class during the first semester of the junior year. Students will then be re-tested in December or January.

Keystone remediation in Biology will continue to follow the current model of pulling students from class one or two days per week for direct instruction with the biology teacher followed by a re-test in January or December.

If students do not earn a proficient score after two attempts on any of the three Keystone Exams, they become eligible to complete the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Keystone Project within that specific content area. The projects are web-based and must be completed under the supervision of a teacher who is highly qualified within a Keystone assessment content area.

If you would like to learn more about PA state assessments please visit the Pennsylvania Department of Education's website at the following link.

http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/state_assessment_system/20965

Sincerely,

Jeff Keeling
High School Principal