



# GARDEN SPOT HIGH SCHOOL

669 East Main Street  
New Holland, PA 17557-0609  
Phone: 717-354-1550  
Fax: 717-354-1534

TO: Parents / Guardians of GSHS Students  
FROM: Matthew J. Sanger – Principal  
RE: Keystone Exam / Final Exam Schedule  
DATE: December 16, 2015

It's a great day to be a Spartan! With the Holidays upon us and the first semester coming to a quick end, I thought it would be appropriate to send you information that provides an overview of upcoming events.

## Exam Schedule

In January certain students will participate in the Keystone Exams. These “end of course exams” occur in our Keystone Algebra 1, Keystone English 10, and Biology courses. Therefore, students currently enrolled in these courses will participate in the respective Keystone Exam, which will count as the course’s final exam grade. Several students will also have to re-take the Keystone Exams due to not attaining “Proficient” or “Advanced”, which is a graduation requirement at Garden Spot High School. **We provide a variety of remedial options for those students needing to re-take a particular exam. Keystone Exams will be taken online, so please be sure your child brings his or her computer to school and fully charged the day of their respective Keystone Exam.**

**To accommodate the Keystone Exams, Garden Spot High School will operate on a modified schedule January 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. Therefore, students not taking the Keystone Exams can participate in a Late Arrival Incentive on January 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, *only*. Students participating in the Late Arrival Incentive will be expected to report to their first block class at 10:40 AM on January 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. Again, this only pertains to those students not participating in the Keystone Exams on January 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>.**

Below is our Keystone Exam Schedule:

January 7, 2016	→	Keystone Exam – Retake/Multiple – Module 1 (Regular Bell Schedule)
January 8, 2016	→	Keystone Exam – Retake/Multiple – Module 2 (Regular Bell Schedule)
January 11, 2016	→	Keystone Exam – Module 1 (Modified Bell Schedule)
January 12, 2016	→	Keystone Exam – Module 2 (Modified Bell Schedule)
January 13, 2016	→	Keystone Exam – Make-up – Module 1 (Regular Bell Schedule)
January 19, 2016	→	Keystone Exam – Make-up – Module 2 (Regular Bell Schedule)

Final Exams will occur on the following dates:

January 14, 2016	→	Final Exams – Block 1 and Block 2 (Early Dismissal Schedule – 11:15 AM)
January 15, 2016	→	Final Exams – Block 3 and Block 4 (Early Dismissal Schedule – 11:15 AM)

We will operate on an early dismissal schedule each day of Final Exams. Students will be dismissed at 11:15 AM both days. AM CTC students need not attend school on January 14, 2016. PM CTC students need not attend school on January 15, 2016. These will be marked as legally excused days for our AM/PM CTC students. Full-day CTC students will attend school as normal.

Please note that our transportation department will operate on a normal schedule on January 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, and 14<sup>th</sup>. If non-testing students opt to take advantage of the Late Arrival Incentive on January 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, they will need to find their own way to school by 10:40 AM. In addition, no transportation will be provided for students at the time of our early dismissal on January 14<sup>th</sup> (11:15 AM), as this is a High School only Early Dismissal. Students have the option to stay at school. Students who remain on January 14<sup>th</sup> will be provided lunch from 11:30 AM – 12:00 PM in the cafeteria. They will then return to their respective homerooms until regular dismissal at 2:32 PM.

## Senior Cap & Gown Assembly

Members of the Class of 2016 will attend the annual Cap & Gown Assembly on **January 5, 2016** during iSpartan. During this assembly, seniors will receive information regarding commencement caps and gowns. If students plan to attend commencement in June, they are required to attend this assembly. **Seniors will be permitted to leave for the day at the conclusion of the assembly.**

Thanks for your time and continued support of Garden Spot High School. Happy Holidays!

## KEYSTONE EXAM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Q: What are Keystone Exams?**

Keystone Exams are state mandated end-of-course tests that allow our students to demonstrate proficiency in core subjects. The expectation is that all students will pass these tests in order to graduate. There is a secondary purpose of the Keystone Exams as well. The Keystone Exams will be used to determine a portion of the high school's School Performance Profile (SPP) each year. Our SPP for the 2014-15 school year was 83.1.

### **Q: What subjects have a related Keystone Exam?**

English Language Arts (Keystone English 10), Algebra I (Keystone Algebra 2.0), and Biology are the three Keystone Exams to be implemented.

### **Q: How are Keystone Exams related to high school graduation requirements?**

Eastern Lancaster County School District requires students to attain proficiency on state assessments in English Language Arts and Mathematics. From the state level, the PA Department of Education (PDE) is currently working through legislation, which, if passed, will be implemented for the Class of 2019 and beyond. Therefore, students in the Class of 2019 and beyond will be required to attain proficiency for state purposes. After two unsuccessful attempts, students will be eligible to demonstrate proficiency through the completion of a project-based assessment that will be scored by a team of regional teachers.

### **Q: Do Keystone Exams impact a student's grade in a Keystone-tested course?**

Yes. Each Keystone Exam acts as the final exam for the respective class, (i.e. Algebra, Biology, and English 10). Due to the time it takes PDE to grade the Keystone Exams, GSHS uses a "K" as a student's overall grade to indicate that a Keystone Test has been taken, but has yet to be graded. Once scores are obtained from the state, student report cards are updated.

### **Q: Does this mean that the State will be applying test results from middle school students to high school graduation requirements?**

Yes. If a student completes a course aligned to a Keystone Exam during the middle school years (e.g. Algebra I), the proficiency outcome is used to determine eligibility for a high school diploma.

### **Q: Can parents view the Keystone Exam prior to implementation?**

Yes. Parents with concerns about their child completing a Keystone Exam can view a paper copy of the assessment after signing a waiver. .

### **Q: Can a student earn credit for a course by passing a Keystone Exam without taking the course?**

Garden Spot High School awards an academic credit to students who, on the rare occasion, score "Proficient" or "Advanced" on a Keystone Exam, but fail the course.

### **Q: What happens if a student is not proficient?**

Students who do not reach the "Proficient" or "Advanced" level on the Keystone Exam will receive remedial instruction and must retake the Keystone Exam until a passing score is achieved. Again, PDE is currently working through legislation, which if passed, will be implemented for the Class of 2019 and beyond. Therefore, students in the Class of 2019 and beyond will be required to attain proficiency. After two unsuccessful attempts, students will be eligible to demonstrate proficiency through the completion of a project-based assessment that will be scored by a team of regional teachers.

### **Q: Will there be testing accommodations for students with special needs?**

As with the PSSA tests, students with special needs may take Keystone Exams with accommodations listed in a student Individualized Education Plan (IEP), subject to any limitations the State applies to a particular test.

### **Q: Will colleges and universities view success on Keystone Exams as an advantage during the college admissions process?**

Current information counselors have shared about college acceptance patterns indicates that State test results are not yet important factors in acceptance decisions. However, failure to reach proficiency impacts graduation, which obviously has an impact on college acceptance.

### **Q: Will my child be prepared for Keystone Exams?**

Yes. District curriculum is aligned to the PA Core and eligible content on the Keystone Exams. Keystone tested courses are designed to address the requirements of these tests.

### **Q: Who can I contact with questions pertaining to the Keystone Exams?**

Contact your child's counselor, teacher, or a member of the Administrative team.