

## PENNSYLVANIA SYSTEM OF SCHOOL ASSESSMENT (PSSA) AND KEYSTONE EXAMS REVIEW AND OPT-OUT

### PROCEDURES

Section 4.4 of Title 22, Chapter 4 provides for the rights of any parent or guardian to excuse his or her child from the state assessment if, upon inspection of the testing materials, they find the assessment to be in conflict with their religious beliefs.

This is the only basis for a parent or guardian to excuse his or her child from the statewide assessments.

1. Parent/Guardian contacts the Office of the Superintendent or School Building Principal within two weeks of the Pennsylvania Department of Education predetermined PSSA/Keystone Assessment Window to schedule an assessment review.

**A Parent/Guardian may only request a secure assessment review if they believe that they may have an objection to content based upon their religious beliefs.**

**The opt-out request is only in effect for religious reasons and not moral or ethical reasons. If opt-out not for religious reasons, test must be marked as parent refusal.**

2. Parent/Guardian schedules the secure assessment review (to be held at the student's school) at a time convenient for both parties.

*Things to remember **prior** to review of secure test materials at the school:*

3. A PSSA/KE trained staff member **must** be present with the Parent/Guardian at all times during the review of secure test materials.
4. Parent/Guardian must surrender any electronic device(s) over to the district staff member. (to be held until secure review has been completed).
5. Parent/Guardian reviews and signs the Pennsylvania Department of Education Parent Confidentiality Agreement.
6. Parent/Guardian is not allowed to take any notes during the secure review.

*Things to remember **during** the review of secure test materials at the school:*

7. Parent/Guardian reviews the assessment (for each content area considering an opt-out). **To opt out of all three PSSA's and/or KE's, all three content area assessments **must** be reviewed.**

**A parent/guardian must review current assessments each year for opt-out. The opt-out is not open-ended/ongoing from year to year.**

*Things to remember **after** the review of secure test materials at the school:*

8. Parent/Guardian must document religious objection (not specific objection) within a letter and submits to the Superintendent of Schools/CEO for approval.
  
9. The Superintendent of Schools/CEO will approve Parent/Guardian request. In cases of any disapproval, Superintendent contacts Parent/Guardian providing notification of the determination.
  
10. NOTE: Parents/Guardians should be made aware that with an opt-out for their child, it will have a negative impact on student participation rate for district/school federal/state accountability measures.

The letter or website posting to parents regarding Chapter 4 opt-out is not to encourage parents to have students opt out of the administration.

We are subject to a federal requirement to have 95 percent or more of the students participate. Some schools do not achieve the federal participation requirement.

**It is suggested that you encourage all students and the parents to allow participation in the PSSA and Keystone Exams.**

The option to not participate is limited to a religious opt-out. This is NOT an exemption. It is to be used in a limited number of cases. Most states do not allow opting out for any reason.

\*\*\*If you are testing using the DRC Insight Online Test System, you will have to order one (1) copy (test booklet and answer booklet) of each content area assessment from DRC for Paper & Pencil opt-out review purposes.\*\*\*

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) now offers the parent/guardian review of the assessment via the online portal (to be reviewed at the LEA/school location) for sites that are testing 100% online. With this option, sites do not have to request a booklet and all the return materials for it. If you want to receive a test ticket for Chapter 4 parental review, simply contact DRC Customer Service who will send out the ticket and directions. DRC Customer Service at 800-451-7849 or [Racustomerservice@datarecognitioncorR.com](mailto:Racustomerservice@datarecognitioncorR.com)

Online review is available for both PSSA & KE assessments, and LEA's/schools can request online parent tickets three weeks prior to the start of the testing windows.

If not testing 100% online (as an LEA/school), Parents/Guardians cannot complete review of the assessments online on DRC INSIGHT.

However, if you are testing 100% online **for a particular grade or subject** and don't get paper material, you can also request online review tickets (for that grade or subject).

**As always, please encourage parents/guardians to have their students participate in both the PSSA and/or Keystone Exams for Spring 2025.**

**The timeline for parental/guardian review for religious purposes (Chapter 4 opt-out) is generally 2-weeks prior to/up to and including right before the assessments are to start at your LEA/school.**