



**Bristol Township School District**  
**PSSA / Keystone Exam “Opt Out” Procedures**  
**2023-2024 School Year**



Section 4.4 of Chapter 4 of the State Board of Education regulations provides for the right of any parents or guardians to excuse their child from the state assessment if, upon inspection of the testing materials, they find the assessment to be in conflict with their religious beliefs. Please note that this is the only basis for a parent or guardian to excuse his or her child from the statewide assessments.

Parents/guardians requesting that their child be excused from the PSSA or Keystone Exam must adhere to the following procedural guidelines:

- Within two weeks of the date the child is to participate in the PSSA or Keystone exams, parents/guardians must contact the Chief Academic Officer, Mrs. Amy Coleman, to arrange an appointment to review the assessment(s) by completing this survey.

[PSSA REQUEST TO REVIEW](#)

[KEYSTONE REQUEST TO 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 is not for religious reasons, the test must be marked as parent refusal.
- Mrs. Coleman will forward the Parental request information to the schools and the School Assessment Coordinator or Principal will schedule with the Parent/Guardian the secure assessment review (to be held at the student’s school) at a time that is convenient for both parties.
- Prior to this review, parents/guardians must sign the **Parent Confidentiality Agreement**. This document will be provided to you upon arrival at the school. During the review, parents/guardians may not photocopy, write down, or in any other manner record any portion of the assessments, including directions.

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

- A PSSA/KEYSTONE trained staff member **must** be present with the Parent/Guardian at all times during the review of secure test materials.
- Parent/Guardian must surrender any electronic device(s) over to the district staff member (to be held until secure review has been completed).
- Parent/Guardian reviews and signs the Pennsylvania Department of Education Parent Confidentiality Agreement.
- 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:*

- In the presence of the Chief Academic Officer or designee, parents/guardians will be provided a copy of the assessment(s) for review. During the review, parents/guardians may not photocopy, write down, or in any other manner record any portion of the assessments, including directions.
- Parent/Guardian reviews the assessment (for each content area considering an opt-out). All three content area assessments must be reviewed to opt out of all three PSSA's and/or KEYSTONE'S.
- 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:*

- If after reviewing the test, parents/guardians find the test to be in conflict with their religious belief and wish their student(s) to be excused from the test, the parents/guardians must provide a written request that states the objection to the Superintendent. The written request should be written and provided to the Chief Academic Officer or designee immediately following the assessment review.
- If the Superintendent, Mr. Michael Nitti, determines that the student is excused from the assessment due to parental/guardian request, school personnel will provide an alternative learning environment for the student during the administration of the assessment(s). Parents will be notified via email of the approval.
- In cases of any disapproval, the Superintendent contacts the Parent/Guardian via email providing notification of the determination.

**OPTING OUT FOR YOUR CHILD FOR THE PSSAS AND/OR KEYSTONES WILL HAVE A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE STUDENT'S PARTICIPATION RATE FOR DISTRICT/SCHOOL FEDERAL/STATE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES.**

- The information 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 still need to achieve the federal participation requirement.
- **PDE encourages all students and their parents/guardians 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.

**Important Note: The Pennsylvania Department of Education advises that nonparticipation in state assessments due to parental request will negatively affect the school's participation rate and can potentially have a negative impact on the school's accountability status.**

For more information, please visit: <https://www.pacode.com/secure/data/022/chapter4/s4.4.html>