



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

FISCAL NOTE

SENATE BILL NO. 1095

PRINTERS NO. 1994

PRIME SPONSOR: McGarrigle

COST / (SAVINGS)

FUND	FY 2018/19	FY 2019/20
General Fund	See Fiscal Impact	

SUMMARY:

Senate Bill 1095 amends the Public School Code concerning Keystone Exams and graduation requirements. It would take effect immediately.

ANALYSIS:

Senate Bill 1095 delays the use of the Keystone Exams as a graduation requirement an additional year until the 2021-2022 school year. It also establishes several alternative options to the Keystone Exams for graduation requirements.

Alternative option one involves a composite score on the Keystone Exams. In any school year in which demonstration of proficiency on a Keystone Exam is required for high school graduation, a student who attains a satisfactory composite score that has been recommended by the Secretary of Education and approved by the State Board of Education no later than July 30, 2019 on the algebra 1, biology, and literature Keystone Exams will be deemed proficient for the purposes of high school graduation. This score must be published in the PA Bulletin, posted on the PA Department of Education (PDE) website, reviewed every five years by the Board, and will remain in effect unless changed by the Board or the General Assembly.

In option two, a student will be deemed proficient if the student completes two requirements. The first is a locally established grade-based requirement in the associated academic content areas of the Keystone Exams. The second requirement could be obtaining a certain score or performance level on any one of several standardized tests listed in the legislation. The scores are either set by the Secretary and State Board of Education or are included in the legislation. The second requirement could also be met by successful completion of a college level course in an academic content area associated with each Keystone Exam on which the student did not achieve at least a proficient score; successful completion of a pre-apprenticeship program; or acceptance to an accredited four-year nonprofit institution of higher education and evidence of the ability to enroll in college-level, credit-bearing coursework.

Option three is in current law. If a vocational education student fails to achieve proficiency on a Keystone Exam, the student can be deemed proficient for graduation purposes if the student

completes locally established grade-based requirements for academic content areas associated with each exam. In addition, the student must demonstrate proficiency on an assessment in his or her area of study. This could be by attaining an industry-based competency certification related to the student's program of study, or by demonstrating a high likelihood of success on an approved industry-based competency assessment or readiness for continued meaningful engagement in the student's program of study as demonstrated by performance on benchmark assessments, course grades, and other factors consistent with the student's goals and career plan. Senate Bill 1095 clarifies that a Career and Technology Education (CTE) Concentrator will be determined by a chief school administrator in consultation with an area vocational-technical school director or principal of a comprehensive high school. The determination shall be made no later than the end of 11th grade or, for a student enrolled in a one-year program, the end of the first semester of 12th grade.

In option four, a student will be deemed proficient if the student completes two requirements. The first is a locally established grade-based requirement in the associated academic content areas of the Keystone Exams. The student must also demonstrate with three pieces of evidence that reflect readiness for meaningful postsecondary engagement consistent with the student's goals and career plan. This evidence could include obtaining a certain score or performance level on any one of several standardized tests listed in the legislation, where the required scores are set by the Secretary and State Board of Education. Such evidence could also include successful completion of a college level course; acceptance to an accredited four-year nonprofit institution of higher education and evidence of the ability to enroll in college-level, credit-bearing coursework; satisfactory completion of a service learning project that received advance approval for use as a rigorous and objective piece of evidence by a chief school administrator or their designee; a letter guaranteeing full-time employment; a certificate of successful completion of an internship, externship, or cooperative education program; or satisfactory compliance with the National Collegiate Athletic Association's core courses for college-bound student athletes with a minimum grade point average of 2.0 or the equivalent on an alternative grading scale.

This legislation allows a chief school administrator to grant a waiver of the statewide graduation requirements to students in grade 12, including students experiencing extenuating circumstances as outlined in the bill. If such waivers exceed 5% of a school's graduating class in any year, this could subject the school district and its waiver process to additional scrutiny by PDE, including an audit of the school's waivers and the submission of an improvement plan by the school district to PDE.

A school entity may offer supplemental instruction to students who do not score at least proficient on a Keystone Exam, subject to certain requirements and limitations placed on that supplemental instruction in the bill.

No later than December 1, 2022, and each December 1 thereafter, each school entity must submit a report to PDE on the uses of the various graduation requirement options at the school entity in the previous school year. The Department is also required to post these reports on its internet website by January 15, 2023, and each January 15 thereafter. The minimum contents of this report are detailed in the bill.

Provisions are also included in the bill concerning Keystone Exams and special education students, the retaking of Keystone Exams, Keystone Exams for students who transfer from out-of-state, Keystone Exam performance levels on transcripts, and parental and student notification concerning Keystone Exams.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Department of Education has indicated it will need an additional staff person to administer the provisions of this bill at an estimated cost of \$125,000 annually. In addition, the Department estimates a one-time cost of \$75,000 for information technology changes. Finally, the Department will need to hire a contractor to determine the standard setting for assessments at an estimated cost of \$250,000.

The fiscal impact on school districts is expected to be minimal.

PREPARED BY: Jeff Miller
House Appropriations Committee (R)

DATE: October 9, 2018

Estimates are calculated using the best information available. Actual costs and revenue impact incurred may vary from estimates.