

Pathways to Graduation: A Closer Look at Historical Keystone Data and the First Year of Act 158 Outcomes in SDP





Agenda

1. About PERC, ERA, and the Research Roundup Webinar Series
2. About Act 158 & the Graduation Pathways
3. The When and How of Keystone Exams in SDP
4. 2022-23 Graduates and Their Pathways
5. What's Next: 2023-24 Graduate Data

This webinar is being recorded. The recording and a PDF of the slide deck will be available at: philasd.org/research/roundup

Evaluation, Research, and Accountability

philasd.org/era

philasd.org/era/assessment/

Office of Assessment

The Office of Assessment maintains the Assessment Calendar and coordinates the administration of a number of assessments including Star, Keystone, PSSA, PASA, and ACCESS.

- 2023-24 Assessment Calendar
- 2023-24 Assessment Overview

schoolprofiles.philasd.org

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

SCHOOL PROFILES

Find out how a school or group of schools is performing. Search for a district or charter year search using the filters below. You can also view data for groups of schools (for example, all Charter Schools or all Network 1 schools) by clicking on "School Groupings".

Find a school: All Schools School Groupings

Search for a school: Search

Filters

- ACADEMY AT PALMBO
- ACADEMY FOR THE MIDDLE YEARS (AMMY) AT NORTHWEST
- ACHIEVE ACADEMY
- ACHIEVE ACADEMY EAST
- AD PRIMA CHARTER SCHOOL
- ADAIR, ALEXANDER SCHOOL
- ALLEN, DR. ETHEL SCHOOL
- ALLEN, ETHAN SCHOOL
- ALLEN, RICHARD PREPARATORY CHARTER SCHOOL
- ALLIANCE FOR PROGRESS CHARTER SCHOOL

PHILADELPHIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DATA FOR DISTRICT, CHARTER, ALTERNATIVE, AND OTHER/CYBER STUDENTS AND SCHOOLS

Enrollment: 2023-2024 (most updated: November 2024)
Performance and Climate data: 2023-2022 (most updated: Spring 2024)
Survey data: 2023-2022 (most update: Late Fall 2024)

TOTAL ENROLLMENT

197,115

TOTAL SCHOOLS

331

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA
CENTRAL OFFICE
480 S. Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA 19130
62 713-400-0000

SUPERINTENDENT
Tony B. Wellington, Sr., Ed.D.

2021-22 PSSA & KEYSTONE - ELA PERFORMANCE (ALL GRADES)

34%

4 POINT DECREASE FROM PREVIOUS YEAR

The percentage of students who scored Proficient or Advanced on the state standardized English Language Arts exam.

2021-22 PSSA & KEYSTONE - MATH PERFORMANCE (ALL GRADES)

2021-22 FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION



Research Brief: High School Graduation

2022-23 Four-Year High School Graduation Rates in Philadelphia

Many staff in the Office of Evaluation, Research, and Accountability contributed to the information that appears in this brief. Staff in the District Performance Office helped prepare the data files used for analysis, and major writing contributions were made by Josh Braunschweig and Eliza Edson, Ph.D.

Key Findings

Overall, the four-year graduation rate for students entering high school for the first time increased by 10.4 percentage points between the 2012-14 and 2022-23 school years in Philadelphia public schools.

- The rate at District schools increased by 6.7 percentage points over ten years.
- The rate at Charter schools increased by 13.9 percentage points over ten years.
- The rate at Alternative schools/programs decreased by 2.9 percentage points over ten years.

Graduation rates increased in 63% of Philadelphia public schools between the 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years.

- The rate increased at 58.2% of District schools (12 of 55 schools).
- The rate increased at 68.0% of Charter schools (22 of 32 schools).
- The rate increased at 64.0% of Alternative schools/programs (14 of 25 schools/programs).

Economically disadvantaged students in District schools graduated at a higher rate than non-economically disadvantaged students in the 2022-23 school year (81.4% to 79.6%).

- 72.9% of graduating students in the 2019-20 first-time sixth grade cohort were economically disadvantaged.

The School District of Philadelphia is committed to providing a high-quality education for all students. As a result, we are proud to be the first school district in the nation to achieve a 100% graduation rate for all students. This achievement is a result of our commitment to providing a high-quality education for all students, and we are proud to be the first school district in the nation to achieve a 100% graduation rate for all students.

This report was prepared by the Office of Evaluation, Research, and Accountability. For more information on how graduation rates are calculated and which students are counted in each year's first-time sixth grade cohort, visit: <https://www.philasd.org/era/research/2022-23-graduation-rates>

August 2024 • Office of Research and Evaluation

Open Data

The School District of Philadelphia (SDP), in partnership with Open Data Philly, publishes longitudinal data sets spanning various operational school and student performance areas. The public release of this data supports our goals to promote greater transparency and community engagement. Before accessing these data, please review the Terms and Conditions.

School and Network level enrollment data and performance on key indicators are also available on our interactive, user-friendly School Profiles website. In addition to district provided data, please visit the state report card, Future Ready Index, for additional metrics.

To date, SDP has released data sets for:

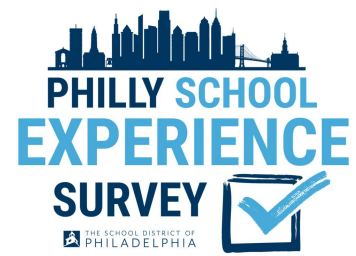
- School Information
 - Master School List, Longitudinal Master School List, School and District Enrollment & Demographics, Pre-School Information, School Catchment Areas, School Catchment Information Details and Counts, District-Wide Surveys, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, School Reopening Information, School Selection, and Household Food Insecurity.
- School Performance
 - School Progress Reports on Education and Equity, District Scorecard, Alternative Education Progress Reports, PSSA & Keystone Exam Data, School and District Graduation Rates, School and District 95% Attendance, Average Daily Attendance, School and District Out-of-School Suspensions, Serious Incidents Counts and Details, and NCS Student Tracker Reports.
- District Employees and Finance
 - Expended Information, Employee Information, Teacher Attendance, Teacher Demographics, District and School Budgets, and Full-Time Employment (FTE).

Data Sets

- School Information**
Information on schools' attributes
- School Performance**
Student performance and climate through the school year
- District Employees and Finance**
Expendeds, Employees, Budget, and FTE Data
- Advancing Education Safety**
Information on hybrid learning and COVID-19 testing
- Terms and Conditions**
Please read!

Quick Data

philasd.org/opendata



philasd.org/pses

philasd.org/research



Philadelphia Education Research Consortium



Primary Partners

Research for Action
(community-connected, anti-racist education research nonprofit)

Office of Research and Evaluation at the School District of Philadelphia
(internal-to-the-district research org and knowledge broker)

Secondary Partners
External-to-district educational stakeholders, including city officials, philanthropic and advocacy orgs, and students and families

Secondary Partners
District central office and school-level staff with decision-making authority related to problems of practice



PERC Approach to Research:

Develop and execute a research agenda that is community-informed, equity focused and based on a critical analysis in collaboration with district staff.

Anticipated Outcomes

1. Provide District offices with research to support students through bureaucratic and data infrastructure improvement
2. Contribute both locally and nationally to education research
3. Generate new knowledge for the general public, educators, and policymakers to help stakeholders navigate and shape broader systems that support education in Philadelphia

Research for Action (RFA) researchforaction.org


PERC phledresearch.org

What is a Research Roundup?

- Regular webinar series with a focus on topics aligned to the [Goals & Guardrails](#) and [Accelerate Philly](#)
- Videos and slide decks available from previous sessions
- Sign up to be notified when webinars are scheduled and when recordings are available:

philasd.org/research/roundup

Research Roundup Topics

Mar 2022	Literacy Performance Grades K-3	May 2023	Impact of Facility Investments in LA
Apr 2022	Math Performance in Grades 3-8	Jul 2023	SPREE
May 2022	9th Grade "On Track" Rates and High School Graduation	Sep 2023	Trends, Transitions, and Supports for English Learners
Jun 2022	Food Insecurity in the School District of Philadelphia	Dec 2023	The 9th Grade On-Track Metric
Jul 2022	English Learners and Students in Special Education	Feb 2024	The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBS)
Oct 2022	PERC: Keystone Graduation Pathways	Apr 2024	Philly School Experience Survey (PSES)
Dec 2022	District-Wide Surveys	Jul 2024	Relationship of Star and PSSA Performance 2022-23
Feb 2023	Philadelphia Police School Diversion Program	Sep 2024	Postsecondary Resource Roundup
Apr 2023	Student Attendance		



About Act 158 & the Graduation Pathways

Act 158 & Graduation Pathways

Act 158, which went into effect starting with the graduating class of 2023, requires that in addition to the 23.5 course credits and the service learning project previously required to graduate in Philadelphia, high school students in Pennsylvania must also meet the requirements for one of the five pathways to graduation:

<p><u>Pathway 1</u></p> <p>Keystone Proficiency</p>	<p><u>Pathway 2</u></p> <p>Keystone Composite</p>	<p><u>Pathway 3</u></p> <p>Career and Technical Education Concentrator</p>	<p><u>Pathway 4</u></p> <p>Alternative Assessment</p>	<p><u>Pathway 5</u></p> <p>Evidence-Based</p>
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For more information visit <http://philasd.org/gradreg>

Keystone Pathways

Goal 4 of the Board’s Goals and Guardrails includes targets for Keystone proficiency for SDP’s high schoolers. Today we’re taking a closer look at Pathways 1 and 2, also known as the “Keystone pathways,” to understand more about which SDP students take the keystones, when they take them, how they perform, and how to best support students in pursuing these two pathways.

<u>Pathway 1</u> Keystone Proficiency	<u>Pathway 2</u> Keystone Composite	<u>Pathway 3</u> Career and Technical Education Concentrator	<u>Pathway 4</u> Alternative Assessment	<u>Pathway 5</u> Evidence-Based
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For more information visit <http://philasd.org/gradreg>

Keystone Pathways

Keystone Proficiency (Pathway 1)

Receive at least a Proficient or Advanced score (1500 or better) on all three Keystone exams (Algebra 1, Biology, and Literature).

Keystone Composite (Pathway 2)

Take all three Keystone exams and:

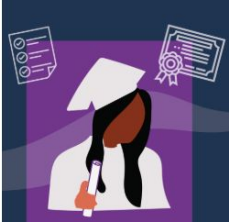
- Receive at least one Proficient or Advanced score.
- Have a composite score of at least 4452.
- Have no Below Basic scores.

This is the equivalent of earning Proficient or Advanced on two exams and Basic on one exam, or earning Basic on two exams and Advanced on one exam.



The When and How of Keystone Exams in SDP

PERC's Act 158 & Graduation Pathways Research

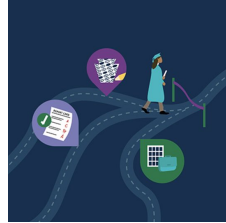


Changing Requirements in Pennsylvania for High School Graduation: A Research Brief on Pennsylvania Act 158

August 2022

PERC's first report outlined the new graduation requirements defined by Act 158, described the evolution of the policy, and summarized some relevant research about high-stakes graduation requirements and their equity implications.

phledresearch.org/changing-requirements-brief/

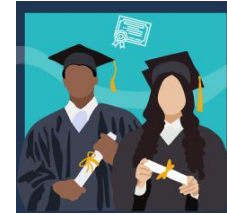


Changing the Finish Line: Implications of new graduation requirements in the School District of Philadelphia

October 2022

The second report applied the policy requirements to historical cohorts to show the potential implications of the policy for the District.

phledresearch.org/changing-the-finish-line/



The When and How of Keystone Exams in the School District of Philadelphia

July 2024

PERC's most recent report describes the timing and circumstances in which students have historically taken their Keystone exams to help inform the strategies to support more students to achieve proficiency.

phledresearch.org/the-when-and-how-of-keystone-exams-in-the-school-district-of-philadelphia/

Historically, what have been the circumstances within which students take and pass their Keystone exams?

- When do students first take Keystone associated courses and how do they fare?
- What share of students attempt Keystone exams?
- How common is it for students to attempt a Keystone exam in the same year as their first attempt at the associated course?
- How common is it for students to pass Keystone exams on their first attempt?

*To answer these questions, we examined historical SDP data from the 9th grade cohorts expected to graduate in 2018 or 2019. These students were in school prior to the new Act 158 policy requirements. **Future research will examine the extent to which patterns have changed since the implementation of the policy.***

When do students first take Keystone associated courses and how do they fare?

Table 1. Most students first attempt Keystone-associated courses in 9th or 10th grade.

Grade-level students were in when first attempting the Keystone associated course, by subject area

Enrolled Grade at First Course Attempt	Algebra (N=16,086)	Biology (N=16,709)	Literature (N=15,871)
7 th or 8 th grade	3.8%	n/a	n/a
9 th grade	92.3%	46.7%	9.4%
10 th grade	3.1%	47.1%	89.0%
11 th grade	0.7%	5.0%	1.4%
12 th grade	0.2%	1.2%	0.3%

Data source: Administrative data from the School District of Philadelphia, ninth-grade cohorts expected to graduate in 2017-18 or 2018-19.

Note: The number of students included in the sample for each subject is shown in the column heading.

Many, but not all, students pass Keystone associated courses on their first attempt.

Table 2. Many, but not all, students pass Keystone associated courses on their first attempt.

Percent of students who passed the Keystone associated course upon their first attempt, by subject area

	Algebra (N=16,086)	Biology (N=16,709)	Literature (N=15,871)
Percent of students that pass the course (with a grade of D or higher) upon their first attempt	83.3%	85.8%	86.1%

Data source: Administrative data from the School District of Philadelphia, ninth-grade cohorts expected to graduate in 2017-18 or 2018-19.

Most students took the Keystone exam at some point, regardless of if they passed or failed the course the first time they attempted it.

- 95% of students who passed their first attempt at the Algebra 1 course went on to take the Algebra Keystone exam, while 75% of students who failed their first attempt at the Algebra 1 course went on to take the exam.
- It was more common for students who failed their first Algebra course attempt to attempt the Keystone Algebra exam than students who failed either Biology or Literature.
- For Biology and Literature, fewer than 60% of students who failed their first course attempt went on to take the exam at some point.

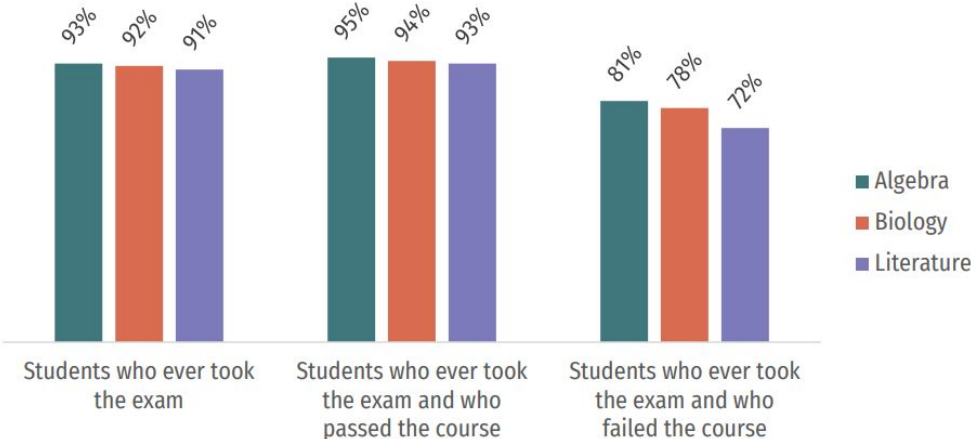
If students took the exam, it was common for them to do so in the same year that they first took the associated course, even if they failed the course.

Among students who ever took the exam, most (91-93%) took the Keystone exams in the same year as when they first attempted the associated course.

Most students who failed the course but went on to take the exam also did so in the same year that they failed the course (72%-81%).

Figure 1. It is common for students to take Keystone exams in the same year as they first take the associated course, even if they failed the associated course.

Percent of students who attempted a Keystone exam in the same year as their first associated course attempt, by subject and if they passed or failed the course, among students who ever attempted the exam

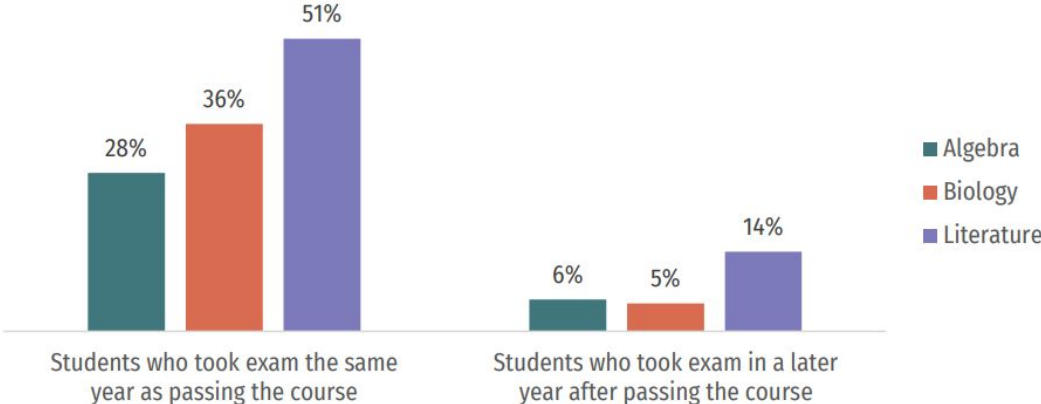


Data source: Administrative data from the School District of Philadelphia, SY2012-13 – SY 2018-19. Sample sizes are listed in the first three rows of Appendix Table A1.

Exam pass rates were low, even among students who passed the associated course at their first attempt, and especially among students who took the exam later.

Figure 2. Exam pass rates are low, even among students who pass the associated course at their first attempt and especially among students who take the exam later

Percent of students who passed the Keystone exam on the first attempt among those who passed the course on the first attempt, by subject area and when they took the exam

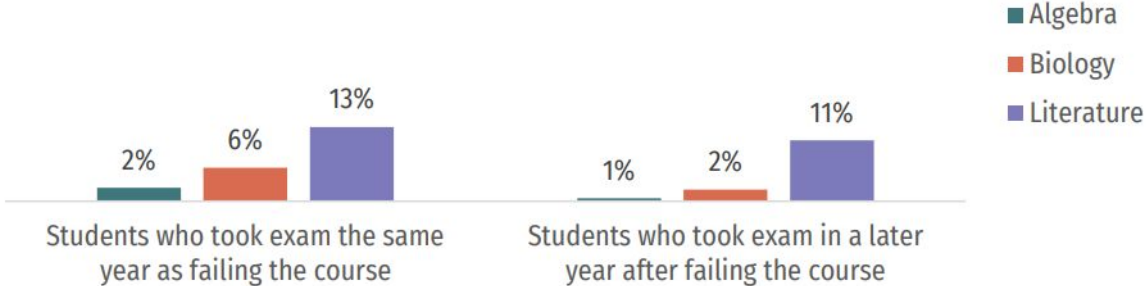


Data source: Administrative data from the School District of Philadelphia, SY2012-13 – SY 2018-19. Sample sizes available in Appendix Table A2.

Exam pass rates were very low for students who failed their first course attempt, especially among those who took the exam in a later year.

Figure 3. Exam pass rates are very low for students who fail their first course attempt, especially among those who take the exam in a later year.

Percent of students who passed the Keystone exam on the first attempt among those who failed their first attempt at the course, by subject area and when they took the exam



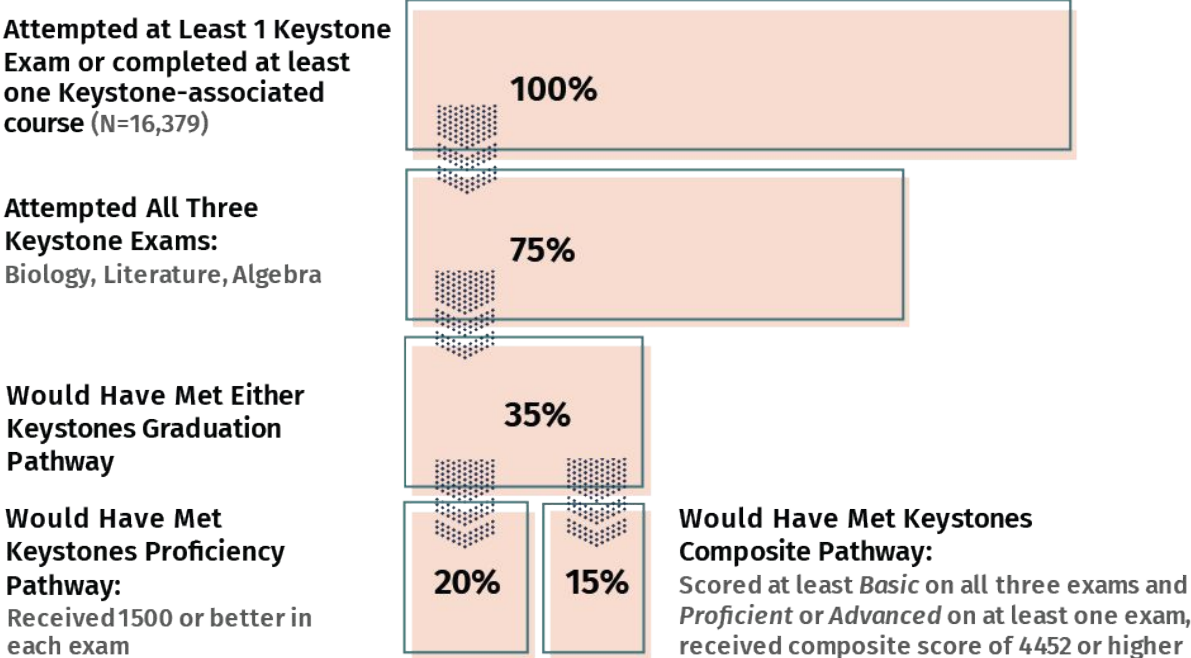
Data source: Administrative data from the School District of Philadelphia, SY2012-13 – SY 2018-19. Sample sizes available in Appendix Table A2.



Implications for Policy and Practice

- Research emphasizes need for improved support to help students pass Keystone exams
- Support students in taking the Keystone exam as close to the associated course as possible.
- Review the tools and guidance provided to support decision-making about which graduation pathway is right for individual students.
- Gain a better understanding of what conditions help students pass a Keystone exam.

In the graduating classes of 2018 and 2019, just over one-third of students would have achieved Keystone scores sufficient to graduate through the Keystone proficiency or composite pathways.





2022-23 Graduates and Their Pathways



Who is Included?

All students who were 12th graders as of May 25, 2023 are included.

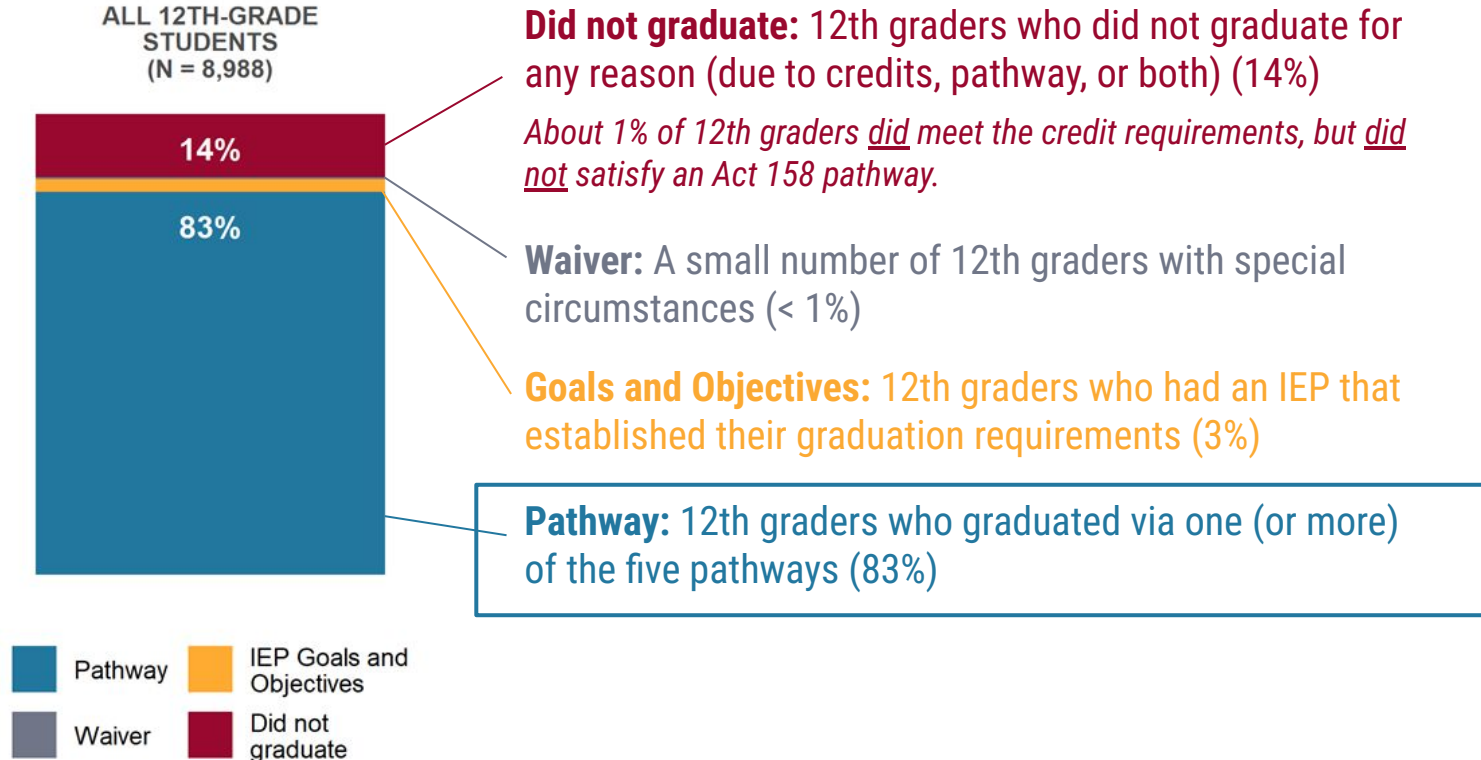
- This excludes 2022-23 students who were SDP 12th graders, but who exited before that date.
- This is different from how graduation rates are typically calculated. Usually, we base graduation analyses on cohorts of first-time 9th graders.



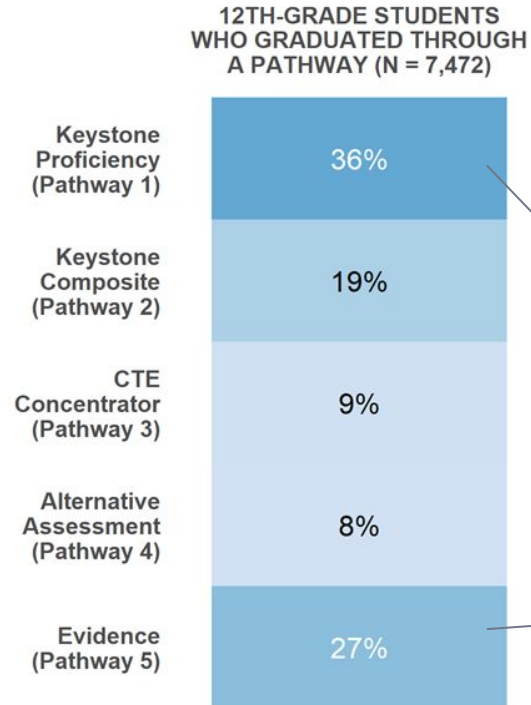
Caveats About This Cohort

- For most of these students, the pandemic began during Spring of their 9th grade year, and their 10th grade year was almost entirely virtual.
- Keystone exams were canceled in 2019-20, and delayed in 2020-21.
 - Non-numeric Proficient scores were awarded on a scale that is not likely to persist over time.

Graduation Outcomes



Pathway Outcomes for Graduates



Notes:

- If students met the requirements for multiple pathways, they are reported in the first pathway whose requirements they met, going in order from Pathway 1-5.
- The visualizations in this section are heat maps. Darker shades of blue correspond to larger percentages.

More students graduated via Pathway 1 than any other option.

Pathway 5 was the second-most common route.

Pathway Outcomes for Graduates (by Race/Ethnicity)

	ASIAN (N = 934)	BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN (N = 3,726)	HISPANIC/LATINE (N = 1,606)	MULTI RACIAL/OTHER (N = 283)	WHITE (N = 923)
Keystone Proficiency (Pathway 1)	67%	28%	23%	46%	58%
Keystone Composite (Pathway 2)	15%	21%	20%	17%	15%
CTE Concentrator (Pathway 3)	2%	11%	11%	9%	5%
Alternative Assessment (Pathway 4)	7%	10%	8%	8%	7%
Evidence (Pathway 5)	10%	31%	38%	20%	15%

Pathway 1 was the most common Pathway for students identifying as Asian, Multi-Racial/Other, or White

Pathway 5 was the most common for students identifying as Black/African American or Hispanic/Latine

Pathway Outcomes for Graduates (by Gender)

	FEMALE (N = 3,969)	MALE (N = 3,479)
Keystone Proficiency (Pathway 1)	40%	32%
Keystone Composite (Pathway 2)	19%	18%
CTE Concentrator (Pathway 3)	8%	10%
Alternative Assessment (Pathway 4)	9%	7%
Evidence (Pathway 5)	23%	32%

Students identifying as female most frequently graduated via Pathway 1.

Students identifying as male were equally likely to graduate via Pathways 1 or 5.

Pathway Outcomes for Graduates (by Econ. Dis. Status)

	ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED (N = 5,102)	NOT ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED (N = 2,370)
Keystone Proficiency (Pathway 1)	32%	46%
Keystone Composite (Pathway 2)	20%	17%
CTE Concentrator (Pathway 3)	11%	5%
Alternative Assessment (Pathway 4)	9%	7%
Evidence (Pathway 5)	29%	25%

Students experiencing economic disadvantage graduated via Pathway 1 most frequently, followed closely by Pathway 5.

Those not experiencing economic disadvantage graduated via Pathway 1 most frequently.

Pathway Outcomes for Graduates (by EL Status)

	ENGLISH LEARNERS (N = 976)	NOT ENGLISH LEARNERS (N = 6,496)
Keystone Proficiency (Pathway 1)	7%	41%
Keystone Composite (Pathway 2)	19%	19%
CTE Concentrator (Pathway 3)	9%	9%
Alternative Assessment (Pathway 4)	13%	8%
Evidence (Pathway 5)	52%	24%

Non-English Learners graduated via Pathway 1 most frequently.

English Learners graduated via Pathway 5 most frequently.

Pathway Outcomes for Graduates (by IEP Status)

	STUDENTS WITH IEPs (N = 472)	STUDENTS WITHOUT IEPs (N = 7,000)
Keystone Proficiency (Pathway 1)	11%	38%
Keystone Composite (Pathway 2)	12%	19%
CTE Concentrator (Pathway 3)	16%	9%
Alternative Assessment (Pathway 4)	9%	8%
Evidence (Pathway 5)	53%	26%

Students without IEPs graduated via Pathway 1 most frequently

Students with IEPs graduated via Pathway 5 most frequently



What's Next: 2023-24 Graduate Data





Future Research

Graduation data from 2023-24 will be available when the 2023-24 SPREE is released.

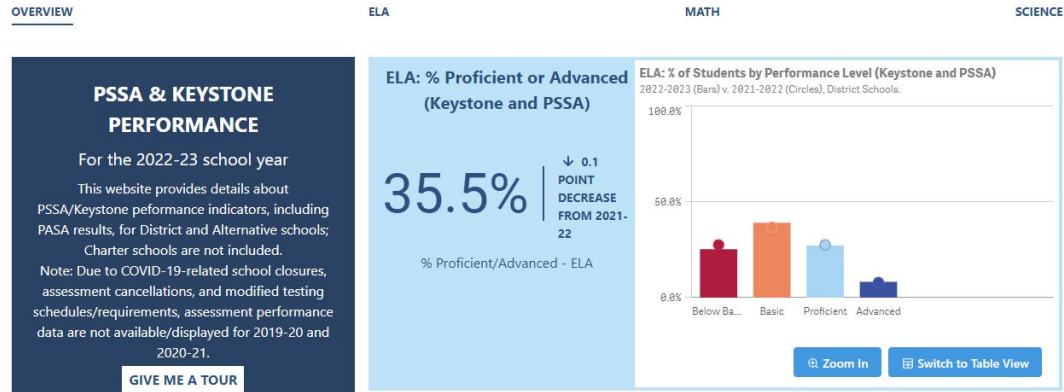
Future research might include:

- Looking more closely at factors that support Keystone proficiency.
- Understanding trends as more classes graduate using the Act 158 pathways.
- Learning more about student, family, and school staff experiences navigating the pathways.

Explore our resources!

Interactive Keystone Dashboard

<https://dashboards.philasd.org/extensions/pssa-keystone-public/index.html#/>



Research Roundups

- [Postsecondary “Resource Roundup”](#)
- [Implications of New Graduation Requirements \(Five Pathways to Graduation\)](#)

Research & Reports

<https://www.philasd.org/research/category/college-career/high-school-graduation/>



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
PHILADELPHIA

Questions?