

August 2015

# KeyNews—Keeping Up With Keystone

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## Preparation is Key!

Preparation is the key to success in nearly every endeavor. Athletes spend hundreds of hours preparing for an event, and doctors spend many years in medical school to be prepared for their career. Even something as simple as a family vacation takes hours of planning and preparation to get the most enjoyment from the trip.

We know that as parents you have goals for your children's future. Students have goals of their own, and many Keystone students are fully engaged in pursuing their dreams. Keystone exists and remains relevant year after year because it is part of our mission to support students in preparing for their future and achieving their goals. We take our mission seriously, and continuously review

data and feedback to determine how we are doing and identify plans for improvement.

Keystone prepared for this coming school year by adding two new key positions to our staff—another guidance counselor to support the post-secondary planning process, and another learning coach to support student engagement and success in Keystone. We added new engaging elective courses such as Entrepreneurship, Forensic Science, and Probability & Statistics; we updated several of our core courses with new content; we revised the Strong Start program and added resources to the Guidance Services Resource Center; and teachers added more learning resources and references to

courses. All these improvements took planning and preparation to ensure students can access the support they need to be successful in Keystone's unique independent learning environment.

Throughout this newsletter, focused on preparation, you will find references to the preparations we made, as well as recommendations for preparations parents and students can make to plan for a successful year. I hope you find the information helpful and use it as a springboard to contact us for more help whenever you need it. We are here for you!

One new feature I am proud of is our new **Keystone Talkback** question of the month. I hope you will take the time to give us your opinion on the monthly topics, and help us better understand how we can continue to

always improve our services.

I have truly enjoyed my time at Keystone in my role as Head of School. I will be stepping aside, however, and moving into a new role that will still keep me involved with Keystone, but at a different level. I am pleased to announce that Erica Rhone, Deputy Head of School has been promoted into the Head of School position. Erica has been at Keystone for over eight years, and is very well qualified for this role. We will be sharing more details with all families via e-mail. Please join me in wishing Erica well as she takes on this new and important role.

Best wishes to all Keystone students in the coming year! Take advantage of the resources Keystone provides, and achieve your goals!

*Lisa McClure*



## Keystone Talkback

Keystone strives for continuous improvement. Feedback from students and parents is key to helping us identify areas in need of improvement. Every month we will provide you an opportunity to share your feedback on a specific area. Some examples of topics include teacher support, services provided by Keystone, and Keystone's classes. This month's topic is expectations. We would like to hear from you how your Keystone experience has aligned with the expectations that were set prior to enrolling. Please take a few minutes to answer our Keystone Talkback question of the month and thank you for providing feedback. Click here to answer this month's question posted on the Keystone Strong website:

<http://www.keystonestrong.com/parent-network/>

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## Keystone Preparation: The Basics

Whether your student is just starting classes now or they have been working for quite some time, preparation for success is an important step. These two tips are helpful for those just starting out as well as those that are not new students, but may need to change their plans.

### **Preparing the School Space:**

Does your student have a space dedicated to their school work? This is one of the first things you can do to be prepared for a good school experience. Many of our students do not have a lot of experience doing their school work from home. By having a space dedicated to school, it helps them get into the right frame of mind when it is time to “go to school”. Here are some dos and don’ts on how to set up a school area for your students: <http://slides.com/klc/deck-13>

### **Preparing a Schedule:**

Once the school area is prepared, the next important step to being prepared is creating a schedule. We recommend that students plan out their school day. They should decide what order they will work on their classes, when they will take breaks and when they plan on finishing for the day. In addition to planning the daily schedule, students also need to create a schedule for their school work. The first step is to determine a start and end date for the courses. Remember, your student has one full year from the date of enrollment to finish their courses. The next step is to create the schedule. Online students will find a [Dynamic Course Schedule](#) in their online classroom, under the Orientation tab, to help with that process. Print students will find some tips for planning a schedule here: <http://www.keystonestrong.com/get-started/print-courses/>

## Meet our new Guidance Counselor: Mr. Dufford



Mr. Dufford earned his Bachelor’s Degree from Penn State University and his Master’s Degree in Counseling and Development from Slippery Rock University. He is certified in Elementary and Secondary School Counseling. Mr. Dufford did his internship at Haine Elementary and Seneca Valley High School in the Pittsburgh Area. His favorite part of being a guidance counselor and working for The Keystone School is being able to share educational tools and webinars with students all over the world. In his spare time he likes to hang out with his dogs Vader, Mia and Maggie and his hairless cat Yoda. He also enjoys kayaking with his wife, coaching soccer, playing PlayStation 4, and collecting socks.

# Personalize Your Course Plan

If you ask Keystone parents to pick one word to describe Keystone it would likely be “flexible”. We have a flexible open enrollment program, which means students can enroll in courses any time of the year. We also allow students to build their own unique course completion plan. Earning credits for a course comes down to three things: 1. Finishing before the year deadline (but extensions are available if needed), 2. Earning a final grade of 60% or higher and 3. Completing every assignment in the course.

There’s another aspect of Keystone that provides an added layer of flexibility - course selection and planning! While Keystone has specific credit requirements for graduation, there is no mandatory, prescribed sequence of courses. There are many courses that are highly suggested for college-bound students, but ultimately Keystone families have the ability to pick the courses that will fulfill the graduation requirements. Are you interested in personalizing your course plan? Below are Keystone’s graduation requirements as well as tools for getting started!

## Graduation Requirements

To receive a Keystone High School diploma, students need to earn 21 units of credit in grades 9-12. Credits can be transferred in to Keystone, but students must take at least five credits with Keystone, one credit each in the areas of English, Math, Science, Social Studies, and another credit in an area of choice. Once a student meets the graduation requirements, he or she is awarded a high school diploma from Keystone.

**The required graduation credits must be distributed as follows:**

Course Type	Minimum Credits for Graduation	Recommended for College Bound
Health/PE (must include one planned course in Health)	1	1
Art	1	1
Mathematics (at least one must be Algebra 1 or higher)	3	4
Science	3	3 -4
English	4	4
Social Studies	4	4
Electives	5	4-5
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21 - 23</b>

Though the minimum diploma requirement is twenty one (21) credits, we encourage students to develop a four year learning plan and take courses that will provide them the best foundation for college or career, even if that means earning more than 21 credits. College Bound students are encouraged to take at least two credits of the same world language as part of their electives.

Here is a video that walks parents through **Building a Keystone Course Plan**:

<https://fw.unitymg.com/rdr/C:7900>

Visit Keystone’s course catalog for an up-to-date listing of our course offerings!

<http://keystoneschoolonline.com/browse-course-catalog>

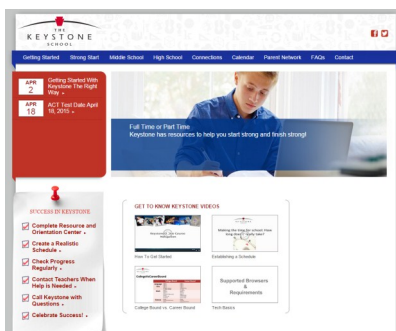


# Sample Four Year Plan for a college-bound student

Requirements	9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	11 <sup>th</sup> Grade	12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Total Credits
<b>English</b>	English 1	English 2	English 3	AP Eng. Lang	4
<b>Mathematics</b>	Algebra 1	Geometry	Algebra 2		3
<b>Social Science</b>	Geography	American History	World History	AP Economics	4
<b>Science</b>	Biology Biology Lab	Chemistry	Physics		3.5
<b>Health</b>				Nutrition, Health and Wellness	1
<b>Fine Arts</b>		Art and Music Appreciation			1
<b>Electives</b>	Spanish 1	Spanish 2	American Government/ Economics	Trig/Pre-Calculus Spanish 3	5
<b>Total Credits</b>	5.5	6	5	5	21.5

Throughout the year, many changes can occur in our lives. Maybe your email address changed, maybe your student has a new email address, or maybe your plans have changed. It is important to keep Keystone up to date with your contact information and your Keystone plans. Parents, please take a few minutes to answer this short survey to help us keep our information up to date so you don't miss any important information!

Survey Link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FVWM7P6>



As you may know at Keystone, we provide you with many materials and resources to help you succeed with your educational experience. Sometimes it may feel like you are not sure which resource to utilize first. Well, now there is an excellent one-stop-shop-site that both students and parents can go to get a well-rounded idea of our program. This is our Keystone Strong Start website: [www.keystonestrong.com](http://www.keystonestrong.com). Here you will find information for students and parents as well as information about both print and online courses. Many of our resources are one click away from watching or downloading onto your computer! So go on and check it out today!

## What does YOUR student’s future look like?

Have you and your student discussed a plan for after high school? It is never too early! College preparation begins early in high school with course selection. Career preparation begins with seeking part-time jobs as a youngster to learn important career skills, effective communication skills, responsibility, and independence. If you and your student are looking for a starting point in preparing for the future, visit Keystone Strong’s Career and College Preparation page, found here:

<http://www.keystonestrong.com/high-school/college-and-career/>

Keystone’s Guidance Counselors are here to help you plan your future!

Please email [guidance@keystonehighschool.com](mailto:guidance@keystonehighschool.com) with any questions about Career and College Preparation.

### Check out the August Webinar Schedule

Getting Started webinars are designed for new students and parents, but any Keystone student or parent is welcome to sign up and attend! You can click on the event to sign up or use the links provided below.

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Presenter</u>	<u>Audience</u>
<a href="#">Getting Started The Right Way With Keystone</a>	August 4th	7 pm ET	Aubree Kresch	New Students and Parents
<a href="#">Getting Started The Right Way With Keystone</a>	August 13th	12 pm ET	Aubree Kresch	New Students and Parents
<a href="#">Getting Started The Right Way With Keystone</a>	August 18th	3 pm ET	Aubree Kresch	New Students and Parents
<a href="#">Getting Started The Right Way With Keystone</a>	August 27th	7 pm ET	James Bonham	New Students and Parents
<a href="#">Getting Started The Right Way With Keystone</a>	September 2nd	3 pm ET	James Bonham	New Students and Parents

Getting Started Webinars 8/4, 8/13, 8/18: <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0949a5ad23a2fd0-getting>

Getting Started Webinar 8/27 & 9/2: <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0f4aa5aa2aa1f58-getting1>

Congratulations to Keystone’s **74** July Graduates from 27 US states and 7 countries!

Best Wishes on your future success!!



# Advice from Keystone Teachers

Keystone teachers were asked to answer the following question. Take time to review their suggestions below.

In order for Keystone students to have a successful learning experience, they should:



- Start by completing the Resource and Orientation Center.
- Set up a schedule and try to follow it closely.
- Be open minded and open to the new ideas and ways of learning that Keystone offers.
- Reach out to their teachers with any questions.
- Take responsibility for their own understanding.
- Keep motivated and focused on their goals.
- Avoid procrastination.
- Use all of the resources available to them.
- Maintain a regular assignment submission rate.
- Study and read the course content thoroughly.
- Work on developing reading and writing skills.
- Be comfortable using a variety of programs such as Word and PowerPoint—check out the ROCK for more information.

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## Preparation through Social Media

Did you know that Keystone has a Facebook page and also several Twitter accounts? We are often posting tips and suggestions for students on how they can be a successful student. Throughout the month of August, we'll be posting tips on how to prepare for a successful school year. Whether you are starting your year now or are in the midst of your school year, these tips can help you stay organized and keep your goals in mind.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/keystoneschool>

Learning Coach Twitter: [https://twitter.com/Keystone\\_LC](https://twitter.com/Keystone_LC)

Guidance Twitter: [https://twitter.com/Keystone\\_Gdnce](https://twitter.com/Keystone_Gdnce)

Student Services Twitter: [https://twitter.com/Keystone\\_SS](https://twitter.com/Keystone_SS)









## Tech Tip of the Month

### Using Alt-Codes in World Language Courses (on Windows)

Sometimes World Language courses require students to type special characters to indicate letters with accents. While there are numerous ways of generating these characters, the easiest way to accomplish this is by the use of Alt-Codes.

For a full listing of Alt-Codes please visit: <http://symbolcodes.tlt.psu.edu/accents/codealt.html>

Windows assigns a numeric code to different accented letters, other foreign characters and special mathematical symbols. For instance the code for lower case á is 0225, and the code for capital Á is 0193. The ALT key input is used to manually insert these letters and symbols by calling the numeric code assigned to them.

#### To use the codes:

1. Place your cursor in the location where you wish to insert a special character.
2. Activate the numeric key pad on the right of the keyboard by pressing **Num Lock** (upper right of keyboard). The **Num Lock** light on the keyboard will indicate that the numeric key pad is on.



**NOTE:** You must use the numeric key pad; if you use the number keys on the top of the keyboard, the characters will not appear. If you are on a laptop or computer without a separate numeric keypad one of the other methods is recommended.

3. While pressing down the **ALT key**, type the four-digit code on the numeric key pad at the right edge of the key board. The codes are "case sensitive." For instance, the code for lower-case á is ALT+0225, but capital Á is ALT+0193.

4. Release the ALT key. The character will appear when the ALT key is released.

**NOTE:** You must include the initial zero in the code. For example, to insert á (0225) you must type LT+0225, NOT ALT+225.

### Keystone's Mission

*The Keystone School provides high quality, individualized educational experiences in a safe, technology enabled learning environment to empower students to achieve their academic and personal goals.*

**More information about Keystone's mission and our expected school wide learning results can be found in the student handbook posted in the online homeroom and on our website.**