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# OLEY VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

JEFFREY F. ZACKON, Ed. D.  
Superintendent of Schools

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September 21, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

On Wednesday, September 16, 2009, the Oley Valley School Board met with a representative from the Pennsylvania Department of Education concerning the proposed High School GCA/ Keystone Exams.

At the conclusion of the regular board meeting, the Board of Directors of the Oley Valley School Board voted not to support the proposed High School GCA/Keystone Exams.

The vote on the motion was 8 to 1.

For your review, a copy of the resolution is attached. If you have any questions, please contact us.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey F. Zackon, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

RECEIVED  
SEP 23 AM 9:19  
INDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
COMMISSION  
OF PENNSYLVANIA

**Resolution Opposing proposed High School GCA/Keystone Exams**  
**By the Board of School Directors of the Oley Valley School District**  
**September 16, 2009**

**WHEREAS, the Oley Valley School District is currently preparing all students for success in post high school education or the workplace; and**

**WHEREAS, Oley Valley School District students who have passed the local proficiency evaluations and have historically experienced placement and success in post high school could be denied the opportunity to attend even after offers of admission have been granted; and**

**WHEREAS, in the Oley Valley School District, students who have not scored proficient on the PASA have shown understanding of state standards through a variety of other assessments including portfolios, oral presentations, hands-on demonstrations, and other methods; and**

**WHEREAS, the PSSAs and local assessments already provide districts with information about students in need of remediation, and another layer of testing will only confirm what is already known; and**

**WHEREAS, the State, without regulatory change, can extend technical and financial assistance to districts already known to be struggling; and**

**WHEREAS, verification of the validity of these alternative assessments would be required every six years and would be costly to the school district and administration in both time and money, giving districts no choice but to “voluntarily” use the GCA/Keystone Exams rather than incur the financial burden associated with the validation process; and**

**WHEREAS, the monies required by the school districts for verification of alternative assessments would require expenditures that would be better spent in the classrooms, and**

**WHEREAS, the criteria for local assessments are undefined and may discourage assessments that would be beneficial for diverse learners; and**

**WHEREAS, the addition of the GCA/Keystone Exams would reduce the number of instructional days and impose an unreasonable load of stakes testing on students who are already facing a burden of stressful standardized tests; and**

**WHEREAS, the introduction of the GCA/Keystone Exams amounts to a state controlled curriculum that reduces the Oley Valley School District's ability to provide a curriculum based on community needs and desires for education that focuses on developing in students a passion for learning, personal integrity, the pursuit of excellence and social responsibility; and**

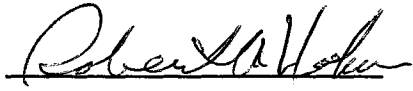
**WHEREAS , the GCA/Keystone Exams will not measure 21<sup>st</sup> century skills employers are seeking and will take away from instructional time that should be used for developing skill sets in the areas of leadership, collaboration, creativity and technology; and**

**WHEREAS, the GCA/Keystone Exams will have continued economic impact on school districts operating under ACT1 fiscal constraints and on taxpayers across the Commonwealth, and these required expenditures have no proof of cost effectiveness; and**

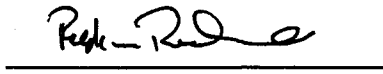
**WHEREAS, the State, having already identified best practices related to local proficiency assessments, can share these methods with all school districts without the need to add GCA/Keystone Examinations and related expenses;**

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOVED that the Board of School Directors of the Oley Valley School District opposes the State Board of Education proposals to enact the GCA/Keystone Exams and any other regulations or legislation that usurp the authority of local school districts to determine whether their students high school diplomas. This resolution will be shared with the State Board of Education, Governor, legislators, including local legislators and members of the State and House Education Committees, and the Independent Regulatory Review Commission, PSBA, and the news media.**

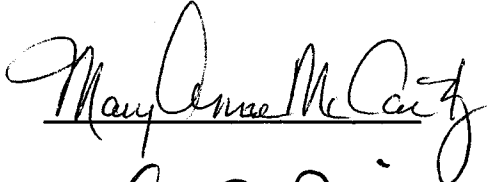
**The Oley Valley School Board:**



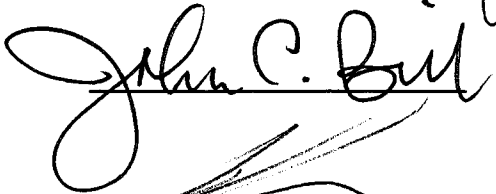
**Robert A. Heckman, President**



**Ralph C. Richard, Vice President**



**Mary Anne McCarthy**



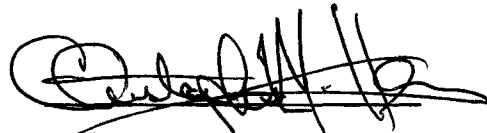
**John C. Bieber**



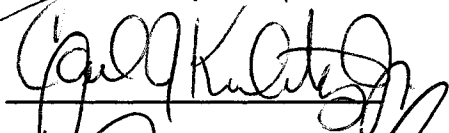
**Stephen S. Burns**



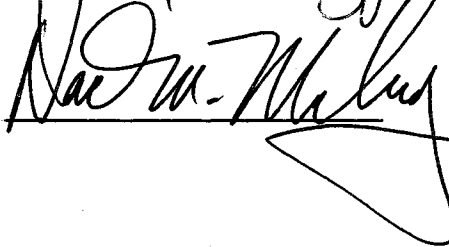
**Robert J. Cappa, M.D.**



**Christopher M. Hannum**



**Carl J. Kubitz, Jr.**



**David M. Maloney, Sr.**