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TITUSVILLE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

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KAREN E. JEZ
SUPERINTENDENT

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September 25, 2009

The Honorable Arthur Coccodrill, Chairman
Independent Regulatory Review Commission
333 Market Street, 14th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101

RECEIVED
2009 SEP 29 PM 1:55
INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

Dear IRRC Chairman Coccodrill:

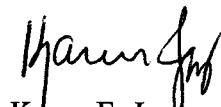
Enclosed is a copy of a resolution, opposing the proposed high school GCA/Keystone Exams, that was unanimously approved by the Titusville Area School District Board of School Directors at their regular school board meeting on September 21, 2009. This is the second resolution adopted by our board in this regard. Our board's first resolution in opposition to the proposed GCAs (IRRC2696, regulation 6-312) was mailed to Dr. Zahorchak, the IRRC, the State House and Senate Education Committees, and our local legislators in February 2008 and to James Buckheit in June 2008. In addition, a letter further expressing our opposition to the proposed Keystone Exams was sent to Mr. Buckheit and our local legislators in July 2009.

Our board of school directors, school district, and many school districts across Pennsylvania have voiced their unmitigated concern in regard to the proposed exams. Please carefully consider the valid points in this resolution which clearly outline the Keystone Exams as an undue burden on our students, citizens, and public education.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

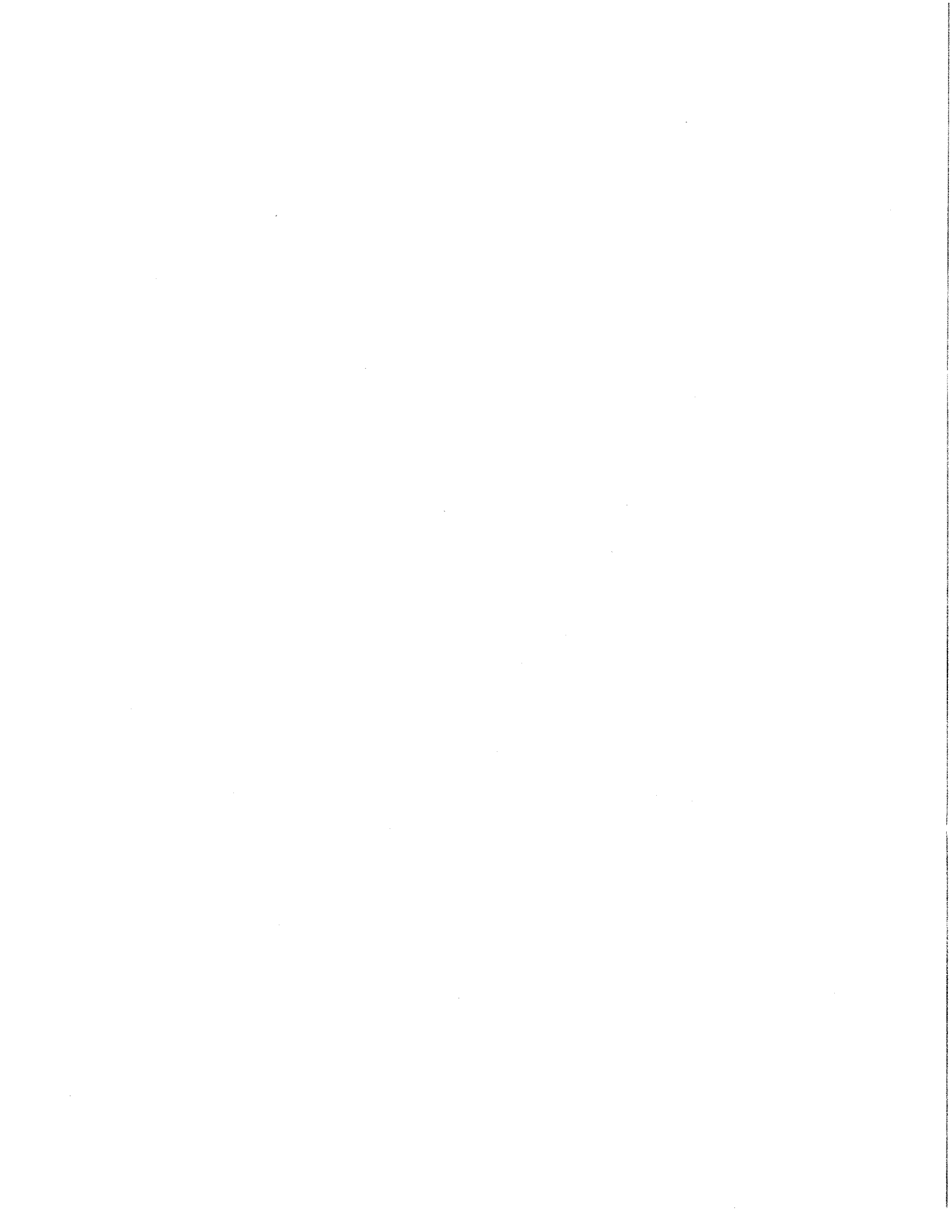
TITUSVILLE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT


Karen E. Jez
Superintendent

enclosure

The mission of the Titusville Area School District, a partnership with parents and community members, is to ensure that all students are challenged by quality academic and social experiences to achieve their fullest potential as life-long learners.

An Equal Rights and Opportunities School District



RESOLUTION OPPOSING PROPOSED
HIGH SCHOOL GCA/KEYSTONE EXAMS
by the Titusville Area School District
Board of School Directors

WHEREAS, the Titusville Area School District is currently preparing all students for success in college and the workplace; and

WHEREAS, students who have passed the local proficiency evaluations and have historically experienced placement and success in college could be denied the opportunity to attend even after offers of admission have been granted; and

WHEREAS, in the Titusville Area School District, students who have not scored proficient on the PSSA have shown understanding of state standards through a variety of other assessments including portfolios, oral presentations, hand-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 districts for verification of the validity of alternative assessments would require expenditures that would be better spent in 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 high-stakes testing on students who are already facing a burden of stressful standardized tests; and

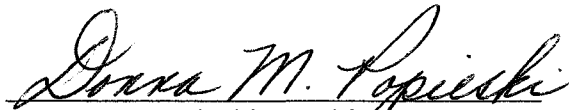
WHEREAS, the introduction of GCA/Keystone Exams amounts to a state controlled curriculum that reduces the District’s ability to provide a curriculum based on community needs and desires for education that focuses on developing in students a passion for learning, personal integrity, the pursuit of excellence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

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

WHEREAS, the GCA/Keystone Exams will have continuing economic impact on districts operating under Act 1 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 districts without the need to add GCA/Keystone Examinations and related expenses;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of School Directors of the Titusville Area School District opposes the State Board of Education proposals to enact GCA/Keystone Exams and any other regulations or legislation that usurp the authority of local school districts to determine whether their students have earned high school diplomas. This resolution will be shared with the State Board of Education, legislators, including local legislators and members of the Senate and House Education Committees, and the Independent Regulatory Review Commission.



Donna M. Popieski, President
Board of School Directors



Ronald G. Lytle, Secretary
Board of School Directors