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PENNSYLVANIA ASSOCIATION OF
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY
SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

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INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

FACSIMILE TRANSMITTAL SHEET

TO: *FRRC*

FROM: *Sheri Thompson For*

COMPANY

DATE: *10/13/09* *Joseph Acri*

FAX NUMBER

TOTAL NO. OF PAGES INCLUDING COVER

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SENDER'S REFERENCE NUMBER

RE: *Written Comments on Keystone Exams*

YOUR REFERENCE NUMBER

- URGENT
- FOR REVIEW
- PLEASE COMMENT
- PLEASE REPLY
- PLEASE RECYCLE

notes/Comments:

These have been emailed as well.

Thank you -

Sheri Thompson

FAX: (717) 732-4890

IRRC TESTIMONY – KEYSTONE EXAMINATIONS
State Board of Education
Regulation ID#6-312
Academic Standards and Assessment

As Assistant Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Association of Elementary and Secondary School Principals, I write in opposition to the State Board of Education Final Regulations ID#6-312 Academic Standards and Assessment. As the IRRC is fully aware, you have received numerous correspondences on this topic mostly against the implementation of Keystone Exams. This opposition has come from a number of sources: parents, administrators, teachers, school boards, other concerned citizens and even a majority of state legislators. There has been a multitude of data included for you to consider as well.

The question for approval or disapproval of Final Form Regulations #6-312 can be framed as "Will these exams benefit students in the coming years?" The answer from both sides of this debate is "we do not know." No one person or group can state with absolute certainty whether we will be better off with minor changes to the present system or moving to the Keystone Exams. What we do know is that the present system of assessment has produced results and in many cases dramatic results. For example, the Center on Education Policy reported that Pennsylvania students made progress in all categories from 2002 to 2008. In another report, the National Assessment of Educational Progress showed that Pennsylvania is one of only 10 states to make significant progress since 2003 in reading and math. No one denies that significant progress has been made. With a system of assessment that has only been in effect less than 10 years, teachers, principals, administrators, parents, school boards and communities now understand the importance and significance of PSSA tests. It took a generation and a two-term Administration to get to this point in time. Implementing a new program now with an Administration that has basically one year left will cause widespread confusion and may significantly set back the progress made to date.

With the large number of individuals and groups from so many diverse backgrounds that did not request these regulations or were part of their development all asking that these regulations not move forward, one must believe this statement: *If the Independent Regulatory Review Commission believes "we are a government for the people and by the people," it will Vote No in implementing the final form regulations.*

Joseph P. Acri
Assistant Executive Director
PAESSP