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From: Rich Hudic [rich@teampa.com]
Sent: Monday, October 19, 2009 1:46 PM
To: IRRC
Subject: Keystone Exams
Attachments: IRRC Letter re Standards & Accountability.pdf

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INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

For submission.

Thank you

--
Rich Hudic
President
Team PA Foundation
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TEAM Pennsylvania

F O U N D A T I O N

October 19, 2009

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

Dear Mr. Coccodrilli,

On October 22, 2009, the Independent Regulatory Review Commission will be considering an initiative that will increase accountability in our education system by implementing coursework accomplishment standards (Regulation 006-312).

On behalf of the private sector leaders who support Team Pennsylvania Foundation, I ask that you approve this worthwhile regulation for the following reasons.

For years, business owners have relayed horror stories of students who do not have basic reading, writing, math and letter composition skills to succeed in the workplace. A lack of these extremely vital skills costs Pennsylvania businesses an exorbitant amount of time, money and resources to remediate their new employees.

A recent survey of 400 business owners and senior managers conducted by Susquehanna Polling & Research determined the following:

- More than 80 percent believe the quality of the workforce in Pennsylvania has gotten worse or stayed about the same in recent years while 60 percent feel the quality of the workforce will stay the same or get worse.
- A whopping 90 percent are somewhat confident or not confident at all that high school students are graduating with the necessary skills to meet the business community's demand for skilled and trained workers.
- More than 80 percent believe that statewide education standards and course-by-course final exams would have an impact on improving the quality of the workforce in Pennsylvania.

Absent a strong, well-grounded and educated workforce, we stand to lose ground to competing states and nations. The fact remains that without a quality education, Pennsylvanians are unqualified for 70 percent of today's jobs, according to federal data.

Something must be done to ensure students are competent and have the proper basic skills in reading, math and writing to enter the workforce or continue their academic pursuits beyond high school.

Business leaders want to invest in job retention and expansion opportunities by developing existing and new markets; not spend precious time and resources teaching a new employee how to read a ruler, construct a cover letter, or calculate a simple formula – the very basics we should expect any graduate to possess when they hold a Pennsylvania diploma.

Sincerely,



Rich Hudic
President & CEO

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