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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

July 15, 2009

EDUCATION, REPUBLICAN CHAIRMAN
CAPITOL PRESERVATION, CHAIRMAN
GAMING OVERSIGHT

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Government Relations

Joseph Torsella, Chairman
State Board of Education
Pennsylvania Department of Education
First Floor, Harristown 2
333 Market Street
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PA. STATE BOARD
OF EDUCATION

Dear Joe:

I have reviewed your proposed Keystone Exams, providing Pennsylvania high schools with a new standard of graduation requirements.

While I appreciate your hard work and dedication to improving quality education, I believe your Keystone Exams proposal will create more bureaucracy and result in an unfunded mandate for local schools.

While the two of us have had informal conversations about the merits of GCAs and Keystone initiatives, I am unaware of any formal meetings whereby my opinions on this issue were solicited.

In the overall picture of improving educational standards and in reducing the need for remedial courses, the proposal you and your committee have set before us will not achieve these desired results.

In addition, many in the education community have opposed the concept of the GCAs and the Keystone initiatives. I want the proposed Keystone Exams to be vetted among school administrators and the local school boards before making an informed decision on your proposal.

Joseph Torsella, Chairman
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Therefore, for these and other reasons, I stand opposed to the Keystone Exams proposal. Further discussions with members of the education community are necessary before these new and onerous proposals are forced upon our 501 school districts.

Sincerely,



PAUL I. CLYMER, Republican Chairman
House Education Committee

PIC/erk

cc: The Honorable Gerald Zahorchak
Secretary of the Department of Education
The Honorable Stanley Saylor
House Republican Policy Committee Chairman
House Republican Members
Patricia White, Executive Director
House Education Committee (R)
Dr. Robert Kish, Superintendent
Pennridge School District
Dr. Francis Barnes, Superintendent
Palisades School District
Dr. Lisa Andrejko, Superintendent
Quakertown Community School District