


# Great Valley School District

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*Creating a new age  
of learning*

# 2696 1022

RITA S. JONES, Ed.D.  
District Superintendent

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**PA. STATE BOARD  
OF EDUCATION**

July 27, 2009

The Honorable Duane Milne  
18 E Lancaster Avenue  
Malvern, PA 19355

Dear Representative Milne:



I understand that representatives of the Department of Education have been circulating a "joint letter from Pennsylvania Superintendents on stronger high school graduation requirements." Many of my colleagues have signed it.

Appropriately, the joint letter acknowledges the improvements to the end of course testing proposal that were developed during the last year—particularly the last few weeks. It correctly recognizes that under the new proposal, as opposed to the proposal that was before you last year, students will have more options to earn a diploma, and students will be subject to less testing. As important as these advances are, I believe that the regulation can be improved with two simple amendments.

Under the proposal, student performance on the Keystone exams must account for at least one-third of the student's final grade in the course for which the exam is required. This is too much weight to put on the test. It means that everything else the student does during the course of the academic year can count at most for two-thirds of their grade. Most districts count final exams as less than 20% of a student's course grade.

Students scoring below basic on a Keystone exam would get no credit for what they do know. They would be assigned a zero. I think this is unfair, and again, places too much emphasis on the state test. We recommend recognizing the actual score of every student without the artificial cliff.

I urge you, as you review and comment on the regulation, to seek these two simple changes.

Sincerely,



Rita S. Jones, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

c: State Board of Education ✓  
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