2696

<u>RESOLUTION # 2009-1</u>

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS OF THE
NORTH HILLS SCHOOL DISTRICT
OPPOSING THE PROPOSED KEYSTONE EXAMS

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania Department of Education had approved a proposal to revise the current high school graduation requirements under the Chapter 4 regulations to require students to pass a series of standardized high-stakes Graduation Competency Assessments in order to get a diploma; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly of Pennsylvania placed a one-year moratorium on the State Board prohibiting them from implementing regulations to establish GCAs or proceeding any further with them without the sanction of the General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the State Board has ignored the one-year moratorium placed on them by the General Assembly under Act 61 of 2008 which prohibits the establishment of high school graduation requirements and issued Request for Proposal for the GCA tests in August 2008, which will now be known as the Keystone Exams. Further, the Department of Education has awarded contracts with Data Recognition Corp. to develop Keystone Exams in spite of the one-year legislatively imposed moratorium.

WHEREAS, the State Board, the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and the Pennsylvania School Boards Association have entered into a joint agreement that would replace the highly-controversial and highly-objectionable GCA proposal with an alternate proposal that is also highly controversial and highly objectionable, known as the Keystone Exams; and

WHEREAS, there is a broad requirement for local assessments to be aligned with the state academic standards and include performance-level expectations to be comparable to the PSSA or Keystone Exams; and

WHEREAS, the Keystone Exams' proposal permits schools to use a local assessment option; these local assessments must be validated in order to be used. The proposal states that "PDE will establish a Local Assessment Validation Committee to develop criteria for the validation process and criteria for the selection of approved validation entities …. The committee's criteria for the validation process and criteria for selection of validation entities will be submitted to the State Board of Education for approval or disapproval." The cost of validation is to be evenly divided between the District and the

State Board; and

WHEREAS, the costs associated with validation will be an additional burden to school districts and taxpayers across this state, and the proposal requires school districts to absorb many new costs related to revising curriculum, professional development, test preparation and administration, remediation and other costs; and

WHEREAS, the cost for the development and implementation of these exams approximates $210,000,000 over the next seven years, and, in light of the current economic situation in this Commonwealth and the nation, the Governor, the State Board, the Department of Education, and the Pennsylvania School Boards Association should not be adding additional expenses to district and taxpayer budgets, and, with the limitations of Act 1 on tax increases, school districts have limited ability to fund any potential new costs; and

WHEREAS, the State Board has already sent out the preliminary revisions to the current Chapter 4 regulations in regard to the Keystone Exams; these new regulations leave many unanswered questions and much ambiguity; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Directors of the North Hills School District opposes the joint proposal between the State Board, the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and the Pennsylvania School Boards Association to enact the Keystone Exams. With the additional validation costs to school districts and taxpayers, school districts will implement and use the Keystone Exams thereby making the Keystone Exams mandatory, as school districts may find that they have no alternative but to choose the Keystone Exams due to cost and complications related to the validation process; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors of the North Hills School District will hereby continue to support legislation to extend the moratorium as well as any legislation against any new test development or implementation and funding being used for this purpose; and

WHEREAS, this resolution will be shared with the State Board of Education, the Department of Education, the Pennsylvania School Boards Association, state legislators, including local legislators and members of the Senate and House Education Committees, and any others as this board directs; and

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of School Directors of the North Hills School District hereby directs the Superintendent and Board President to communicate this resolution to other school districts within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and to

members of our community, encouraging other school boards and individuals to take similar action on this issue.

ADOPTED this 15th day of June, 2009.

ATTEST: NORTH HILLS SCHOOL DISTRICT

Marilyn Schmitt   By: _Edward M. Wielgus_
Board Secretary   President

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North Hills School District

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MESSAGE URGENCY: _____NORMAL _____URGENT _____HAND DELIVER

FROM:

NAME: Lynne Phillips

DEPARTMENT: Board Secretary

TELEPHONE NO: (412) 318-1004

REMARKS: Re: Resolution Opposing Keystones

Please post. Thank you!

PRIDE   TRADITION   EXCE...