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From: raymond griffith [raygrif@verizon.net]
Sent: Friday, August 21, 2009 11:28 AM
To: IRRRC
Subject: Wilkinsburg Keystone Exams Resolution
Attachments: signed Wilkinsburg Keystone Exam Resolution.pdf

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Please accept the attached resolution as part of public comment on the Keystone Exams.
Thank you.

Raymond Griffith, Wilkinsburg School Director and PSBA Liaison.

RESOLUTION #2009-02

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS OF THE
WILKINSBURG SCHOOL DISTRICT
OPPOSING PROPOSED HIGH SCHOOL EXIT EXAMS
June 23, 2009**

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania Department of Education has 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, also known as the Keystone Exams, in order to receive a high school diploma; 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 Requests for Proposal for the GCA exams in August 2008. Further, the Department of Education has awarded contracts to develop GCA/Keystone Exams in spite of the one-year legislatively imposed moratorium.

WHEREAS, there already exists 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 PSSA and local assessments already provide districts with information about students in need of remediation; and

WHEREAS evidence exists that high school exit exams will increase the high school dropout rate without intellectual benefit for the students who pass them, and, therefore, the educational value of high school exit exams has not been demonstrated and is in serious doubt; and

WHEREAS, the local assessment options permitted by the Keystone Exams proposal must be validated in order to be used, and there is no guarantee that the cost of such validation will not be fully borne by local school districts, and the costs of such validation of local assessments and associated curriculum changes (in full or in part) constitute an unfunded state mandate beyond local control; 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, constitutes an especially burdensome expense.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Directors of the Wilkinsburg 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 Exam proposal.

ADOPTED this 23rd day of June, 2009.

ATTEST:

WILKINSBURG SCHOOL DISTRICT


Board Secretary

By: LaToya Washington
Board President