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November 4, 2013

The Honorable Silvan B. Lutkewitte, III Chairman Independent
Regulatory Review Commission
333 Market St., 14th floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101
Email: irrc@irrc.state.pa.us

Re: Final-Form Regulation #6-326 Academic Standards and Assessments

Dear Chairman Lutkewitte:

I am writing to express my strong support for final-form regulation #6-326 (Academic Standards and Assessments) that adopts the Pennsylvania Core Standards in English language arts and math. I urge IRRC to approve the regulation.

Many young people in Pennsylvania complete high school without the academic background necessary for success in college or careers. Adoption of these more rigorous and internationally benchmarked Pennsylvania Core Standards, along with aligned assessments that include Keystone Exams, will help to ensure our high school graduates will have the academic foundation required to pursue postsecondary education or to enter the workforce.

The regulation you are considering strikes a fair balance between accountability and support for struggling students. Supplemental instruction for students who do not demonstrate proficiency on the Keystone Exams, along with the opportunity to re-take the exams or modules of exams are provided for within the regulation. If a student is still unable to demonstrate proficiency on a Keystone Exam, he or she can move to a project-based assessment. Additionally, supports such as voluntary model curriculum aligned to the PA Core Standards, computer diagnostic tools and professional development are provided for teachers.

As a representative of professionals who directly assist adult learners, many of whom were left behind in elementary or high school, I understand the need for high standards and the student and teacher supports necessary for students to meet those standards. Again, I strongly support the final-form regulation and urge IRRC to approve it.

Thank you for considering my view on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Kim Rossman

President, Pennsylvania Association for Adult Continuing Education