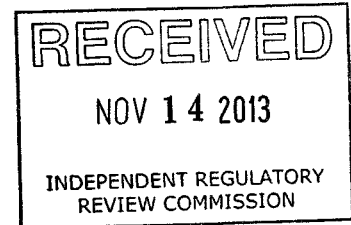


Cooper, Kathy

2976

From: Ida Yeager Sales <idayeagersales@zoominternet.net>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 12:51 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Keystone Graduation Exams



Dear Mr. Sumner:

The Keystone Graduation Exams details and criteria effectively :

Remove all local school district input into the educational process – where such input should remain

Become another unfunded mandate authorized and demanded by the combining of these exams with Common Core (which in itself changes the entire scope of education)

Transfer all authority from “we, the people” to a monolithic government entity.

We respectfully request that you reject the proposed Chapter 4 regulations.

I am the mother of a seven year old boy. After 50 some days of helping my FIRST grader with his homework, I now understand why the number of graduating students is down. These young students don't get a chance to grasp hold of anything before FIFTH grade curriculum is being forced/shoved into a FIRST graders mind/head. They are being assaulted with a laserium-laser-like show daily with words, grammar, numbers, Algebra, Geometry, etc. Algebra, Geometry, In FIRST grade? Why? They are completely bombarded. How can they possibly learn when nothing that is started is ever finished before the next fact comes along. I learned without schema (really? “ schema”?). They are not being taught, they are being suffocated ad nauseum with unnecessary “liberal arts”: “how do I feel about numbers, learning”?

I learned my addition 1+1, 1+2, 1+3...in order, memorized through nines 9+1, 9+2...he gets flash cards with, 4+5, 6+2, 0+3...There is no order to this, no rhyme or reason. Not all children are ADHD, but this might help them to be. I graduated, with Honors and a 4.0 average, in 1988 well prepared for the “real world” using the “old system”. What is being taught now, in my opinion, is only preparing our children for failure, reliance on the government or someone to take care of them, or the ability to play on the computer. I personally DO NOT think that BLOG is an appropriate FIRST grade spelling word. Nor do I believe that writing spelling words (as a weekly assignment no less) in snow, flour, mud, sand, shaving cream, clay, playdoh or in the air with a flashlight will enable mastery of the spelling of that word. MEMORIZATION. Memorization is a wonderful thing. Because of it I am able to add even if the power is out. How many Graduates today can say the same? I can even make change without a cash register to tell me what it is. Why? Because we memorized things. Everything does not have to be fun and creative. Numbers are what they are: numbers. There is no feeling in math, i.e. “How does this make you feel?” really who cares; 1+1 will always equal 2.

Thank you, but no more COMMON CORE. ***Our children are wonderful individuals; NONE of them are COMMON.***

My last complaint is about the Constitution; why ever would we quit teaching our children about The Constitution? It's the reason that we are all who and where we are at now.

If it is not being taught, does that mean our Judicial System is now not based on Constitutional Law? So what is to happen, are there going to not be anymore lawyers, policemen, judges?

When did "WE THE PEOPLE" vote on this?

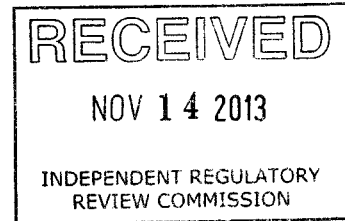
Our children deserve the best education system in the world: whether it is in public, private, home or charter schools, and the cooperation between Common Core and the Keystone Graduation Exams we feel is not providing that foundation in any way.

I respectfully thank you for this opportunity to be heard.

Rachel C Altares

Cooper, Kathy

From: Amy Wilen-Buckman <awbtvgal@comcast.net>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 12:20 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Public comment regarding the Keystone Exams



Dear Chairman Lutkewitte and members of the IRRC,

Thank you for the opportunity to present written comments regarding Regulation #6 – 326: Academic Standards and Assessment, which amends existing regulations to reflect Pennsylvania's Common Core Standards in English language arts; address test security concerns; and require students to demonstrate proficiency on the Keystone Exams in order to graduate from high school. Specifically, the following comments are in regards to the impact of implementing the Keystone Exams as proposed in the Chapter 4 regulations.

As a Pennsylvania voter, as a parent of three current and past Pennsylvania public-school students, and as a Pennsylvania public-school graduate myself (Lower Merion HS Class of 1982) who went on to receive two degrees from Northwestern University's prestigious Medill School of Journalism (BSJ/MSJ 1986), I would like to voice my opposition to proposals requiring the Keystone Exams for students' graduation, expanding the required number of Keystone Exams from three to five, and to using a single, high-stake test to measure individual student learning and achievement.

The exams are costly (\$300 million per year in the state) and redundant, especially in districts where PSSA's, DRP's, PSAT's, AP's and/or SAT's are already given. The time and money spent on these unnecessary tests would be better spent on teacher training, books, and on additional, enriching classroom learning.

Many schools estimate that anywhere from 10 to 20 percent of the school year is now spent preparing for and/or taking high-stake tests, time that would be much better spent in actual instruction especially when students are not enrolled in the course corresponding to the test (i.e., physics students taking the biology Keystone). As a result, more time and money is being spent on testing and many districts have had to reduce their arts, music, history, civics, physical education, sciences, and world language courses to make up the difference. In addition, some students who are advanced in subjects (such as my 7th

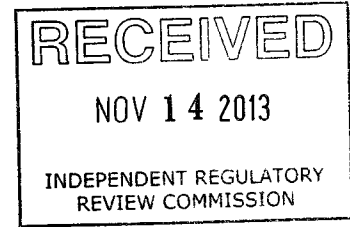
grader who's taking Algebra) have to take high-school graduation tests in middle school. That's just crazy.

Teaching our children how to learn should be a far more important priority than teaching them how to take tests. The additional burden of the expanded Keystone exams is a step in the WRONG direction.

Yours truly,
Amy Wilen Buckman
25 E. Princeton Rd.
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004-224
610-667-4361

Cooper, Kathy

From: Lynn Steerman <ls@alphabenefits.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 12:01 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Testing In Schools



Dear Mr. Sumner,

I have a child attending the Lower Merion School District, he is in 5th grade this year. We are very lucky to be in such a great district.

I have been keeping up with the news of keystone exams and the new requirements for graduation. It is appalling to me they would use these test scores to dictate who will or will not graduate.

I am writing with the hope that my voice as well as all others you are hearing from will make a difference.

Our children are being evaluated by using these standardized tests and it is not fair. Every child learns differently, I happen to have a child that is amazing in class, gets A's & B's on all homework and assessments weekly but can't get a proficient score on most of the DRP or PSSA tests. I know from talking with many teachers over the past 5 years, my child is not the only one. Standardized testing in general is being mis-used!! It is giving children anxiety about school and test taking and there is nothing positive about the experience for the students especially the ones that do not test well on these exams.

I hope my voice is heard! I also hope for all the kids in graduating classes they will reverse this new requirement and lastly I hope one day the state of PA will realize they need to modify all testing to help our children and not measure them by this type of performance.

Let the teachers teach and the kids experience life in the classroom learning!

Sincerely,
Lynn Steerman

*Lynn Steerman
Client Service Specialist
Brown and Brown-Alpha Benefits Division
450 S. Gravers Rd.
Suite 200
Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462
610-275-8989 ext 108
610-275-8886-FAX*

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Cooper, Kathy

From: Anne O'Dell <odellsbar@verizon.net>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 2:46 PM
To: David Sumner
Cc: mfolmer@pasen.gov; BONEill@pahousegop.com; Tstephen@pahousegop.com; sgreenleaf@pasen.gov
Subject: Keystone Exams IRRC

Independent Regulatory Review Commission
David Sumner, Executive Director
Sent via E-mail



November 14, 2013

Dear Mr. Sumner and IRRC members:

We are writing to respectfully request that you DO NOT approve the proposed regulation requiring every student in Pennsylvania to pass Keystone Exams in order to graduate from high school. As the parents of a 10th grade student in the North Penn School District, we have experienced firsthand the problems associated with the Keystone Exams:

1. The tests do not accurately indicate a student's knowledge or potential
2. The tests do not honor creativity, imagination or innovation
3. The tests fail to acknowledge that students have unique ways of thinking and learning
4. The tests unfairly and unjustly penalize special education students and English Language Learners
5. Too much time is spent in school preparing for the tests, instead of educating students
6. The high stakes and labels associated with the tests are destructive to students and teachers

It is well documented that high stakes tests, such as the Keystone Exams, do not improve schools, teachers or students. We do not want our tax dollars used to implement these tests, AND more importantly we do not want the state usurping the authority of local school districts to determine whether or not a child graduates from high school. The officials in Harrisburg need to stop listening to testing industry lobbyists and start listening to those of us directly involved in the education of our children: parents, teachers, and local school administrators. We are not programming machines. We are raising children who deserve to look to the future with hope, knowing that they have value and that we, as a society, celebrate each and every one of their unique, God-given gifts.

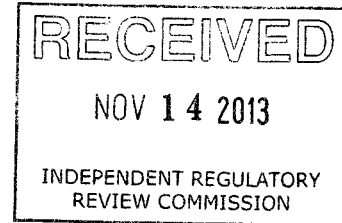
Sincerely,

Anne Babcock & Roger O'Dell
108 Oxford Lane

North Wales, PA 19454

Cooper, Kathy

From: Alex Schuh <a.schuh@verizon.net>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 1:06 PM
To: David Sumner
Cc: s.schuh@verizon.net; BCMS HSA
Subject: superintendents' letter on the keystones



Dear Mister Summer,

I read with interest the collective letter of the PA Superintendents on the removal of Keystone Exams from graduation requirements (dated Nov. 5 2013 to the IRRRC Director). I found the arguments to be, honestly, all over the place and fairly weak. I would have hoped that a group with that much collective education and experience could have formulated something more substantial. The arguments restated go something like this:

- 1) The Keystone Exams' implementation last year as a PSSA substitute were problematic, and high schoolers take a lot of exams already (NOTE: this was a one time event that doesn't even affect the graduation of that cohort. There are multiple times given to take these exams, unlike the PSSAs, and some students could be finished with the basic ones before they even get to high school);
- 2) Districts will have to spend money on supplemental instruction for students who don't pass the exams (NOTE: they already had to spend supplemental money under the PSSA system and No Child Left Behind, and doesn't it make sense that a district would want to spend money helping a student to learn something if they didn't get it the first time? What else should they spend money on?);
- 3) The alternative project-based assessments will be expensive (NOTE: there's no way to know how many students will actually need to do one of these projects, and the criteria haven't been established, so there's no way to really know whether this will be expensive or not at this point);
- 4) The use of Keystones for AYP (now SPP) has been unclear (NOTE: this is, as I'm sure is well known to the Superintendents, an issue with the approval process of accountability under No Child Left Behind by the US Department of Education. That process had an unfortunate timeline, but that's water under the bridge at this point as that situation has been resolved. Sounds mostly like griping to me, as opposed to the original issue of Keystones use in graduation);
- 5) The fallacy of failing public schools is countered by citing some performance statistics from high schools nationally (NOTE: Pennsylvania's academics, according to the National Assessment of Education Progress, the Nation's Report Card, have not kept pace with the growth of the rest of the country. The argument that the Superintendents are trying to make here is extremely vague and argued vociferously both ways by a slew of academics. Their argument makes no reference to Pennsylvania, but even worse, it seems to make no reference to the issue at hand, other than that they are trying to make the argument that schools are better, so there's no need for more accountability. AND, the Superintendents seem to not even understand how the Keystones work, saying they are a "single assessment on a single day" which completely misses how they are different from the PSSA test for 11th graders);
- 6) The Keystones amount to an unfunded mandate of an estimated additional 300 million dollars (no citation given) which the Superintendents believe would be more productively spent on teacher professional development and classroom instruction. Money spent on test preparation prevents districts from providing their students a well rounded education. Keystones might increase the dropout rate of poor students and minorities. (NOTE: the problem cited here is that these tests will cost more money, which was already mentioned in 2 previous argument points. There is no mention of where the 300 million dollar figure came from, or what it might include. A non-sequitur argument is included that the Keystone graduation requirement might also increase school dropout rates- the one actual legitimate argument of the whole letter. There is no support provided for that argument, however.)

I have to conclude from this collection of rather poor arguments, 3 of 6 of which had to do with the financial burden than the value of the new policy, 2 which had to do with implementation problems in the past, and 1 which had to do with a desire for less accountability for school districts, that the Superintendents don't really have a legitimate argument against the use of the Keystones for graduation. In fact, they don't even seem to understand how the Keystone exams work, and how they are different from the PSSAs. For the record, I don't believe that their use in graduation will be harmful. However, I do support a careful study of their implementation to ensure that they are not disproportionately causing members of some groups to leave high school in greater numbers than they are under the current system.

Sincerely,
Alex Schuh

Alex Schuh, Ph.D.
Director
FRONTIER 21 Education Solutions
www.frontier21.net

Cooper, Kathy

From: Patricia Kreiser <trish.kreiser@me.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 3:30 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Testing and our schools



Dear Mr. Sumner,

I thank you for your service to our state and our education system. As you consider the ramifications of more testing for Pennsylvania schools, I would ask you to reflect upon the intended goal of assessments. I believe the intent was to protect children from inadequate education systems. Is the current assessment process a realistic and fair way to evaluate the performance of a school? Have all factors been taken into account? There have been unintended consequences to current testing policy.

As a parent of two children, 10 and 13, in the Lower Merion School District, I would like to share that PSSA testing has impacted my children and our school negatively. At the elementary level, kids and faculty have felt the brunt of the PSSA policy of needing to show improvement, despite already high proficiency scores. Teachers and administrators, who are more than competent, get stressed out and freaked out, taking too much "prep" time to do what should be a simple assessment. Different aspects of the elementary experience which should first and foremost create a love for learning and growth are pushed aside in favor of prep work and practice testing for the looming evaluation. I have been told it's because the stakes are high. Even though our school does great, all schools need to show improvement, no matter what their score. That is ridiculous.

I personally have no problem with PSSAs as an assessment for all schools. All children deserve the best education possible, and those schools who are performing badly need to be turned around. However, is the current language of the Act fair? No. Mandating improved scores at all levels, high and low, makes no sense. Why do schools that are doing great have to show continued improvement? 100% proficiency is unrealistic. 100% of students do not possess the ability to score proficient. What about those kids who simply don't test well? Are the percentage of IEP students accounted for? For example, if a school shows 85% proficiency, but has a learning disabled population of 5%, that is not a fair assessment. Is this how we reward schools for affording integrated education for those who are mentally and physically challenged?

I believe a remedy for the unfairness of required improvement, within the parameters of an accountability testing program, is to pick a reasonable benchmark. If schools fall below said benchmark, they must show improvement. Students who present with an IEP should not be expected to test proficient in either PSSAs or Keystone exams.

As far as Keystone exams are concerned, it is my understanding that there is a set time for these tests which may or may not concur with when the child takes the subject. Why can't the exams be administered year end at year end at the completion of the course when things are fresh? I know I wouldn't want someone testing me on something I learned last year, or two years ago!

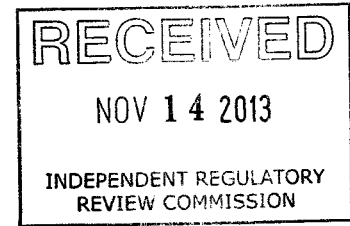
Again, I have no problem with accountability, as long as logic, reason, and common sense are part of the equation. The original intent of No Child Left Behind was to highlight failing school systems, and fix them, not to punish and intimidate those schools that are serving their children well.

Sincerely,

Patricia Kreiser
Ardmore, PA

Cooper, Kathy

From: Whitey <whitey.coyne@verizon.net>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 3:59 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Common Core hidden agenda



Mr. Sumner.

The following discussion is in reference to IRRC # 2976 and is intended to make the case that the federal government and its Common Core should be kept OUT of the Pennsylvania education system at all costs.

There has been a relentless power and control grab by the Federal government in recent years at the expense of personal, local and state authority, from dictating the kind of light bulbs we use to the unconstitutional and catastrophically expensive health care takeover atrocity. One of the most insidious of these is the Common Core educational standards program that the Federal government has already bribed a number of states to initiate.

This is no more nor less than the dumbing-down of America's K-12 educational system to a lowest common denominator to satisfy the progressive thirst for control! A combination of ignorance and arrogance is a very dangerous thing! The plan starts out with seemingly innocuous "standards" to be achieved at each grade level, which must be tested and met. But there are already indications that curricula will eventually be dictated and this material will be politicized. A recent copy of "The Science Teacher" journal suggests that students in the 5th grade should begin to "understand" the "expectations" of global climate change! This should most accurately be termed propaganda and indoctrination. All science through grade 12 should be concerned only with the established basics such as biology, physics, chemistry and the associated mathematics.

In addition, the federal initiative seeks to create a data base for all K-12 students with an eye toward directing the "careers" of these students in true "progressive" fashion. "1984" arrives, just 30 years later than expected by Orwell !

Finally, there is no consideration about how much this initiative will cost the taxpayers of Pennsylvania. Let us have no more unfunded mandates!

There is no constitutional justification for the federal government to be involved in what has been and should be a local and state responsibility. I strongly urge you work to eliminate CCS from Pennsylvania schools by supporting HB 1551 (Rep. Tallman) and HB 1552 (Rep. Bloom) to repeal Common Core standards in state schools and exempt private, parochial and home schools from them. The unconstrained growth and control of the Federal government must be checked!

Thank you for your attention.

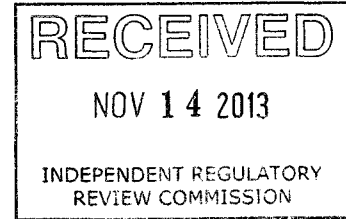
George Coyne

31 Barren Road

Newtown Square, PA 19073

Cooper, Kathy

From: tsmac3@verizon.net
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 12:00 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Keystone Graduation Exams



Executive Director, David Sumner

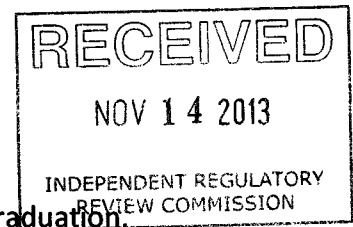
I am against the new testing for students to take in order to graduate. It is unfunded and I do not wish to pay extra school taxes. I am also in favor of school tax reform and i think this new exam will burden an already arcaic system of taxation on the home owner.

Regards,

Scott McHenry

Cooper, Kathy

From: Rachel Nichols <rachelenichols@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 12:04 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: against Keystones



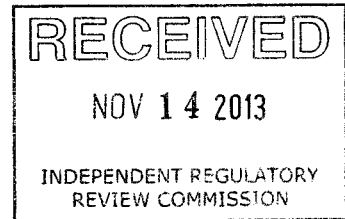
As a teacher and a parent, I oppose the requirement of Keystone exams for graduation.

Sincerely,

Rachel Nichols

Cooper, Kathy

From: Emily M. Wolfson <cpitalk@comcast.net>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 12:05 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: opposing the proposed new keystone regulation



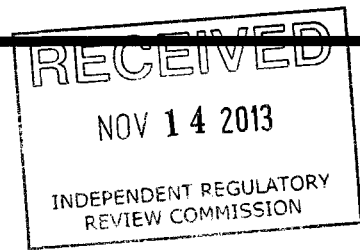
I have 2 children in the Lower Merion public school system, I am highly opposed to the new keystone proposal. I do not want to have to take my kids out of public school b/c of this, keystones are already a problem in many people's opinions in our schools. Parents I know are very unhappy about this new proposal.

thank you for your time,
Emily W.

Emily M. Wolfson
Conversation Pieces, Inc.
O: 610-668-3850
F: 610-668-3851
C: 610-246-6146
www.Unforgettaballs.com

Cooper, Kathy

From: Lutz family <lutzer@comcast.net>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 12:01 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Opposed to Keystone exams requirements



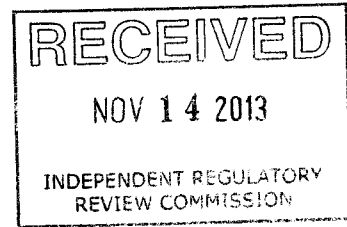
I am writing to let you know that I am opposed to the increased use of the Keystone Exams as currently proposed. While I agree we need to consistently and urgently hold schools and students and teacher accountable for improving education, I do not elusive universal end of high school based testing is the appropriate approach.

Sincerely

Robert Lutz
Bryn Mawr, PA

Cooper, Kathy

From: Mike McCutchan <mimccutch@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 12:10 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: I oppose the Keystone exam requirement



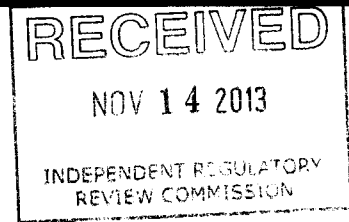
Director Sumner:

As a parent with three children in Pennsylvania schools, I oppose requiring the Keystone exams for graduation. They are a waste of time, and resources better spent on relevant education, not yet more testing.

Thank you,
Mike McCutchan

Cooper, Kathy

From: Samuel Wojnilower <samngaby@msn.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 12:29 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Keystone Exams



I am a parent of 3 children in Lower Merion School District. This email is to express my opposition to the addition of Keystone Exams as yet another "high stakes" testing requirement for PA students. As a parent, I find it is disheartening that externally imposed testing pressures seem to grow ever-greater, and are met at the expense of other valuable programming for my children.

Sincerely yours,
Sam Wojnilower

Cooper, Kathy

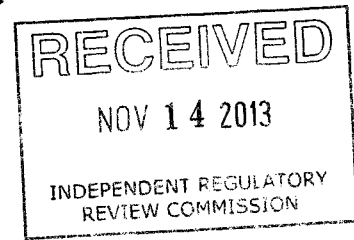
From: elizabeth masoudnia <emasoudnia@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 12:36 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: keystone exams



It is important that Keystone Exams not be required for graduation.
Thank you for listening.
Elizabeth Masoudnia

Cooper, Kathy

From: Barri Beckman <BBeckman@weichertrealtors.net>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 12:30 PM
To: David Sumner
Cc: 'Michael Baurer'
Subject: Keystone Exams



Dear Mr. Sumner,

I am writing as a parent of a 10th grade student at Abington Senior High School. I am writing to loudly protest the Keystone Exams. The roll out & implementation of the Keystone Exams has been a complete failure - and well documented as such. Neither the administration, nor the teachers have any clue as to how to prepare their students to score Proficient in these exams.

There is so much frustration being felt by the students & teachers, and needless pressure - in forcing these Keystones on the students as a graduation requirement. My daughter has a 504 service agreement with the school district due to her deficiencies in focus, retention and learning large chunks of material. She does not test well. And yet, she is now in a remedial Applied Bio Chem class struggling to learn an entire year's worth of Bio in a condensed 4 month period, as she has to retake the Bio Keystone in January. **THIS MAKES NO SENSE!!!** Here is a student with a 504 in place, **BECAUSE** she cannot handle large chunks of information in a fast paced setting - and yet she is expected to score Proficient the 2nd time around?? This will never happen. Her first marking period grade in Applied Bio Chem is a 72%. She has failed every quiz and test and is only receiving a C because she has earned 100% points on her labwork, classwork, homework and citizenship. Oh, and by the way, her grade in 9th grade Bio? It was a B. Is this not enough to prove she was proficient in Bio?

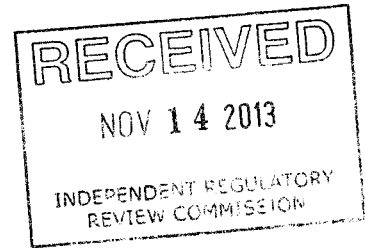
THESE KEYSTONES ARE SETTING THE STUDENTS UP TO FAIL. IT'S THAT SIMPLE. MY DAUGHTER ALREADY TAKES A TREMENDOUS HIT ON HER SELF-CONFIDENCE BECAUSE OF HER STRUGGLES WITH LEARNING. REQUIRING HER TO TAKE AND RE-TAKE THE KEYSTONES MULTIPLE TIMES IS A TRAVESTY. PLEASE, PLEASE, take these Keystones off the table.

Thank you very much for your consideration,

Barri Beckman Baurer
Manager/Associate Broker
Weichert, Realtors
93 Old York Road
Jenkintown, PA 19046
215-885-8100 Office
973-630-2624 Direct Fax

Cooper, Kathy

From: Williams, Charlene <Charlene.Williams@dsm.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 12:36 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Keystone Exams as a requirement for graduation



Dear Mr. Sumner,

I believe that the Keystone Exams are an unnecessary requirement. I don't understand why grade point averages and semester hours are not the only requirements for graduation. The school districts spend entirely too much time on testing and testing preparation. All of that time is lost instruction time. It would be more beneficial if that time was spent on subject matter. The Keystone Exams and PSSA are only used as metrics for government funding. They are not teaching my child anything other than how to take a test. It is another example of bureaucratic waste. The time and money that we are spending on satisfying the No Child Left Behind legislation should be allocated to updating the infrastructure of our schools and putting the arts and music back in all schools. If we were spending those millions of dollars on WIFI hot spots at every school, laptops for every child, and teacher education, our children would be on the way to getting the educations they deserve.

Thank you for your time,

Charlene White Williams
Concerned Parent
Lower Merion School District

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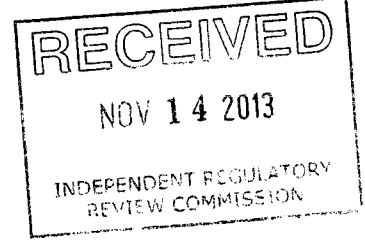
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Cooper, Kathy

From: Craig Needleman <craig@shootersinc.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 12:25 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Keystone Exams



Mr. Sumner,

I feel like my children are not learning as much as they could in school because so much time is wasted on teaching to the test or practicing for the test. They are not learning how to think, but to answer questions that may be on a test. The Keystone Exams are a bad idea that will cost the state millions and result in no benefit to the children or the teachers.

With 55 of the 62 superintendants in our region, Lower Merion School District, against these tests, that's got to tell you something is wrong!

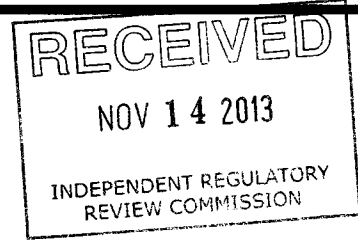
Craig Needleman

--



Cooper, Kathy

From: Jeffrey Dobkin <jeffdobkin@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 12:35 PM
To: David Sumner
Cc: Patte Dobkin
Subject: against Keystone exams



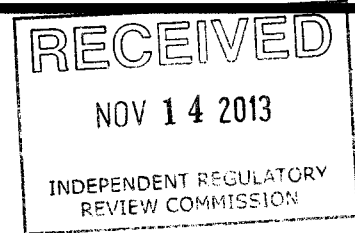
We are against the proposed Keystone exams. Please do NOT pass this.

Thank you,

Jeffrey and Patricia Dobkin

Cooper, Kathy

From: b kase <bhkase@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 12:38 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: keystone exams



I am the mother of a high school student. I am very much against the Keystone Exams as they have been designed:

- 1 Some exams are taken years after the student took the subject in school.
- 2 The exams force the schools to teach to the test, taking valuable time away from academic instruction.
- 3 The exams cost the districts money which could be better spent in other important areas.
- 4 The fact that these exams need to be passed for high school graduation puts unneeded pressure on students, and probably disproportionately negatively affects students in less affluent districts.
- 5 Students do not need more standardized testing to add to PSATs, SATs, AP exams, etc.

These exams are poorly-conceived. Pennsylvania owes its students better.

Barbara Kase

RECEIVED

NOV 14 2013

INDEPENDENT STATE ARCHIVE
COMMISSION

Cooper, Kathy

From: kristincvs@gmail.com on behalf of Kristin Smith Cahn von Seelen
<kmsmith@suhelia.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 12:40 PM
To: David Sumner
Cc: dleach@pasenate.com; repbriggs@pahouse.net; repmaryjodaley@pahouse.net;
mfolmer@pasen.gov; BONEill@pahousegop.com; repdelissio@pahouse.net
Subject: VOTE NO on Chapter 4 Regulations

My name is Kristin Smith Cahn von Seelen. I live in Bryn Mawr, Lower Merion Township, PA. I am writing to say I strongly oppose the Keystone Exams being tied to a student's high school graduation. Although my own children are thriving young students, they report that the amount of time already devoted to standardized test preparation is detrimental to the quality and substance of their education, in that it results in repetitious, inflexible, and uninspired lesson plans.

Further, there are clearly more precise, productive, and insightful means of assessing students' aptitudes and interests earlier in their academic careers that would set them on an appropriate scholarly or vocational track. Would it not be better, for instance, to help certain students succeed in the skilled trades, rather than set them up for failure in a one-size-fits-all 'last stand' in their senior year? The Keystone Exams strike me as an attempt to apply a publicity-oriented band-aid to a much deeper wound.

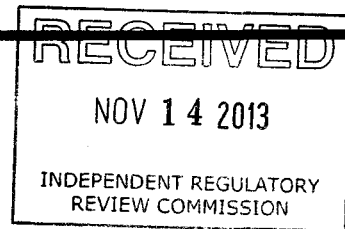
I am asking you to REJECT the proposed Chapter 4 regulations. I urge you to VOTE NO on November 21st.

Respectfully,

Kristin Smith Cahn von Seelen

Cooper, Kathy

From: Susan Daley <daleygibson@comcast.net>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 12:00 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Keystone Exam

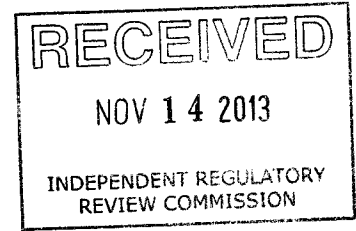


IRRC Executive Director David Sumner,
I am writing to express my opposition to the proposal to have Keystone exams as a requirement for graduation. I believe it will detract from meaningful instruction for my children.

Thank you,
Susan Daley Gibson
Parent, Lower Merion School District

Cooper, Kathy

From: Jill Kallen <jkallen569@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 12:48 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Keystone Exams



Dear Mr. Sumner:

We are parents of students in the Lower Merion School District and are opposed to the Keystone Exams being used as a graduation requirement.

Thank you.

The Kallens

Cooper, Kathy

From: Nicholas,Diana <dsn35@drexel.edu>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 10:50 AM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Keystone exams changes Against!
Attachments: IRRC+Superintendent+Keystone+Letter_11_04_13+(2).pdf

TO: IRRC Executive Director David Sumner

Dear Dr. Sumner,

As a lower Merion Parent, I am against the proposed Keystone Exams changes please see LMSD Superintendent Dr. McGinley's letter attached for the reasons.

Thanks

D. S. Nicholas, RA, AIA, NCARB

Assistant Teaching Professor,

Director-Sustainability in The Built Environment Minor

Department of Architecture + Interiors

Antoinette Westphal College of Media Arts and Design,

Drexel University

URBN Center: 3501 Market Street, Suite 410

Philadelphia, PA 19104

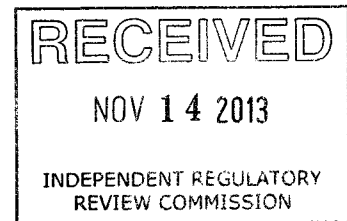
Phone: 267.738.3096

Email: dsn35@drexel.edu

www.switchedondesign.com

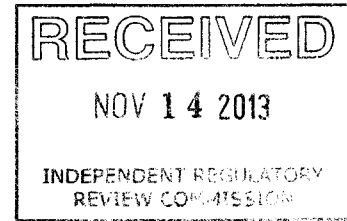
twitter: mouthoflowers **skype:** diana-nicholas

Blogs: <http://reactivespacestudio.blogspot.com/>; <http://studiordsn.blogspot.com/>



Cooper, Kathy

From: Caryn Karmatz Rudy <carynkr@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 11:31 AM
To: David Sumner
Subject: NO on Chapter 4 regulations



Dear Mr. Sumner,

As a mother of two daughters in the public school system here in Lower Merion, PA I would like to add my voice to the many who oppose the proposed Chapter 4 regulations. I am entirely against using the Keystone Exams as graduation requirements and don't think they should be linked to Common Core standards . Our taxpaying dollars should not be used to further the testing frenzy that is overtaking this nation. Please trust our teachers to educate our children--I want attention paid to critical thinking, and fostering a love of learning, not to rote memorization of subject matter.

Please vote against these changes.

Thank you,

A Concerned Mother of Two and Taxpayer,
Caryn Karmatz Rudy

Cooper, Kathy

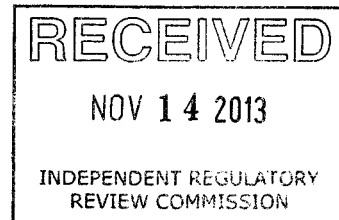
From: germdoctor@comcast.net
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 11:46 AM
To: David Sumner
Cc: dleach@pasenate.com; repbriggs@pahouse.net; repmaryjpdaley@pahouse.net; mfolmer@pasen.gov; BONEill@pahousegop.com

The Pennsylvania Department of Education and the Pennsylvania State Board of Education have proposed the Keystone Graduation Exams to the Pennsylvania Independent Regulatory Review Commission, which is set to vote on them on Nov. 21.

If approved, Pennsylvania would usher in new high-stakes tests in Algebra 1, biology and literature that students must pass in order to graduate, regardless of their grade point average.

I urge you to reject this proposal which does nothing to improve the education of our children and adds needlessly to our already high tax burden.

Elyse Seltzer, MD



Cooper, Kathy

From: Rachael Silverman <rachsilverman@aol.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 10:48 AM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Keystone exams

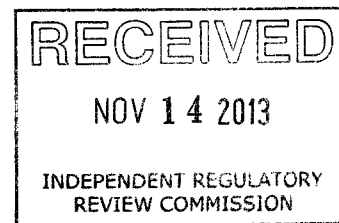
I am opposed to the Regulations and are urging the IRRC and General Assembly not to require Keystone exams as graduation requirements.

My two children are in the LOWER MERION SCHOOL DISTRICT.

Thank you.

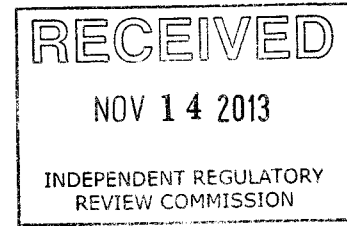
Rachael Silverman

Sent from my iPhone



Cooper, Kathy

From: Suzan <satill@comcast.net>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 11:34 AM
To: David Sumner
Cc: Suzan Atillasoy
Subject: Keystone exams



Dear Chairman and members of the IRRC,

I have read the eloquent letter from the Public School superintendents and support them.

I see no educational value in the new proposed keystone exam regulations and see it as fiscally irresponsible.

**Thank you,
Suzan Atillasoy**

Cooper, Kathy

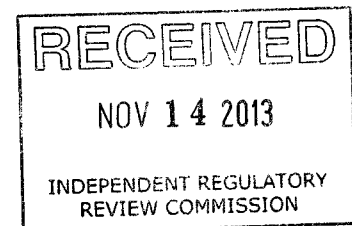
From: Viraj Parikh <virajash@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 11:46 AM
To: David Sumner
Cc: dleach@pasenate.com; repbriggs@pahouse.net; repmaryjodaley@pahouse.net; mfolmer@pasen.gov; BONEill@pahousegop.com; repdelissio@pahouse.net
Subject: VOTE NO on Chapter 4 Regulations

Dear Mr. Sumner,

My name is Viraj Parikh. I live in Villanova, PA. I am writing to say that I adamantly oppose the Keystone Exams being tied to a student's high school graduation. These high stakes exams would literally determine whether or not my children graduate regardless of their performance and achievements in class. 55 of the 62 Superintendents in our region (including our own Superintendent) are opposed to these Regulations. I do not want my tax dollars used to implement these tests, and more valuable classroom time devoted to test prep.

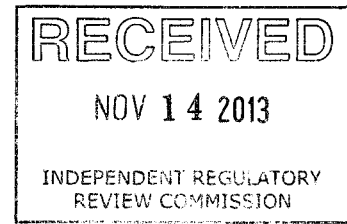
I am urging you to REJECT the proposed Chapter 4 regulations. I urge you to VOTE NO on November 21st.

Respectfully,
Viraj Parikh



Cooper, Kathy

From: Maria Miazga <miazgmd@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 11:08 AM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Keystone exams



Dear Sir,

We are residents of Montgomery County and Lower Merion Township. We are writing to state that we are strongly against the implementation of the Keystone examinations.

After reading the letter from the superintendents of Pennsylvania, we wholeheartedly agree with their conclusions; namely the financial expense to Pennsylvania residents and the undue hardship this places on our children.

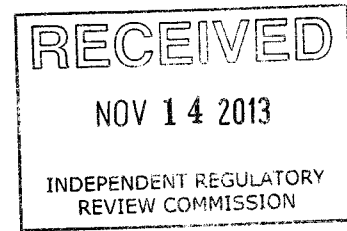
These children have grown up with teaching that is geared toward testing, not teaching that is geared toward students. The Keystone exams take this to another completely unnecessary level.

Sincerely

Andrew and Maria Miazga

Cooper, Kathy

From: Joe Siciliano <joesiciliano@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 11:42 AM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Keystone Exams



David,

I am writing to voice my concerns over the Keystone Exams – as referenced in the 11/5/13 memo to Sylan Lutkewitte from the Coalition of Pennsylvania’s Public School Superintendents and Intermediate Unit Executive Directors...

Better ways to measure and assess proficiency of our students must be developed – opposed to additional ‘high stakes’ testing as outlined in this memo. I’ve watched over the years as more and more time is devoted to testing – at the expense of the ‘human’ element of education. Our current elementary school administration, for instance, has managed to take some of the warmth and fun away from the children’s experience (as well as the teachers) with an overbearing focus on “the numbers”. I urge the Independent Regulatory Review Commission and the General Assembly to look at the big picture and not push the Keystone exams as currently proposed.

Thank you

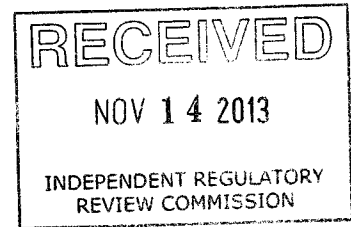
Joe Siciliano

Ardmore, PA

Parent of 6 children (3 graduates, 3 currently enrolled) within the Lower Merion School District (Montgomery County)

Cooper, Kathy

From: Toni Griffith <rhgriffith@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 11:41 AM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Impact and implementation of Keystone Exams



To Whom It May Concern,

We strongly agree with all of the reasons listed in Superintendents and Intermediate Unit Executive Directors letter to the IRRC and General Assembly for NOT MAKING the Keystone exams a requirement for high school graduation. I hope that the IRRC takes these reasons seriously before proceeding to pass such a requirement. It will cause more problems than it will help.

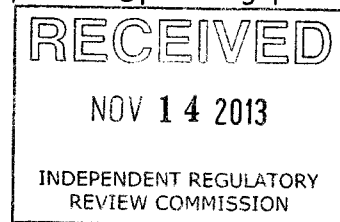
Thank you,

**Toni and Robert Griffith
Parents of Student in LMSD**

Sent from my iPad

Cooper, Kathy

From: Erica Bleznak <blezyogi@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 1:20 PM
To: David Sumner
Cc: dsumner@irrc.state.pa.us.net; repmaryjodaley@pahouse.net;
mfolmer@pasen.gov; BONEill@pahousegop.com; repdelissio@pahouse.net;
repmaryjodaley@pahouse.net; mfolmer@pasen.gov; BONEill@pahousegop.com;
repdelissio@pahouse.net
Subject: VOTE NO on Chapter 4 Regulations



BODY:

My name is Erica bleznak live in Villanova PA. I am writing to say I adamantly oppose the Keystone Exams being tied to a student's high school graduation. I am asking you to REJECT the proposed Chapter 4 regulations. I urge you to VOTE NO on November 21st.

Respectfully,

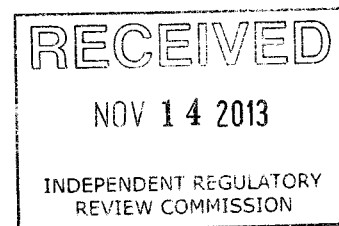
Erica bleznak

"Draw your chair up close to the edge of the precipice and I'll tell you a story"- F. Scott Fitzgerald

Erica Taxin Bleznak, CYT, CFR
Private Yoga & Foot Reflexology
610-324-3139

Cooper, Kathy

From: Christine Weatherwax <cmw114@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 1:29 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Keystone Exams



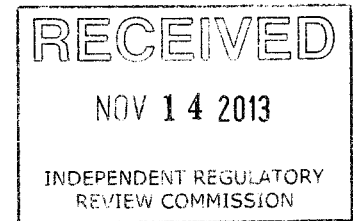
Dear Mr. Sumner,

I am writing regarding the proposed regulations pending before Pennsylvania's Independent Regulatory Review Commission (IRRC). I urge you to vote NOT to require Keystone exams as graduation requirements. The time spent on testing - from the elementary level up - is grossly out of proportion to the instructional time in the classroom. These tests do not fairly measure the progress and abilities of our students.

Sincerely,
Christine Weatherwax

Cooper, Kathy

From: Elizabeth Bennett <bennett.cachon@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 1:09 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Keystone Exams



Hello,

I am the parent of four children who attend or who have attended the Lower Merion School District since 2000. Happily, my oldest child has graduated and is currently a successful student at Juniata College in Huntingdon, PA. My three children who are still at Lower Merion are bright and engaging students; however, all three of them (for various reasons) have difficulty performing well on large assessments.

Our second oldest took the Keystone exams in biology and algebra last spring. He "passed" the tests by the skin of his teeth. It was a very stressful time for him and a hurdle we were all worried about him crossing. In the midst of my worry, I keep thinking how ridiculous this was: we are an educated and worldly family (my husband and I both hold advanced degrees) in an upper middle class neighborhood in one of the best performing school districts in the country and yet I was concerned that my children might not graduate high school due to a test. So the solution to our educational problems is to simply fail out or refuse to graduate a sizable portion of the students in Pennsylvania? I don't understand the reasoning here.

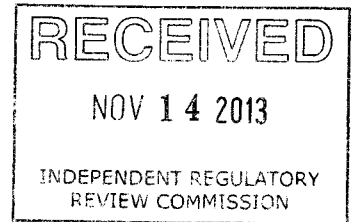
I have read the letter sent to you by a number of school superintendents in our area and I completely agree with every point in that letter. As a parent and as a concerned member of my community who has deep concerns for the education of all students, I urge you to *not* require the Keystones as a graduation requirement. The funds should instead be used to support learning in a positive way. Why don't you spend the money to help the School District of Philadelphia instead?!?! Now that is a very sad situation that needs the state's care and dollars.

Regards,

Elizabeth Bennett

Cooper, Kathy

From: Cecilia Jenkins-Michl <jenkinsmichl@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 1:21 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: re: Implementation of Keystone Graduation Exams



To Whom It May Concern:

I wanted to write and voice my opposition to Pennsylvania implementing the Keystone Graduation Exams. I have three children in public school and my oldest will graduate 2015. Our district is participating in the voluntary testing and I know first hand how stressful these tests are to student and teacher. My youngest son has an IEP and also ADHD and no testing accommodations will help him to score proficiently in these future tests. He is reading one year behind his grade level right now. However, I do believe that he has the right to graduate and not to have his diploma marked with an indication that he failed the tests but completed a "supplemental project". How is this any different than comparing a 4 year diploma to a GED exam? However, my son will have completed 4 years of high school and will still be seen as having the something "less than" his peers. This whole concept has the potential for discrimination.

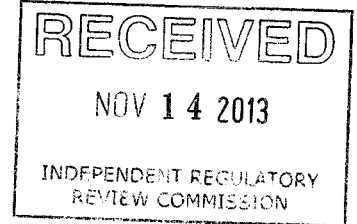
I also want to highlight that once again, a mandate is coming down from the state with NO funding to provide the necessary staff, time, and materials to ensure each student taking these exams is successful. Throughout my children's elementary school years I have witnessed the disintegration of classroom parties, celebration of students birthdays, outdoor activities, etc in order to comply with all the state and federal regulations. I believe that we are part of a community and childhood is precious and far too short. It is upsetting to see my children's teachers forgoing field trips, enrichment projects, and other things in order to get through all the curriculum at the "right" time.

I am asking the IRRC members to reject the proposed Chapter 4 regulations. As a mother, taxpayer, social worker and former graduate of Pennsylvania's public schools, I do not think they are needed and will cause undue hardship on students, teachers, and the districts.

Sincerely,
Cecilia Jenkins
Celia Jenkins

Cooper, Kathy

From: Moss <stern.moss@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 1:32 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Opposition to Chapter 4 Regulations



To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed Chapter 4 Regulations pending before Pennsylvania's Independent Regulatory Review Commission concerning the implementation of the Keystone Exams. I believe that the current and proposed testing requirements pose an undue burden on both school districts and students.

While it is important to ensure that all of our students receive a quality education, testing should be kept to a minimum so students will be able to spend the maximum possible amount of time actually learning instead of being tested. The current testing requirements, combined with the difficult financial straits of public education institutions in Pennsylvania, have resulted in tragic cuts to arts, music, history, civics, physical education, sciences, and world language courses.

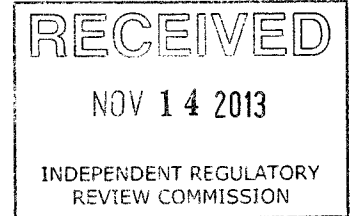
Our schools are struggling hard enough to provide a quality education in the current economic climate. Do not impose an additional burden on our schools by forcing them to impose additional testing on their students.

Respectfully yours,

Walter Moss Stern
114 Chestnut Avenue
Narberth, PA 19072

Cooper, Kathy

From: Dawn Morningstar <dawnmorningstar4@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 1:38 PM
To: dleach@pasenate.com; repbriggs@pahouse.net; repmaryjodaley@pahouse.net; mfolmer@pasen.gov; BONEill@pahousegop.com; repdelissio@pahouse.net; David Sumner
Subject: VOTE NO on Chapter 4 Regulations



My name is Dawn Morningstar. I live in Bryn Mawr, PA. I

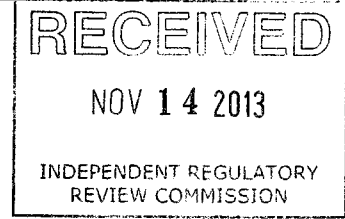
am writing to say I **adamantly oppose** the Keystone Exams being tied to a student's high school graduation. I am asking you to **REJECT** the proposed Chapter 4 regulations. I urge you to **VOTE NO** on November 21st.

Respectfully,

Dawn Morningstar
30 S Warner Ave,
Bryn Mawr, PA 19010

Cooper, Kathy

From: clutterbuddies@comcast.net
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 1:48 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: keystone

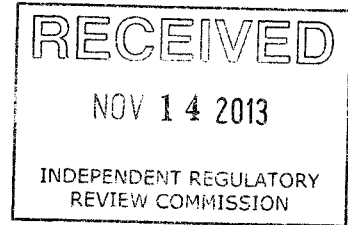


I feel it is completely unnecessary to enforce the keystone exam at all. Teachers should be concentrating on teaching and not teaching to get high scores on the keystone to make their schools look better than others.

Think about whats right ?

Cooper, Kathy

From: David Munroe <dmunroe@paradigmtax.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 1:57 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Keystone Exams



Mr. Sumner,

In reading about the implementation of the Keystone Exams as a graduation requirement, one thought comes to mind...ENOUGH ALREADY!!! My 8th grade son is currently doing outstanding work at his middle school and is currently an honor student securing As and Bs for his work. This is not accomplished without considerable work and effort on his part and current weekly test preparation is already a majority of his workload. The added stress that these tests will eventually cause and the additional waste in taxpayer dollars is unacceptable. More evidence of intrusive government run amok.

Everyone understands the plight of the public school system in this country but because some are failing, please don't punish those that are actually doing the work. My son will feel the misdirected pain of having to take additional testing when, currently, test-preparation appears to be all he is doing. His studies keep him from other physical activities that his mother and I wish could be squeezed into his current schedule but after he arrives home from school, his face is pushed back into another book. It's no wonder that there's a childhood obesity problem facing our country and perhaps those Keystone Exam dollars (\$300 million by estimates) could be better spent in that area.

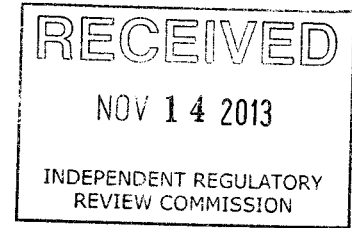
They are bright, brilliant kids already dealing with considerable stress as evidenced by our own son's need for counseling. Stop bringing the hammer down on them and us, the tax-payer. And don't punish our kids for those that aren't living up to expectations. Our public school system is one of the best in the country. These tests will do nothing to better our kids' situation.

Sincerely,

David Munroe

Cooper, Kathy

From: Andrew Bell <abell@intelliscaninc.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 1:46 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Opposition to Keystone Exams



Good day.

I am writing to express my opposition to the use of the new Keystone Exams as a graduation requirement.

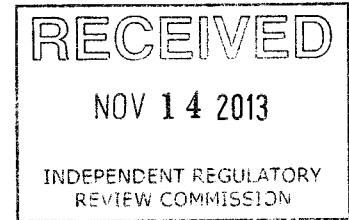
I am a resident of Chester County, PA and have two daughters in the West Chester Area School District, grades 6 and 9.

Thank you.

Andrew Bell
1503 E Woodbank Way
West Chester, PA 19380

Cooper, Kathy

From: Jonathan Seltzer <jseltzer@a-ci.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 1:54 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Parent Comment on Keystone Exams



To the IRRC:

I am a resident of Lower Merion whose children attend or attended the public schools. Previously we lived in Philadelphia County and had our children in private education. I've have read the "A Coalition of Pennsylvania's Public School Superintendents and Intermediate Unit Executive Directors" petition and have the following observations:

1. In general, I support the Keystone Exams as a way to further accountability for students as well as schools.
2. I agree with the Superintendents that the performance data can be misinterpreted. I would strongly suggest a trial period of up to 5 years where the data is gathered and analysed. The final rules should not be established until small, piloted roll-outs. I think the expectations and results , say, for a Philadelphia County school might be significantly different than our schools here in Lower Merion.
3. While I agree with the Superintendents that there may be additional costs and infrastructure requirements for this testing, these will only be overwhelming if they, in fact, 'teach to the test'. Rather, I would hope that the Keystones would encourage teachers to teach well and the test results will follow. Making this happen is related to #2,as the initial results should be non-punitive and constructively issued.
4. I strongly disagree with the Superintendents statement about the general state of education. Our scores, are not world leaders. I am an employer in a global and my experience reflects the truth, not just in math and the sciences. In general, I don't have a problem with testing, it reinforces accuracy and precision.

Thank you very much

Jonathan Seltzer
1001 Hagys Ford Road
Narberth PA 19072

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Cooper, Kathy

From: Deborah Dixon <the.dixons@live.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 1:57 PM
To: David Sumner
Cc: dleach@pasenate.com; repbriggs@pahouse.net; mfolmer@pasen.gov; repmaryjpdaley@pahouse.net; BONEill@pahousegop.com
Subject: NO on Chapter 4 Regulations

Dear Mr. Sumner,

My name is Deborah Dixon. I live in Villanova, PA. I am writing to say I adamantly oppose the Keystone Exams being tied to a student's high school graduation. I am asking you to REJECT the proposed Chapter 4 regulations. I urge you to VOTE NO on November 21st

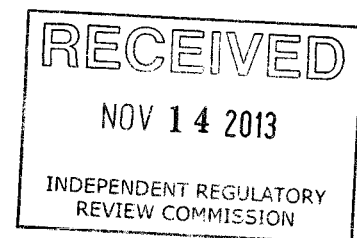
Let the record show my request to reject the proposed Chapter 4 regulations. Keystone exams and Common Core standards should not be tied together and are BOTH an assault to critical thinking and creative problem solving in our educational system.

Let educators educate. Let politicians advocate for better education by supporting our educational system in a functional way. Use funds wisely.

What our country needs right now are graduates that have developed critical thinking skills and creative thought processes to deal with the rapidly, ever-changing world we live in. High stakes tests do not foster those skills and cannot measure them.

Sincerely,

Debbie Dixon
"Mother of 3"

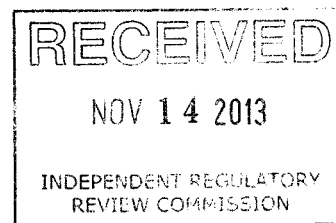


Cooper, Kathy

From: househunter househunter <househunter@qw.comcastbiz.net>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 1:52 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: keystone exams

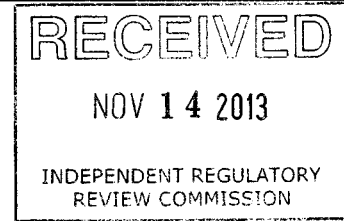
AFTER CAREFUL REVIEW OF THIS PROPOSAL I AM ABSOLUTELY OPPOSED TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THEM. I FEEL IT A DETRIMENT TO OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM.

Etta Norton, Realtor
Quinn & Wilson, Inc.
267-254-4824 cell
215-885-7600 x217 office



Cooper, Kathy

From: michaelmeline@comcast.net
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 2:00 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Keystone Exams



I am a tax paying parent with children in the Lower Merion School District.

I am in agreement with the position stated in the November 13th letter from the Coalition of Pennsylvania's Public School Superintendents and Intermediate Unit Executive Directors:

"The costs associated with the implementation of the Keystone Exams and delayed communication about Pennsylvania's changing accountability system has negatively impacted districts, students, and their families. School districts are concerned that the financial and student impact will become even more pronounced in the future as districts implement supplemental instruction and Keystone project based assessments."

I join with the Superintendents and IU heads to urge the Commission, the Administration, the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the General Assembly to seek additional information and suggested solutions from intermediate units and school districts who see first-hand the unintended consequences of high-stake testing on resources, teachers and students. **We urge the Independent Regulatory Review Commission and the General Assembly not to require Keystone Exams as graduation requirements.**

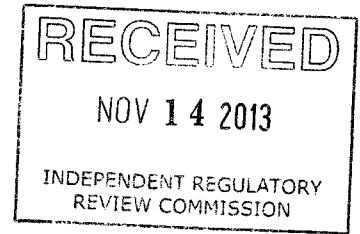
For goodness sakes, please don't further limit the resources allocatable for instructional time and art and music experiences! It is disgraceful that my children spend the long blocks of time that they already do on testing preparation and testing itself!

Thank you for your consideration.

Elizabeth Sweeney
125 Chestnut Ave
Narberth, PA 19072
(484) 557-5681

Cooper, Kathy

From: Marcia Heumann <manyhats43@aol.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 2:05 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Keystone Graduation Exams



Dear Mr. Sumner:

My husband and I are very much opposed to the Keystone Graduation Exams for all the reasons cited by State Senator Andrew Dinneman. We want the IRRC to reject the Keystone Graduation Exams as part of the proposed Chapter 4 Final-Form Regulations.

Thank you,

Marcia W. Heumann
Joseph J. Heumann
43 Harrison Rd., East
West Chester, PA 19380

Cooper, Kathy

From: Cliff Berman <Cliff.Berman@verizon.net>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 1:59 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Please do not require Keystone Exams as graduation requirements!

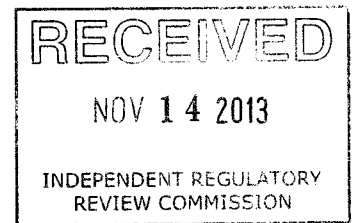
To whom it may concern:

I am opposed to the regulation changes and are urging the IRRC and General Assembly not to require Keystone exams as graduation requirements.

Sincerely,

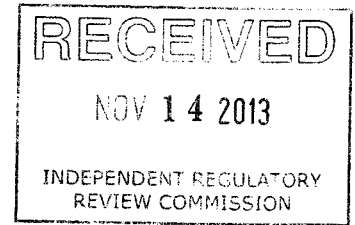
Cliff

Clifford Berman
10 Garnet Circle
Conshohocken, PA 19428
Home 610 834 6050
Office 610 834 7717
Cell 610 656 7583
Fax 215 893 8526
Cliff.Berman@Verizon.net



Cooper, Kathy

From: Lee Finkelstein <leefink@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 2:04 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Keystone exams as graduation requirements



Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

Please add my name to the list of those, including many school superintendents, who oppose the plan to have the new keystone exams used as graduation requirements.

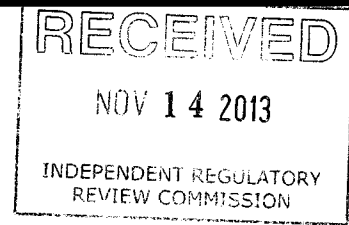
My rationale is two-fold. First our teachers already spend far too much time considering and preparing for tests that have no proven utility in preparing students for lifelong learning, success in academic pursuits, and success in the new world of work.

Our students and teachers deserve better. Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions. You may reach me at 215.280.0402.

Thank you,
Lee Finkelstein

Cooper, Kathy

From: Pezzin, Liana <lpezzin@mcw.edu>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 2:11 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Keystone Exams



Dear Mr. Sumner:

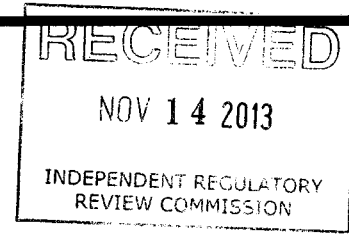
I am strongly in favor of maintaining the current regulations and requiring the Keystone Exams for graduation to high school. It is time to hold our PA public schools and teachers accountable. Thank you.

Liliana E. Pezzin, PhD JD
Parent of Bala Cynwyd Middle School, LMSD 7th grader

Cooper, Kathy

From: Beth Krouse <beth@ert-title.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 2:33 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Keystone Exams

Importance: High

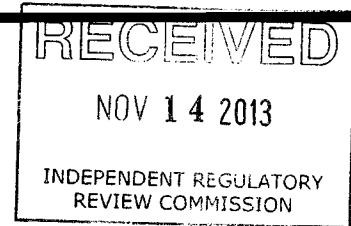


The Keystone exams should be eliminated and NOT be a requirement for graduation. The proposed increased testing negatively impacts students from 8-12 grade. The time it takes for the teachers to “prepare” the students for the test and the students taking the test should be used to actually learn; a much better use of time. Students spend roughly 4 weeks taking Keystone Exams, AP exams and final exams, not to mention SAT's, SAT 2's, ACT's and PSAT's in high school. Increasing this already huge burden on our students not only adds unnecessary strain to an already stressed out student population, but also takes a MASSIVE chunk of time AWAY from our teachers to actually TEACH OUR STUDENTS!!! They are basically DONE teaching and start test preparation by late February, early March--this is grossly unfair to our children. We should not be teaching for a test, but teaching to learn and use every possible minute to teach information, not to teach how to pass a test.

Beth H. Krouse

Cooper, Kathy

From: Alison Cook-Sather <acooksat@brynmawr.edu>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 2:34 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Keystone Exams



To IRRC Executive Director David Sumner,

I write to urge you to heed the thoughtful letter sent on 5 November 2013 from the PA Public School Superintendents and IU Executive Directors. As a professor of education as well as a parent, I ask that you help shift the emphasis away from high-stakes testing and toward more appropriate measures of learning. There is a great deal of research in support of more meaningful assessments and just as much on the failure of standardized tests to measure what students know and the damage such tests do to students.

Best,

Alison Cook-Sather

Jean Rudduck Visiting Scholar

Homerton College, University of Cambridge, UK Mary Katharine Woodworth

Professor of Education Coordinator of The Andrew W. Mellon Teaching and

Learning Institute Bryn Mawr College

101 N. Merion Ave.

Bryn Mawr, PA 19010

Phone: 610-526-5396

FAX: 610-526-7476

Email: acooksat@brynmawr.edu

<http://www.brynmawr.edu/education/people/alison.html>

<http://www.brynmawr.edu/tli/>

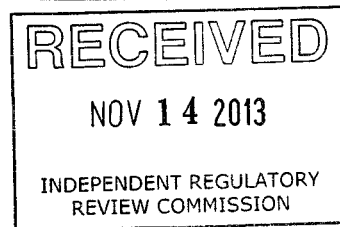
<http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-1118434587.html>

<http://www.upenn.edu/pennpress/book/14175.html>

<http://www.paradigmpublishers.com/books/BookDetail.aspx?productID=215342>

Cooper, Kathy

From: Anne Cappola <acappola@mail.med.upenn.edu>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 3:01 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Comments on the IRRC proposal re Keystone Exams



Dear Mr. Sumner,

I am writing to voice concerns about the Keystone Exam requirement and to ask for its withdrawal. I am a mother of three daughters and a resident of Lower Merion School District. I have a unique perspective at the moment, as my husband and I are on sabbatical in the UK and our daughters, all of whom have attended Lower Merion public schools, are now enrolled in British schools. The emphasis on thinking and learning in the British schools has been refreshing, and there has been no standardized testing administered, nor teaching to standardized tests. We are extremely concerned about the burden that standardized testing has placed on our school district, and the negative impact it has caused on the way our children are taught. We are academics and advocates for public school, but we are considering having our children attend private school upon our return to the US next fall.

Please, please do not add additional Keystone Exam requirements.

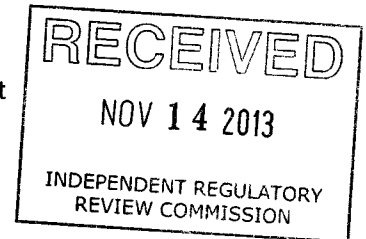
Sincerely,

Anne Cappola

Associate Professor of Medicine
Associate Editor, JAMA
Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania
12-136 Smilow Center for Translational Research
3400 Civic Center Blvd
Philadelphia, PA 19104-5160
Tel: (215) 573-5359

Cooper, Kathy

From: Cappola, Thomas <thomas.cappola@uphs.upenn.edu>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 3:04 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Please remove the keystone exam graduation requirement



Dear Mr. Sumner,

I am a parent with three children in Pennsylvania Public Schools and I am writing to voice my strong opposition to the keystone examination requirement.

As a physician and university professor I am well aware of the purpose and burden imposed by exams, and the trade-off between teaching students to take a test instead of thinking creatively and independently. Only creative thinking will prepare our children for success in a rapidly changing world. There are already far too many examinations near the time of graduation. More requirements will only serve a bureaucratic purpose and will detract actual education. Please do not do this.

Sincerely,

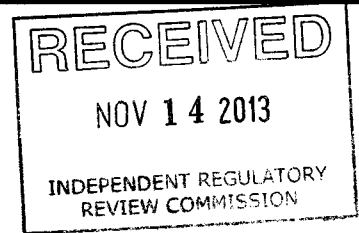
Thomas Cappola, MD, ScM

*Thomas P. Cappola, MD, ScM
Associate Professor of Medicine
Perelman School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania
11-102 Translational Research Center
3400 Civic Center Blvd
Philadelphia, PA 19104
Tel: 215-573-4717
Fax: 215-746-7415
thomas.cappola@uphs.upenn.edu*

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Cooper, Kathy

From: Linda Feldman <linlnk2u@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 3:03 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Keystone Exams



To Whom It May Concern:

I am a parent, grandparent, social worker, and very interested citizen. I am extremely opposed to the proposed recommendation that requires Keystone Exams as graduation requirements for our students in high school. I have always been a fervent believer in public education but this continued misguided notion of testing testing testing is out of hand. We are supposed to be educating our children to think CRITICALLY, to use thier imaginations and interact with their world in creative ways to make a difference, a positive difference; to think alternatively and imagine a better world. This bizarre way of wanting everyone to think, act, behave the same and be taught to score highly on a test is counter intuitive to what our educational system is all about. The dollars that is being spent to sabatage our children and our teachers is a crime. Give us back what matters; the arts, physical education, the wonder in learning and the yearning to want to learn because it is exciting not the duldrums and deadliness of learning to take a test. PLEASE . I am begging you on behalf of of children and our world.

Thank you!

Cooper, Kathy

From: Sunny <marsun@comcast.net>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 3:11 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Keystone Exams

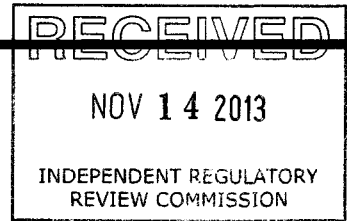


As a former teacher I am opposed to the Keystone Exams as a requirement for graduation. I believe it creates an unfair burden on the students and possibly will exclude some students.

S.Gross

Cooper, Kathy

From: kayjard@juno.com
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 3:32 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Chapter Four Regulations



I am requesting that my comments **in favor of your commission approving** the revised Chapter 4 regulations be included in the public record.

Although not perfect, this is a big step in the right direction and particular issues can then be addressed and corrected if necessary. The on again, well maybe, off again, etc has been frustrating not only to school board directors, but administrators, teachers, parents and students.

Thank you for allowing emails to be received as public record.

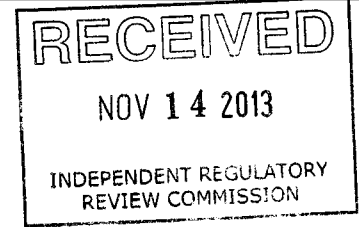
Kay J. Ardner,
Intermediate Unit 13, Board of Directors, President
Elizabethtown Area School District, Board Member

1 Easy trick FIGHTS carbs

1 EASY tip to increase fat-burning, lower blood sugar & decrease fat storage
info.fixyourbloodsugar.com

Cooper, Kathy

From: Weber, Cass <CWeber@wavesseeker.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 3:09 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Keystone Exams



Dear Mr. Sumner,

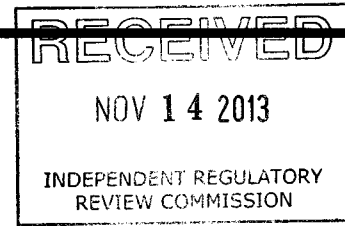
I am writing to you to express my dislike for the Keystone Exams. I am against more testing. I'm tired of the "teaching for the test" mentality. Our children need to be more well rounded academically and socially. Sure, they need challenges but they don't need more stress in their education. Imagination takes anyone further than any test given. The students already have PSSA and then PSAT and SAT to contend with. My daughter is a current 9th grader at Lower Merion High School. She is a happy, good child who does well academically but also enjoys sports and other activities. She missed being "proficient" in math for the Keystone Exams by 14 points. It has taken me months to build up her confidence which is already a daunting task for a mother of a teenage girl. She feels she doesn't belong in her honors math now, even though her teacher has told her and us (her parents) she most certainly belongs. Then we find out that all students starting with 2017 class must be proficient in order to graduate. My daughter now has knots in her stomach believing she will never graduate high school. Our children should be concentrating on all of their subjects, not just Keystone testing. Students already have enough stress to deal with in everyday high school life. They don't need more. Enough with the standardized testing!

Thank you for your time.

Cass Weber

Cooper, Kathy

From: bdecarlo718@comcast.net
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 3:16 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: keystone exams

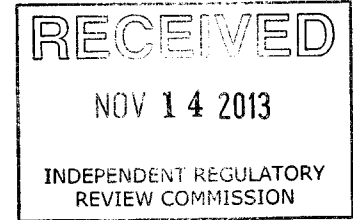


As a retired thirty-five year veteran of public education, I strongly oppose the implementation of Keystone exams.

No one has yet convinced me that their usefulness outweighs their negatives. The wrong instruments are being used to measure a student's success. The joy of learning is disappearing. Please bring it back. Before voting on anything educational, please spend some time in the schools.

Cooper, Kathy

From: Carole Miller <carolejmiller@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 3:51 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Keystone Grad Requirement - Opposition



Dear Mr. Sumner,

I am writing to express my concern regarding the Keystone Exams.

I am a parent NOT in favor of these exams as a graduation requirement.

I believe they hinder the teachers' ability to teach in the classrooms, restrict class content and limit that to which our students are exposed.

FYI, My son has already passed one Keystone exam and is preparing for his second. He is in all honors classes at the HS level.

Thank you for considering repealing this graduation requirement.

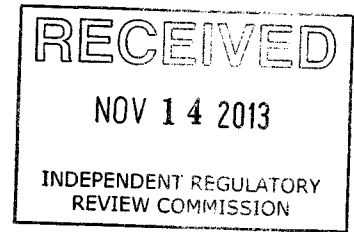
Carole Miller
Mother to
Roxanne, 3rd Grade
Micah, 6th Grade
Leonard, 9th Grade
Lower Merion School District

Cooper, Kathy

From: Powell, Joanne <Joanne.Powell@dechert.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 3:56 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Keystone Exams

I vehemently oppose the rule of Keystone Exams as prerequisite to high school graduation.

Joanne Powell
Dechert LLP
Cira Centre
2929 Arch Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104-2808
Telephone: 215.994.2457
Fax: 215.994.2222
Email: joanne.powell@dechert.com



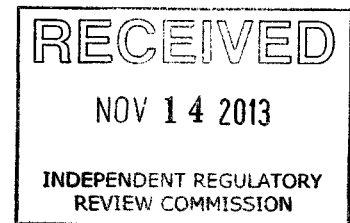
This e-mail is from Dechert LLP, a law firm, and may contain information that is confidential or privileged. If you are not the intended recipient, do not read, copy or distribute the e-mail or any attachments. Instead, please notify the sender and delete the e-mail and any attachments. Thank you.

Cooper, Kathy

From: bandsbil@verizon.net
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 4:21 PM
To: David Sumner
Cc: dleach@pasenate.com; repbriggs@pahouse.net; repmaryjodaley@pahouse.net; mfolmer@pasen.gov; BONEill@pahousegop.com; repdelissio@pahouse.net
Subject: Re: No on Chapter 4 regulations (Keystones)

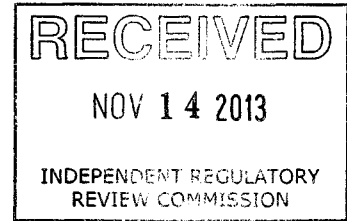
Please reject the proposed Chapter 4 regulations and VOTE NO on November 21. I am opposed to having the Keystone Exams being tied to a student's high school graduation.

Barbara Billings
Haverford, PA



Cooper, Kathy

From: Laurie & Doug <dlynch3@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 4:11 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: no to the keystones



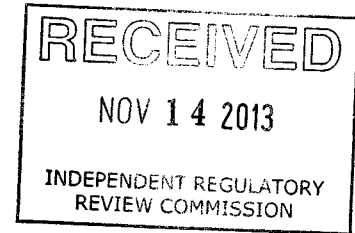
Dear Mr. Sumner-

Pleas vote "NO" to the Keystone graduation exams. There needs to be a better way. I agree with much of what Senator Andy Dinniman wrote in regards to the Keystones. I have two 10th grade daughters who are exceptional students. They have taken 2 out of the 3 Keystones and have done well on them. However, they have friends who are still above average students, who have not faired as well- some needing to take a "review" class. Without state funding for these remediation classes, yet more programs will be cut; the vicious cycle will continue. Not everyone needs to be proficient or advanced in biology to go to college and/or be a productive member of society. Please reject the Keystone Graduation Exams as part of the proposed Chapter 4 Final-Form Regulations.

Thank you-
Laurie Lynch
135 Polar Road
Newtown Square, PA 19073

Cooper, Kathy

From: Maria Luby <mmluby@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 4:11 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Vote No!



Mr. Sumner,

Please vote no on chp4 regulations regarding keystone exams.

I have 4 school aged boys and no not think this approach will benefit school children.

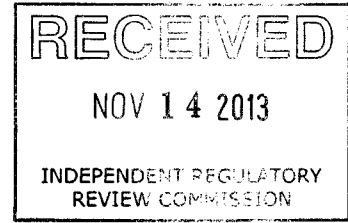
Thanks

**Maria Luby
LMSD parent**

Sent from my iPhone

Cooper, Kathy

From: ContactForm@state.pa.us
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 11:44 AM
To: Help
Subject: IRRC Website - New Message



A new message has arrived from the IRRC Website

First Name: Andrea

Last Name: Hall

City/State: Coopersburg, PA

Email: andrea.hall@rodale.com

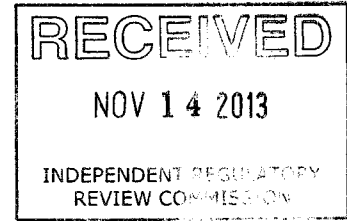
Subject: TITLE 22. EDUCATION - CHAPTER 4. ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENT

Message:

I strongly encourage you to approve the proposed revisions for TITLE 22. EDUCATION - CHAPTER 4. ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENT.

Cooper, Kathy

From: ContactForm@state.pa.us
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 1:19 PM
To: Help
Subject: IRRC Website - New Message



A new message has arrived from the IRRC Website

First Name: Lisa

Last Name: Mears

City/State: Monroeville, PA

Email: 15146

Subject: Pennsylvania Core Standards

Message:

I strongly object to the adoption of Common Core Standards a.k.a Pennsylvania Core Standards. We need to encourage students to set higher goals, not dumb down the system to a "common" denominator. This method of teaching is unproven to improve outcomes and test scores!