

LACKAWANNA COUNTY WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AREA
WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

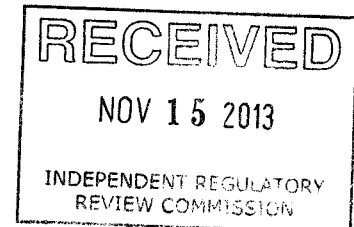
Richard R. Beasley
Chairman

Virginia H. Turano
Executive Director

November 15, 2013

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The Honorable Silvan B. Lutkewitte, III
Chairman
Independent Regulatory review Commission
333 market Street, 14th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101



Dear Chairman Lutkewitte:

I am writing to express my support for the final-form regulation #6-326 (Academic Standards and Assessments) that adopts the Pennsylvania Core Standards (which were developed by Pennsylvania teachers) and aligned assessments, including Keystone Exams. These reforms will help ensure the commonwealth's students graduate from high school ready for the rigors of postsecondary education and the 21st century global workforce.

As a workforce professional, I see every day that jobs of the new economy require higher levels of academic skills than ever before. If Pennsylvania is going to compete in this economy, it's critically important that our students graduate from high school with the strong academic foundation necessary to successfully go on to postsecondary education or workforce training programs – regardless of which high school they attended.

Pennsylvania needs a vibrant education system that produces students with the skills to be successful, to help employers succeed and grow, and to attract new employers and investments to our state and local areas. Today; however, employers have no real assurance that a high school graduate has the required basic skills to be successful in an entry-level job or to advance within a career. This regulation will adopt rigorous, internationally benchmarked standards in English and math and provide students a variety of assessment tools to demonstrate their proficiency, including Keystone Exams, project-based assessments, Advance Placement and International Baccalaureate Exams, and independently-validated local assessments.

The regulations also rightfully include important safeguards and supports for students – including supplemental instructions and accommodations for disabled students and English language learners.

I strongly support these important changes to Pennsylvania's academic standards and aligned assessments, including Keystone Exams, and urge IRRC to approve them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Virginia H. Turano".

Virginia H. Turano
Executive Director

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