

2976

Thomas & Sheila Fuccile  
31 Sugarloaf Avenue  
PO Box 685  
Conyngham PA, 18219

November 11, 2013



David Sumner, Executive Director  
Independent Regulatory Review Commission  
333 Market Street, 14th Floor  
Harrisburg, Pa. 17101

Dear Mr. Sumner:

We are writing to you today to express our concerns with regards to the implementation of Common Core Standards and the Keystone Graduation Exams that are tied to them. We have been researching these standards and do not believe they are in the best interest of the children of Pennsylvania. Some areas of our concern are as follows:

- 1) Funding – We can find nothing written that explains how Common Core Standards and the increased testing requirements will be funded. The Department of Education has provided little or no information to our school districts on how this will be paid for. We have read some estimates that suggest this will result in an unfunded mandate of \$650 million dollars for the citizens of Pennsylvania. Can you please tell us how this will be funded?
- 2) The Common Core Standards being implemented by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the Pennsylvania State Board of Education are based on the national standards that are part of the Race to the Top federal program. A national standard for education is specifically prohibited by the laws of our nation. As a matter of fact, Pennsylvania agreed to follow these standards before they were even completed. By extension, their request for your approval is mandating Pennsylvanians to follow these rules without having full knowledge of how they impact our children. How does the average Pennsylvanian who may become unhappy with all or part of the standard go about having it amended if all local power is removed?
- 3) In our research, we can find no scientific study or paper which would provide the basis of success for implementing Common Core Standards. With regards to the Keystone test, there is increasing evidence that is contrary to the success of standardized tests. Can you cite the specific study or studies that form the foundation for the success of Common Core Standards?
- 4) One of the most disturbing things we are learning has to do with a student data tracking system. It is our understanding that the system that will be used was originally developed & built with federal money made available through the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009. In addition, the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) was amended in December of 2011 to include

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exceptions in which student information could be shared without parental knowledge or consent. Some of the more interesting points include; Non-school activities or groups a child is involved in on personal time, family income range, religious affiliation, and medical laboratory procedure results. Can you please explain to me why information like this is necessary to educate our children & the process provided for opting out of the data tracking system?

In conclusion we are respectfully insisting that the IRRC reject the entire proposed Final-Form Chapter 4 regulations and send them back to the Pennsylvania State Board of Education for further review and changes that are more representative of the people's voice and less of the federal government.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact us at the address listed above if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Sheila Fuccile". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Thomas F. Fuccile Jr. & Sheila Fuccile

November 15, 2013

Mr. David Sumner  
Executive Director, IRRC  
333 Market Street, 14<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17101



Reference: IRRC #2976

Dear Mr. Sumner:

In a previous testimony, I specified the numerous concerns that I have with regard to the implementation of Common Core Standards (CCS) in Pennsylvania's schools. This supplemental testimony elaborates on one of my prime concerns -- ***the nationalization of our educational process*** and the ***consequential loss of influence of parents and local school boards*** that will unquestionably result from Pennsylvania's accepting money from the Feds to sign on to the CCS. (Although the initiative's name has been changed to Pennsylvania Core Standards, this was essentially a marketing technique. A pickle by any other name would taste as sour!)

I recently wrote to Representative Clymer (*the Majority Chair of the PA House Education Committee*) voicing my concerns regarding the federal government's wresting control of our students' education from parents and local school boards. He responded: "After weeks of my own private investigation, I do not have a perception that the federal government is in control of the educational process here in Pennsylvania."

***I provided the following examples in my response to Rep. Clymer's comment.***

"I can understand why you don't have a perception that the federal government is in control of the educational process here in Pennsylvania. **That is because the control by the Feds is not currently obvious.** Those who favor nationalization are far too cagey to make their intentions evident at the outset; they know that this would only alert citizens who would undoubtedly rise to stop it. National control will not happen immediately, but will occur gradually over time until we are so entwined in the mandates and controls from the Feds that we won't be able to extricate ourselves from them. There are definite clues that a nationalization of our children's education is in progress and will ultimately occur:

1. A **clearcut and indisputable indication that the Feds are in control** can be found on page 53 of Pennsylvania's Chapter 4 Final form (*October 18, 2013*) which states: 'The Department will seek to have the Keystone Exams approved as the high school level single accountability system under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. **Upon approval by the United States Department of Education**, the Algebra I and Literature exams will be used to determine adequate yearly progress at the high school level.

The words '**Upon approval by the United States Department of Education**' clearly indicate that Pennsylvania does not have the autonomy to determine what assessment we can use as an accountability system. The Feds have to approve our assessment tool, which means it is ***they***, and not Pennsylvania, who are in control. This directly contradicts what the PA BOE has been insisting is the case.

**2. Money received from the Feds always has stipulations attached.** Pennsylvania received over \$40 Million from Phase III Race to the Top funds from the federal government. I know that you, Representative Clymer, are an experienced, knowledgeable and savvy legislator, and therefore must realize that when states accept money from the Feds there are stipulations attached. A major stipulation was that we have to align our standards to national standards which are tied to assessments and ultimately to curriculum. *(I realize that PA has renamed the standards "Pennsylvania Core Standards," but this was unquestionably done as a marketing technique. We took money from the Feds that committed us to align our standards to theirs. That means they have a hold on us in this regard. Why would anyone be fooled into believing that a name change and minimal tweaking would really make a difference?)*

3. PA also received a partial waiver from the No Child Left Behind as a result of our signing on to the standards. This is another "permission slip" from the Feds. Doesn't that indicate federal control?

4. Governor Corbett's request for more money from the Feds for early childhood education will undoubtedly make us even more beholden to federal control. The Feds don't give PA money out of the kindness of their hearts; they expect something in return!

**5. A major fiscal concern is that Title I monies could be withheld from low income schools if the Feds are not satisfied with a state's compliance with the standards.** A subtle suggestion that this could be an issue was noted at an August, 2013 meeting in Delaware County with then Acting Secretary of Education Harner. When I asked him why we didn't just return the \$40+M that we'd received from the Feds so that we could assure autonomy from their mandates, Dr. Harner skirted the question and indicated that there were other monetary considerations. I asked him whether Title I monies could be involved but never received a definitive answer."

The IRRRC should know that there are strong indications that national control of education has been in the planning stages for some time. Opportunity knocked for proponents of national control when our country elected a president known to favor a strong federal government over the rights of states and of individuals during the same time period that huge amounts of stimulus money became available to "encourage" (AKA "bribe") states (including PA) to sign on to the Common Core. Significantly, Mr. Louis Gerstner, an avid proponent of a transformational educational initiative that involves **national standards** and **removal of local control** and a co-chairman of Achieve (*an organization that was a primary developer of the Common Core Standards*), wrote a chilling editorial that was published in the Wall Street Journal on December 1, 2008. The article was entitled: "'Lessons from 40 Years of Education 'Reform'... Let's abolish local school districts and finally adopt national standards.'" (The article can be accessed on-line at: <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB122809533452168067#articleTabs%3Darticle>.)

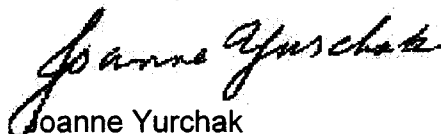
In the article, Gerstner suggests that the United States "**Abolish all local school districts, save 70 (50 states; 20 largest cities). Some states may choose to leave some of the rest as community service organizations, but they would have no direct**

***involvement in the critical task of establishing standards, selecting teachers, and developing curricula.*** He also suggests that the U.S. ***"Establish a set of national standards for a core curriculum. I would suggest we start with four subjects: reading, math, science and social studies."***

Although the PA DOE continues to mislead Pennsylvanians into believing that it is Pennsylvania and not the Feds that is in control of our students' education, the examples noted above indicate otherwise. Warnings that implementation of the CCS will ultimately lessen and possibly totally eliminate the influence of local school boards and parents on the education of our children cannot be ignored. The current Common Core implementation is certainly not as radical as the vision of Gerstner, but considering the stealthy manner in which this initiative was foisted upon the states, including Pennsylvania, it is not unreasonable to assume that his vision could be a predictor of what will happen in the future. Two quotes regarding nationalization from known educational experts are particularly appropriate to this discussion. Maggie Gallagher, a Fellow at the American Principles Project, noted: ***"Common Core advocates continue to insist that Common Core does not usurp local control of curriculum, but in practice high-stakes tests keyed to the Common Core standards ensure that curriculum will follow."*** She also opines: ***"Once a state adopts Common Core, its curriculum goals and assessments are effectively nationalized."*** Joseph A. Califano, Jr., former Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, indicated the portentous aspects of nationalization in his statement: ***"In its most extreme form, national control of curriculum is a form of national control of ideas."***

Forewarned is forearmed! The Feds have a proven track record of ineptitude when they take control. A prime example is the Affordable Care Act, during which the auto-bureaucrats in DC ignored consequences and vastly underestimated costs in their rush to take over our health care system. Americans are now experiencing the chaos resulting from their incompetence. It is unfathomable that states such as Pennsylvania would be so short-sighted and fiscally irresponsible as to allow them to attempt to nationalize our educational system. I strongly urge the IRRC to consider the implications of this potential nationalization and put an immediate halt to the implementation of the Common Core initiative in Pennsylvania. Thank you.

Respectfully,



Joanne Yurchak  
West Chester, PA  
yurchak@science.widener.edu

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Carola Hein <carolahein@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:59 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** patrick.dhuique@arrisi.com  
**Subject:** Support for letter From Interschool Council



Dear David Sumner,  
As a mother of a highschool student and a professor at Bryn Mawr College, I am writing in strong and complete support of the letter sent by the Interschool Council, copied in below. I agree that it is critical not to require Keystone exams as graduation requirements and to decrease the amount of testing imposed on middle and high school students.  
Sincerely  
Carola Hein



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A Coalition of Pennsylvania's Public School Superintendents and Intermediate Unit Executive Directors

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November 5, 2013  
  
Chairman Sylvan Lutkewitte  
Independent Regulatory Review Commission 333 Market Street, 14th Floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17101

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.

First and foremost, Pennsylvania public schools are committed to making education in Pennsylvania second to none. Despite the many challenges of meeting the needs of all learners during the worst economic crisis in generations, Pennsylvania's public school educators firmly believe that all students should be required to think critically and apply their learning and skills in realistic and meaningful ways and that all educators should be held accountable for the learning that takes place in their classrooms and their schools.

However, there are major challenges and concerns with the current implementation strategy of the Keystone Exams and Pennsylvania's school accountability system. As a result, the undersigned Pennsylvania public school superintendents urge the Commission and our legislators to reexamine the proposals requiring 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 following information will:

- Describe the concerns public school districts have with the implementation of the Keystone

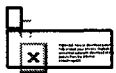
Exams;

- Detail the challenges caused by increased testing, changing accountability systems and poor communication; and
- Call to re-evaluate the need for high-stake testing and how the results are used to evaluate our students, our teachers and our schools.

## 1. Impact of the Keystone Exams

The Keystone Exams, originally designed as end-of-course exams, were re-purposed in 2012-13 to be an accountability measure to replace the 11th grade PSSAs. This change in direction increased the hours of testing time for many students. For example, this year, high school students were required to take Keystone Exams in biology, literature, and algebra (often years after students had taken the courses). This type of testing (and re-testing for students who were not proficient) created unanticipated hours of planning for test preparation, administration, remediation and review.

The increased testing impacted school district staff, students and their families. For example, students



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spend up to three to four weeks taking the Keystone Exams, AP exams, and their schools' final exams. In addition, students also take the PSAT, SAT and ACT college entrance exams in the spring. This overlap of the Keystone Exams, AP testing and college board exams places an undue burden on students and wastes precious teaching time for exam review.

High school students are not the only students affected by multiple testing. Eighth graders are also negatively impacted. Since many students take algebra in the eighth grade, students must take the PSSA and the Algebra I Keystone Exam at the same time. High stakes testing in eighth grade, which affects the students' ability to earn a diploma, adds undue stress to students who have not yet entered high school.

## 2. Financial Impact of Keystone Exams

**Districts are required to provide supplemental instruction to students who take a Keystone Exam as a graduation requirement and who do not score proficient. Students are to be retested up to two times and then are permitted to take an alternate assessment. As a result, school districts are expected to allocate more resources to supplemental instruction in literature, algebra, and biology at the expense and detriment of other subject areas.**

## 3. Cost of Project-Based Assessments

**Of great concern are the costs associated with the Keystone project based assessments. This option is required to be available to students who have not scored proficient on the Keystone Exams after two attempts. The current model for implementation of the Keystone project-based assessments requires that school districts provide human and financial resources such as project administration, student tutoring and project assessment by a Pennsylvania-certified teacher. In the pilot phase, the Keystone project-based assessments represented a real financial hardship for school districts with no evidence that it increased student achievement.**

## 4. Lack of Communication and Clarity

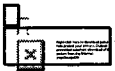
**The delayed release of information related to Pennsylvania's accountability system has greatly compromised educators' ability to properly plan for the tests' administration and to share information with stakeholders, while preventing adequate time for curricular content and sequence adjustments. Changes to the uses of the Keystone Exams have been confusing to students and their families. As late as June 2013, districts still did not know how data from the Keystone Exams would be used for accountability measures for public schools in the 2012-13 school year.**

Schools did not know if the historical Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) measure would be in place or if the new School Performance Profile would be used. Each contains different factors and different criteria. This situation resulted in all testing being completed in the 2012---13 school year without districts knowing how the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) would hold the schools and their students accountable for the results.

Timely release of information has hampered school districts' ability to plan. As an example, with less than two weeks before the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) was scheduled to release the newly developed School Performance Profiles (SPP), numerous school districts across the state, many of which are high---performing, received a letter from PDE stating that due to students in their district incorrectly coding the purpose of the Keystone Exam, their district's performance profile would be calculated without the data. Further, the SPP's would be released on September 30 as planned with no opportunity to correct the data. Through an email received on Monday, September 23 (one week before the reports are made public) school districts were informed that they will have an opportunity to

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correct their data but only after the SPP's are released. Districts have until September 25 to decide whether to keep the data as is or correct the data and have their performance profiles recalculated in January 2014. Whichever option the district chooses, they will not be able to reverse their decision. In essence, districts are being given two days to decide how to proceed when it is unclear of the ramifications of their decision.

As the Keystone Exams were administered in April 2013, it is extremely perplexing as to why PDE waited until two weeks before the SPP's were to be released to inform superintendents of the problem regarding their district's data. This is just but one example of the miscommunication, misinformation and confusion that has surrounded the implementation and intended use of the Keystone Exams and the new school accountability system. **School Performance Profiles (SPP) should be delayed for release until accuracy is confirmed.**

### 5. The Fallacy of Failing Public Schools

Contrary to popular rhetoric, the majority of America's public schools are meeting the needs of their students. Public school test scores and graduation rates are the highest they've ever been, and dropout rates are at their lowest point. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the U.S. high school graduation rate hit an all---time high in 2009 when 85% of U.S. adults over the age of 25 reported having attained a high school diploma as compared to only 34% of the population in the 1950 U.S. census. In addition, according to the College Board, average composite SAT scores for American students have risen almost constantly since 1990. In 2004 the average composite SAT score was 1026 as compared to 1003 in 1994 and 999 in 1984. In 2010, students' mathematics scores were up two points higher than in 2000 and 15 points higher than in 1990.

Also according to the College Board, among the class of 2012, the number of high school graduates taking AP Exams increased to 954,070, (32.4%), up from 904,794 (30.2%) among the class of 2011 and 471,404 (18.0%) in 2002 among the class of 2002. More importantly, the number of high school graduates scoring a 3 or higher also increased by 8% from the class of

2002.

The extreme focus on testing did not take a hold of the American school system until 2001 under the George W. Bush presidency and with the No Child Left Behind legislation. This high---stake testing frenzy was reinforced under the Obama presidency with the Race

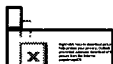


to the Top grants. It is time for Pennsylvania Legislators to stand up to the politics at both the state and national levels and re-examine the long-lasting consequences of high-stake testing on our students, our teachers, our schools and our society.

It is recognized that there are schools not meeting the needs of their students. Schools must always strive to improve and to enhance their curriculum to ensure they are continually meeting the changing needs of a global, technologically advanced society. However, forcing all schools and all students to be judged by a single assessment on a single day disregards the strong history of academic performance by multiple measures. Public schools are producing better test results and higher graduation rates than at any other time in history.

#### 6. The Inevitable Consequences of High-Stake Testing

High-stake testing has financial, social and educational implications. It is estimated that Pennsylvania will spend \$300 million dollars annually to administer the Keystone Exams, money that would inarguably be better spent in providing teachers with professional development and students with additional resources in the classroom to enable them to succeed.



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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, many educators fear that an inevitable outcome of tying Keystone Exams to graduation rates is an increased dropout rate that will affect a disproportionate amount of low-income and at-risk students than their peers in more affluent communities whose parents and schools have more resources to focus on remediation.

#### Call to Action

In conclusion, Pennsylvania school districts welcome rigor, high expectations, and accountability and have willingly and regularly invested time and resources to equip students with the skills they need to be college and career ready. However, 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.

As a result, we 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.** Pennsylvania's educational leaders welcome the opportunity to provide additional measures of the impact of increased testing and changing accountability systems on our schools.

In addition, we know it is especially important that we work closely with our legislators, the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the Corbett Administration during this critical time for Pennsylvania public education. **We need to work together to have a strong accountability system with public commitment in place.**

We appreciate your support for the children of Pennsylvania, and we look forward to additional discussions that will result in a stronger public school system for all students and for the Commonwealth.

Respectfully submitted by a Coalition of Pennsylvania's Public School Superintendents and Intermediate Unit Executive Directors, including:

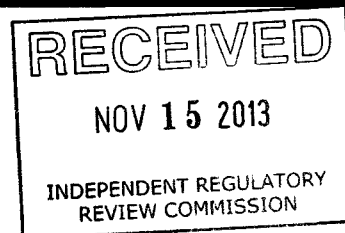
**Bucks County**

Dr. Barry Galasso, Executive Director Bucks County Intermediate Unit

Dr. David Baugh, Superintendent Bensalem Township School District

**Cooper, Kathy**

**From:** Mary Manges <mmanges27@aim.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 1:37 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Common Core and IRRC #2976



Dear Mr. Sumner,

Please stop the Common Core in Pennsylvania for the following reasons:

**It is an unfunded mandate.**

Implementation of the Common Core curriculum was agreed upon sight unseen to receive Federal Stimulus funds. The total cost is still not known, but is likely to run in the 100's of millions for the state. Further federal funding (such as Title 1 for impoverished children) will be tied to alignment of the Common Core. Pennsylvania schools are already struggling financially. What will this mandate do to their already distressed budgets?

• **Standards take away freedom in the classroom and all schools will be forced to teach the common core standards as a curriculum.**

As we have seen with "No Child Left Behind", standardized testing = teachers are forced to teach to the test rather than use their teaching talents. This limits freedom in the classroom for meaningful discussion, creativity in learning, personal connection, and spontaneity of the class.

• **There are no considerations for children with special needs or even individual differences in children.**

There are no variations for children with different needs. All children are required to reach the same standards at the time regardless of culture, special needs, and abilities. It is a one size fits all standard for children.

• **Some of the lesson content is questionable and is already being shared on social media.**

Each day, more examples are brought to the nation's attention for questionable content with regards to age appropriateness, clarity and content of the assignment. Political indoctrination, and a move in social morality are apparent. My own daughter was given an assignment about adultery in 10th grade.

• **There is no rigor, only rigormortis and the death of learning.**

Though Common Core claims to be "internationally benchmarked", that claim is not proven, rather, just the opposite. International benchmark has been downgraded to "internationally viewed" or created with benchmarking goals. CC Math is 2 years behind the benchmark. True learning is being killed in this system. Children are given low grade clerical work in place of creativity and critical thinking skills. Content knowledge isn't important in the Common Core, but this provides critical background knowledge required to think critically and make decisions.

• **It is a federal mandate**

Though standards are marketed as "state led", Common Core was created by a private organization and states agreed to its implementation sight unseen, being at the time it was still incomplete. Alignment with the Common Core was required to receive education funding from the Stimulus Package and was offered to replace the unpopular No Child Left Behind. Further federal funds will also be tied to Common Core. This is federal coercion, not freedom. Education is left to the

direction of the states. Pennsylvania students--and ultimately all of us will suffer from yet another dysfunctional federal mandate. Have we learned nothing from the obvious failure of NCLB?

- **The collection of data is a violation of parental rights and an abuse of power by the federal and state Departments of Education.**

400 data points will be collected, stored, and referenced over the course of a student's lifetime. Data includes everything from grades and discipline, to medical records and political and religious affiliations. In the "Promoting Grit and Tenacity" booklet produced by the Dept. of Education, future plans to use new technologies to collect bio-data is laid out. This report acknowledges the trade off of privacy for progress. Federal privacy statutes were re-written to accommodate data sharing of children for RTTT. This is a violation of my rights as a parent. What about FERPA and HIPPA?

- **Common Core is full of untested methods that go against our understanding of child development and the learning process.**

Common Core's philosophy of education is untested and has received poor reviews from top educators. The program has been labeled as "a joke" and "dumbed down", while many teachers describe instructions and assignments as confusing to students, having ridiculous extra steps, and not age appropriate. The materials connected with the common core are also flawed. Just last night my 8 year old was upset because she missed two points on a reading test. This was a mandated test given in class. The passage was pathetically written and the two questions she missed have horrible answer choices for summarizing the text. Neither answer was a correct summary as far as I could tell and I have a M.Ed. in Literacy. If I can't figure it out how is an 8 year old going to?

- **Common Core takes money and time that should go to a comprehensive education.**

Though the total cost is not yet calculated as to how expensive Common Core will be when fully implemented, it required a new curriculum to be aligned with the program, new texts, tests, software for government reporting, data maintenance, new employees on the payroll for data support, new report card system, etc. Funding for Common Core necessities will have to get priority because federal funding depends on implementation. Arts and programs other than Common Core will have to take a back seat. Many schools are eliminating important subjects altogether or are reducing time spent on non-tested subjects like science and social studies.

- **This is an overreach by the federal and state governments. Education is an issue of local control.**

Federal government is taking control of education away from parents, local schools, and even the state level by regulating with a federal mandate. Common Core cannot be changed by local or state authority, nor can it be taken in part. It is copyrighted to be used as a whole. With questionable assignments, a shift away from literature and higher maths, politically partisan assignments and perspective on history, the federal government has an apparent agenda.

- **There has been a lot of lying about its sources and implementation**

All levels of government have consistently and intentionally misrepresented both the source of the drafting of Common Core Standards, and which branch is responsible for it. From slight alterations in the name of Common Core to deceive concerned citizens at a state level to outright name calling by the US Secretary of Education. Deception about state led construction and initiative as well as proof of benchmarking and positive student outcomes continue.

- **It was never voted upon.**

A federal standard was never voted on by the Senate, House of Representatives, or by any voter. It was a condition for eligibility for federal stimulus funds and agreed upon sight unseen by 45 states.

Please put a stop to this madness. It is only going to cause more harm to our children and deprive thousands of students a rich and meaningful education.

## Cooper, Kathy

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**From:** Mrs. Janine Spence <servin@theindependentmission.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:49 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Testimony Reference IRR No. 2976

Dear Mr. Sumner-- We are very much opposed to the implementation of the Common Core curriculum here in PA. Besides this curriculum being unaffordable, we have these reasons/facts that are very alarming:

1. The Common Core curriculum standards lack freedom in the classroom. As we have seen with "No Child Left Behind," standardized testing, teachers are forced to teach to the test rather than use their teaching talents. This limits freedom in the classroom for meaningful discussion, creativity in learning, personal connection, and spontaneity of the class.
2. There is no consideration for Special Needs Children in this curriculum. There are no variations for children with different needs. All children are required to reach the same standards at the time regardless of culture, special needs, and abilities. It is a one size fits all standard for children.
3. The Common Core carry questionable and inappropriate lessons. Each day, more examples are brought to the nation's attention for questionable content with regards to age appropriateness, clarity and content of the assignment, political indoctrination, and social morality.
4. Though Common Core claims to be "internationally benchmarked", that claim is not proven. Rather, it's really just the opposite. International benchmark has been downgraded to "internationally viewed" or created with benchmarking goals. Common Core Math is 2 years behind the benchmark. See this link for quotes from Common Core math writers as proof: [http://www.utahnsagainstcommoncore.com/what-do-the-cc-math-authors-say-about-them/?utm\\_source=twitterfeed&utm\\_medium=facebookWhat%20do%20the%20CC%20math%20authors%20say%20about%20them?](http://www.utahnsagainstcommoncore.com/what-do-the-cc-math-authors-say-about-them/?utm_source=twitterfeed&utm_medium=facebookWhat%20do%20the%20CC%20math%20authors%20say%20about%20them?)
5. More Government Bureaucracy-- Though standards are marketed as "state led", Common Core is a federal mandate of standards swept into place with the stimulus package. Common Core was created by a private organization and states agreed to its implementation sight unseen as it was not yet complete. Alignment with the Common Core was required to receive education funding from the Stimulus Package and was offered to replace the unpopular No Child Left Behind. Let the states and people decide what's best for their children, not the government.
6. Privacy Issues Compromised-- We understand that 400 data points will be collected, stored, and referenced over the course of a student's lifetime. Data includes everything from grades and discipline, to medical records and political and religious affiliations. In the "Promoting Grit and Tenacity" booklet produced by the Dept. of Education (see <http://www.ed.gov/edblogs/technology/files/2013/02/OET-Draft-Grit-Report-2-17-13.pdf>), there are future plans to use new technologies to collect bio-data. This report acknowledges the trade off of privacy for progress. Federal privacy statutes were re-written to accommodate data sharing of children for RTTT, although PA has said they currently will not expand their data collection. Although in 2011 the Obama Administration changed the federal student privacy laws(FERPA), even the ACLU and EPIC (Electronic Privacy Information Center) oppose Common Core data mining and the FERPA changes! We do too!
7. Common Core's methods are still untested! Common Core's philosophy of education is untested and has received poor reviews from top educators. The program has been labeled as "a joke" and "dumbed down", while many teachers describe instructions and assignments as confusing to students, having ridiculous extra steps, and not age appropriate. Please refer to <http://whatiscommoncore.wordpress.com/2013/09/07/top-ten-professors-calling-out-common-cores->

[so-called-college-readiness/?utm\\_source=twitterfeed&utm\\_medium=twitter](http://www.startribune.com/lifestyle/231990071.html) to read about 10 Professors who oppose Common Core. We understand that cursive writing is not taught in Common Core curriculum. Please refer to <http://www.startribune.com/lifestyle/231990071.html>.

8. Too Expensive: Common Core curriculum will take money and time that should go to a comprehensive education. We understand that, though the total cost is not yet calculated as to how expensive Common Core will be when fully implemented, it will require a new curriculum to be aligned with the program, new texts, tests, software for government reporting, data maintenance, new employees on the payroll for data support, new report card system, etc. Funding for Common Core necessities will have to get priority because federal funding depends on implementation. Arts and programs other than Common Core will have to take a back seat. In fact, New York City schools finally received their Common Core textbooks late and full of errors (<http://dailycaller.com/2013/11/13/common-core-textbooks-arrive-late-filled-with-errors/>).

9. Lying about its sources and implementation-- This really concerns us! We understand that all levels of government have consistently and intentionally misrepresented both the source of the drafting of Common Core Standards, as well as which branch is responsible for it. This fact is seen from slight alterations in the name of Common Core to deceive concerned citizens at a state level to outright name calling by the US Secretary of Education. Deception about state-led construction and initiative, as well as proof of benchmarking and positive student outcomes continues. How can we support something that begins this way?

10. We also are concerned that a federal standard was never voted on by the Senate, House of Representatives, or by any voter. It was a condition for eligibility for federal stimulus funds and agreed upon sight unseen by 45 states!

We believe that this push Common Core on everyone is not right and is against our American freedoms.

Please let us choose which curriculum we want to be taught to our children and don't opt for this questionable and downgrading material to be introduced to our precious, innocent children. Lead the way for higher standards; reject the Common Core curriculum in PA!

Sincerely,

Dr. and Mrs. Paul Spence  
Monongahela, PA

RECEIVED

NOV 15 2013

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
REVIEW COMMISSION

The Keystone exams are designed to test for proficiency in three subjects: Algebra, Literature and Biology. I question why we should have these exams at all. One reason given is to make sure not only that students are proficient, but also to help Schools plan their curriculum. I am worried that in curriculum planning the schools will focus on those three subjects in such a way as to unbalance the teaching. Why were these three subjects chosen? What about Chemistry, Physics, Art History, Geometry, Languages, or all the other subjects that can be included in education?

I don't think it is a good idea to have a school curriculum heavily influenced by a test made up by people who are not responsible for teaching it. Curriculum is best left to people at the local level.

The other given reason for having the tests is accountability. This must mean finding out what schools are not doing a good job, get to the people running and teaching these schools and making them do a better job. But why make every student at every school in the State take exams? Our schools in our District are doing a great job. My children are getting an excellent education. The other parents I know feel the same way. We are all very involved with our children's education and we see what their teachers are doing and what the children are learning.

We see that the schools in our district are doing the right things because our students are very successful after they leave us. They go on to college and have fine careers.

You don't need another exam to find out what students and what schools are succeeding. I think we all know that already. Rather than an expensive State wide exam, why not give the poorly performing schools more help? This would focus on the places that have problems and probably cost less than the exams. Maybe give their teachers more



teacher support or provide home counseling or special tutoring. **More exams won't help them. More real attention and resources can help them.**

It doesn't make sense to set up a system for all schools when most of them are doing fine.

I ask you to reconsider the Keystone Exam requirements.

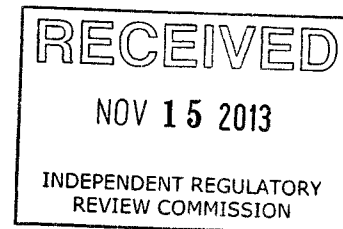
Sincerely

Dori Malloy

**Cooper, Kathy**

---

**From:** Ida Yeager Sales <idayeagersales@zoominternet.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 9:34 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Fw: Keystone Graduation Exams



Ida Yeager Sales, Inc.  
252 Magill Road  
Zelienople, PA 16063  
[idayeagersales@zoominternet.net](mailto:idayeagersales@zoominternet.net)

**From:** [Ida Yeager Sales](#)  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 14, 2013 12:50 PM  
**To:** [dsumner@irrc.state.pa.us](mailto:dsumner@irrc.state.pa.us)  
**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*

Rachel C Altares

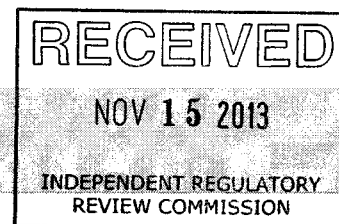
**Cooper, Kathy**

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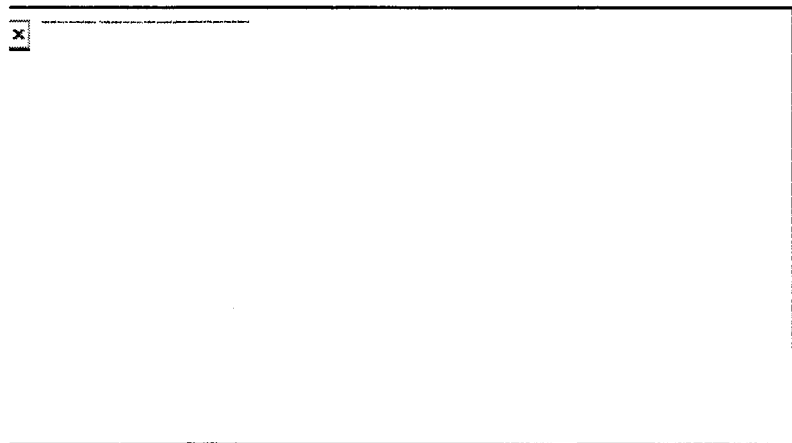
**From:** Ronald Miller <1bighollow@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 10:14 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Fwd: 1BIGhollow@gmail.com sent you a video: "TN Student Speaks Out About Common Core, Teacher Evaluations, and Educational Data"

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** YouTube Service <noreply@youtube.com>  
**Date:** Fri, Nov 15, 2013 at 9:32 AM  
**Subject:** 1BIGhollow@gmail.com sent you a video: "TN Student Speaks Out About Common Core, Teacher Evaluations, and Educational Data"  
**To:** 1bighollow@gmail.com



1bighollow@gmail.com has shared a video with you on YouTube



**N Student Speaks Out About Common Core, Teacher Evaluations, and Educational Data**

/ Ethan Young

Recorded at the Knox County School Board Regular Meeting  
November 6, 2013

Share this video with and spread the message: we will not accept these issues with education.

it, if common core is so great why did the government have to pay the states to use it? This is another example of the federal government trying to take control of every aspect of our lives and taking our freedoms away from us. Why are the corporations sponsoring CC? Are they and the government trying to mould our childrens minds into human robots for the good of the government and corporations? There is another name for it brainwashing. Who will pay for CC when there is no more government funds for it? TAXPAYERS! Who developed this system? Were they educators with teacher input or was this just another political get rich scheme. I have two relatives who are teachers. They do not like CC and other programs that take away from their teaching and delude them with paper work and useless regulations that take away their goal of teaching. There are good teachers getting tired of doing more paper work for the systems than teaching. It is time to leave the teachers teach and quit all this job justification and political interference. We do not live in Hitler's Germany, Stalin's Soviet Union, or Mao's China. Americans are free thinkers and that's what makes us great. Let good teachers teach, students learn and let my children, grandchildren and future generations have the same opportunity as past generations. Reward good teachers get rid of bad ones and get away from government control and politics. If you are all concerned American and worry about educating our children as your priority and goal, get rid of this system and all the other systems that do not let our teachers teach to their full capability. Ron Miller PS Please watch video this student is brilliant because his teachers were good educators.

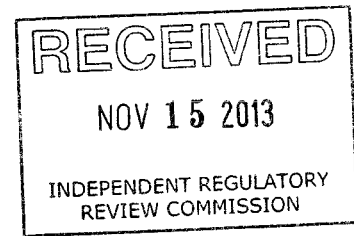
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**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** klsellers@juno.com  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 1:03 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Opposition to the Keystone Exams



Dear Legislature,

As a parent of two high school students and a property taxpayer in the Tredyffrin-Easttown School District of Chester County I am against the implementation of Keystone Exams as a graduation requirement for high school from both an educational perspective and a taxpayer perspective.

From the educational perspective, implementing the exams would cause a major upheaval in the lives of about 50% of the PA high school students that would not pass them and would not receive a high school diploma. The results on the 2011 and 2012 Algebra I and Biology exams indicated that roughly 50% of PA students taking the exams were below Proficient, that is a failing grade. If these preliminary results are used to determine graduation rates, then less than 50% of the PA high school students would get a high school diploma.

Unlike New York State Regents Exams, PA Keystone Exams do not have a statewide required curriculum geared based on the exams. Having grown up in New York State, I can say that the NYS high school curriculum ONLY taught what was on the Regents exams and that the teachers would spend every class period for an entire month prior to the exams having students review tens of old exams. New York State Regents Exams have been in effect for over 50 years. New York State has alternative Non-Regents High School diplomas for the 50% of NYS students that do not pass the Regents Exams. New York State local property taxes are easily three times what citizens in PA pay. I don't think PA citizens want the New York property taxes.

Fiscally, the impact of having 50% of the future PA citizens without a high school diploma would have a major NEGATIVE impact on the economy of the state of Pennsylvania. More people would be applying for state assistance for EVERY PROGRAM. Fewer students would be able to attend colleges. And the College and Universities are major employers in PA. PA has more colleges than any other state. With a 50% rate of high school failure rate and with fewer people able to take further education or advanced degrees, then PA will NOT attract industry to the state to create new jobs.

If students stayed in school until the Keystone Exams were passed, then many school districts would have up to a 50% increase in enrollment of exam takers. There would be at least a 50% increase in taxpayer expenses.

In Tredyffrin-Easttown School District, Conestoga High School is rated as one of the top High Schools in the state and in the country with average SAT scores close to 600 per test. Conestoga HS had one of the highest Keystone Exam passing rates in the state, about 80-85% of the students passed Algebra I and Biology. Currently, the rate of college acceptances at Conestoga High School is around 96-98% of the student body. With the implementation of the Keystone Exams, the graduation rate and college acceptance rate would drop to around 80% at one of PA's best public high schools. Not to mention the taxpayer expense of extra years needed for students to pass the Keystones and graduate.

At the lowest rated PA schools, where at least 70% of students failed the Keystone Exams, students would require extra years of education to pass Keystone Exams. These schools tend to be the largest, poorest school districts, located in cities. The Keystone Exams would DISCRIMINATE against students in the poorest schools, by denying most students a high school diploma. These school districts can NOT afford to pay for additional years of schooling for almost every student, let alone months of exam prep for repeated exams. With so many more projected future high school dropouts, the impact on the economy Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, and other urban and poor rural areas would be devastating for the entire state.

If the State wants a State-wide Keystone Exams, then they will have to increase tax on the PA taxpayers to provide the curriculum and exam prep and provide Non-Keystone graduation diplomas that are recognized by colleges and employers.

Thank you,

Katharine Sellers  
303 Old State Road  
Berwyn, PA 19312  
610-722-0421

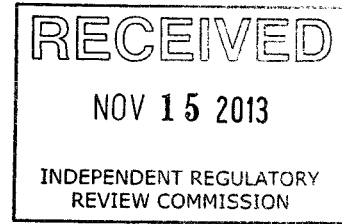
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Do THIS before eating carbs & every time;  
1 EASY tip to increase fat-burning, lower blood sugar & decrease fat storage  
<http://thirdpartyoffers.juno.com/TGL3131/52866229bbc6f62296aa3st03duc>

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Susan Ledieu <susanledieu@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:33 AM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Keystone Graduation Exams



Dear Review Commission,

As a retired educator having taught for 30 years, I encourage you NOT to pass the proposed Keystone Graduation Exam.

There are already TOO MANY standardized tests in our country!. While I understand that student performance is a means by which to measure effective education, it is not the ONLY measure. It is not difficult to assess which teachers are good, which students are performing at an optimum, which schools are deemed successful, and why. Ask the local people in charge, ask the students, ask the effective teachers and their colleagues, They all know quality when they see it. They are aware of the problems, and they are not all financial or test-driven issues.

Try some of Ms. Rhee's (former Washington DC educational consultant) techniques of school performance turn-around!. We do not need yet another test which again takes away from valuable teaching time to "get ready" for the upcoming state assessment. If a test can be part of a curriculum and not in addition to all the other demands placed on schools, that's another story. But given the tradition of independence of curriculum choice by schools and their districts, I am not sure that this is even possible.

The other point is making up the test. Who should decide what that content is? Not to mention the expense of paying yet another educational committee to compose, test-run, print and administer the test. WE need to cut expenses not incur additional ones.

**NO on the Keystone Graduation Exam!**

Susan Ledieu  
Newtown Square, PA

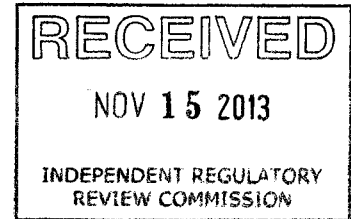


**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Dan Piser <dpiser@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:31 AM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Keystone Graduation Tests

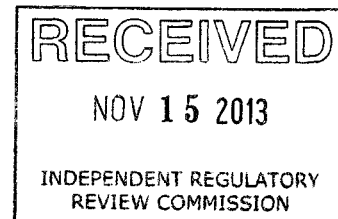
This idea is an insult to real education by focussing attention on a limited range of material. In addition the lack of funding for this initiative will further decay the quality of education in the day to day classes.



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Connie Hofmann <conhofmann@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:28 AM  
**To:** IRRRC; David Sumner  
**Subject:** Please REJECT the Keystone Graduation Exams



Dear Mr. Sumner,

I am contacting you to register my opposition to the Keystone Graduation Exams.

As a parent of children who will be directly in the bulls eye of this new testing mechanism, I do not want this additional burden placed on already overwhelmed teachers and as yet another stressor to students. Three standardized tests should NOT determine a student's high school graduation, especially when the tests were developed with no input whatsoever from a course teacher or local district.

As a taxpayer, I adamantly believe that a huge unfunded mandate is not the way to address student preparedness or to remediate for the many students who will require additional help to pass these tests. Our school taxes are rising every year to meet the basic needs of the students – this additional burden is not warranted and it is not the way to prepare the next generation.

PLEASE reject the Keystone Graduation Exams as part of the proposed Chapter 4 Final-Form Regulations.

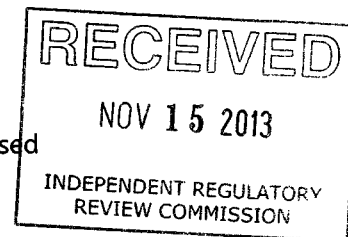
Respectfully,

Connie Hofmann  
754 Laurel Lane  
Wayne, PA 19087

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Duane Stanton <duane.stanton@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:28 AM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** I oppose the Keystone Graduation Exams as currently proposed



Hello,

My name is Duane Stanton. As a recent graduate from the University of Pittsburgh, and prior to that from Phoenixville Area High School, I am a product of PA's public school system.

I was recently fortunate enough to accept a job offer for a position that will directly utilize the knowledge and skills I have developed in this system, enabling me to contribute to Pennsylvania as both a taxpayer and full-time "knowledge economy" worker.


While I recognize the necessity to establish and measure performance metrics in order to assess the academic performance of individual students, school districts etc., I do not believe that establishing an additional round of standardized tests into the curriculum (especially without explicit recognition of the attending educational and financial challenges therein) is the proper way to address the challenges faced by our current educational system.

Standardized tests often detract from the quality and depth of curricula, thus diminishing the educational value of a given program. This exam system is especially concerning due to the consequences it carries for each student. This process seems to result in an increased burden on each school district to teach to a given exam, without much support from the state in confronting the burden. This suggests that costs will instead be transferred from the state level to each school district's taxpayers, with poorer-performing (and often simultaneously poorer) districts receiving weightier burdens.

I value my academic experiences from both my state-affiliated university and the primary and secondary schools preceding it, and I know that Pennsylvania's public schools can offer a top-notch education. Rather than simply adding yet another standardized exam to the curriculum, and one with such resource-intensive demands to boot, please explore ways to improve educational outcomes that are more "carrot" and less "stick" for student graduation and proficiency.

Sincerely yours,  
Duane Stanton  
Kimberton, PA

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 This email is free from viruses and malware because avast! Antivirus protection is active.

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Lynn Ritter <lmritter@cedarcrest.edu>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:23 AM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams



I am opposed to the implementation of the Keystone Exams. This is one more transfer of public tax monies to private testing concerns instead of being used in the classroom where they can make a difference; one more way to reward political cronies who are testing consultants and owners of testing companies with the money that could be used to enhance educational opportunities in our public schools. This latest sham will do nothing to improve student success or teacher instruction. It will just divert resources that could make a difference into the pockets of those who want to corporatize and privatize educational resources for their own personal enrichment.

Another set of high stakes exams that distress students, parents and school district administration, teacher and staff is not in the public interest. Education focused on preparing for these exams does not benefit our student body or contribute to a more prepared generation as they move into higher education and the work force. There is not statistical evidence that these exams measure anything worth knowing about achievement in our public schools. These exams will not be evaluated by professional staff with adequate time for the task.

As a tax payer, I am tired of watching our state constantly underfund and dismantle public education; I am tired of charter and online and private school students and programs being held to lower standards while my tax dollars are siphoned off to support them instead of the public schools which benefit us all. If true progress in education were the goal there are straight forward solutions 1) increase teacher training as per the Finland model 2) support and advocate for programs that adequately feed, house, and support children and their families 3) state funding of public schools according to the levels detailed in the state constitution 4) ending and scaling back the growth of administration while increasing staff to reduce the student:teacher ratio 5) supporting local control of public schools to approve - or disapprove - charter school applications 6) level per-pupil funding across the state regardless of the wealth of individual districts; this could be achieved by a tax levied according to income rather than property. There are many other student centered ways to improve public education; these suggestions are just a start. Another cumbersome, high stakes test that benefits no one but the companies who create and administer it and the politicians who garner political favor for pushing it through isn't one of the ways to improve education in Pennsylvania.

Lynn Ritter

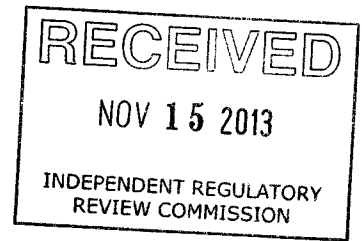
**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Peter Kaczmar <pjkaczmar@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:23 AM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams

I am opposed to the Keystone exams as a graduation requirement. this one size fits all approach just does not work.

Peter Kaczmar

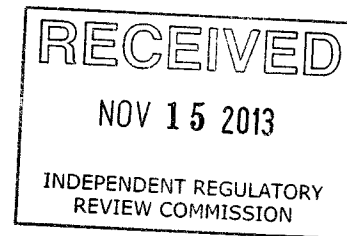


**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** jjabrown@aol.com  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:21 AM  
**To:** IRRRC; andydinniman@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Keystone Grad Exams

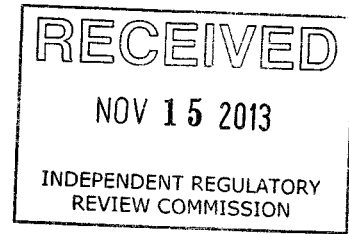
Please do not institute these exams. The kids need to learn, not learn for a test.  
Thank you.  
Joyce Brown  
West Chester, PA



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Powell, Daniel <daniel.powell@bnymellon.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:20 AM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Cc:** Joela Powell (joposbt@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** I am opposed to the Keystone exams.



To whom it may concern:

I am opposed to the Keystone exams. This will cost millions of dollars and push teachers toward a curriculum that is geared toward only the passing of this standardized test.

I vote "NO" to the keystone exams.

Than you.

Daniel Powell  
Technical Account Representative  
[daniel.powell@bnymellon.com](mailto:daniel.powell@bnymellon.com)  
W 610 382-3819

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Please refer to <http://disclaimer.bnymellon.com/eu.htm> for certain disclosures relating to European legal entities.

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Marsha Brofka-Berends <marsha.brofkaBerends@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:17 AM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Please REJECT the Keystone Graduation Exams



Dear Members of the Pennsylvania Independent Regulatory Review Commission:

I am writing to urge you to REJECT the Keystone Graduation Exams, which are up for a vote on November 21.

These exams are by no means an appropriate or adequate way to measure what students have learned in school. With these exams in place, a student who has earned top grades in all classes could still fail to graduate from high school simply because he or she did poorly on one exam. Such high-stakes testing is unfair to the students and teachers and places an unreasonable emphasis on a single event in a student's educational career.

These exams also present an unreasonable burden on local taxpayers. I very much support funding education—in fact, I actually think the current PA educational system is grossly underfunded in some ways. But I want the spending to be done intelligently, in ways that benefit students (and, ultimately, the entire community). Why spend millions of dollars on yet another test, when there are school districts (and students) already suffering from lack of funds?

If you want to improve education in PA, go to the districts where students are faring poorly and figure out what needs to be fixed. This is a big state, with wide disparities (based on city/rural, rich/poor, etc.) among its students. A one-size-fits-all approach isn't going to solve any problems. Instead of throwing money away on unnecessary testing, spend it on the districts—and students—who really need it.

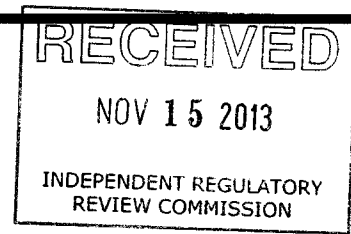
Sincerely,  
Marsha Brofka-Berends  
127 Princeton Road  
Exton, PA 19341  
[marsha.brofkaBerends@gmail.com](mailto:marsha.brofkaBerends@gmail.com)



**Cooper, Kathy**

---

**From:** Comarts40@aol.com  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:17 AM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Cc:** DinnimanSenate@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Keystone Graduation Exams



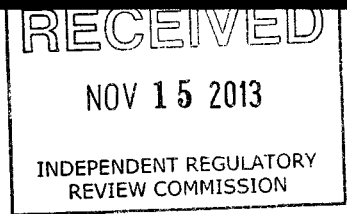
As a former public school administrator and college professor, I join the majority of school administrators in opposition to the Keystone Graduation Exams that will not serve to improve the quality of education in our state.

Sincerely,  
Robert K.Momyer

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Leland Wilds <business48lw@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:16 AM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Keystone Graduation Exams



I am opposed to this new law you are trying to pass. It is difficult enough for the younger generation to get jobs as it is and now you want it to make 1 test determine if they get a diploma. I guess that is just less people going to College also.

Now you must want to have more people on the Welfare list. What are you people thinking. Maybe that is what you want is more to be supported by others. Our taxes is high enough. why don't you try living on what we do with all the taxes imposed onto you like is on us.

L. Wilds

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** John Neider <huggins47@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:12 AM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Standardized Test Proposal



Dear Sirs,

Please understand that I am against the standardized test proposal currently in front of you. It seems fundamentally wrong for three standardized tests to determine a student's high school graduation, especially when those tests were developed with no input whatsoever from a course teacher or local district. I believe it is downright irresponsible to implement a program of graduation exams that will result in the largest unfunded mandate in the past 50 years. The proposed Keystone Exams require school districts to provide remediation and supplementary instruction for students who do not pass. However, the Pennsylvania Department of Education provides no funding whatsoever for remediation costs. In fact, the department has the gall to claim that the exams will have no cost to local school districts, even as test results from the summer indicate failure rates as high as 60 percent in Algebra I and Biology and 45 percent in Literature. It is conservatively estimated that the exams will result in an unfunded mandate of more than \$300 million a year.

Please do not approve this proposal as it stands today. I am the father of 5 children and do not believe this kind of proposal would have been in their best interests.

John Neider

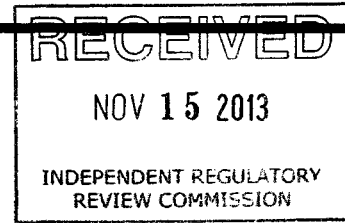
519 Broad Run Road

West Chester, PA 19382

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Geoff ..... <wcflyer1@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:11 AM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Do Not Vote For Keystone Plan

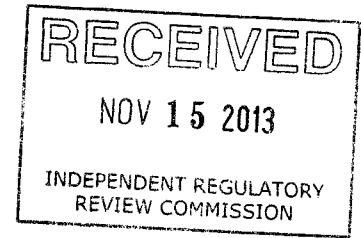


Under the proposal my son who graduated last year would not have graduated.  
He is the best example of a student whose autism deficiencies would be harmed with this proposal. Geoff Wilkinson

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Sabrina Fedel <sabrinafedel@me.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:10 AM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Keystone Graduation Exams



As a parent and Pennsylvanian, I am opposed to the Keystone Graduation Exams. While I firmly believe that education in this state is underfunded and badly disparate, we do not need more of the mentality that we need to teach to the exam, we do not need a "one test one day" evaluation to determine if our students can be successful in life, and we do not need more of the mentality that content is more important than learning to think logically and with care.

Please do not allow this dangerous proposal to become the standard which sets our children up for more failure.

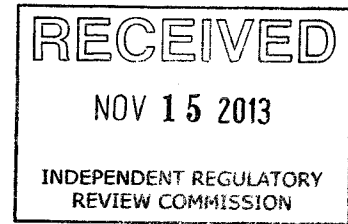
Sincerely,

Sabrina Wojnaroski  
Sent from iCloud

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Paul O'Leary <pauloleary@bolef.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:07 AM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams



To whom it may concern:

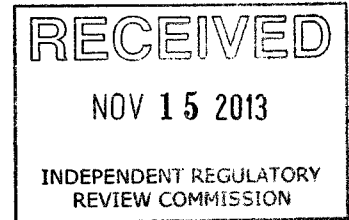
Please know that our family is 100% against the proposed Keystone Graduation Exams. Both of our children are excellent students taking AP course at their high school. I don't feel that a generalized test has any merit in their academic career. We feel that it is an extreme waste of taxpayer money.

Please do not pass this.  
Thank you,  
Paul G. O'Leary  
9 Vincent Road  
Phoenixville, Pa. 19460

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Tara Brooks <taramcbrooks@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:09 AM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Scrap the Keystone Graduation Exams



We're not in a financial position to support yet more testing. My youngest son is a smart kid and does well in class, but always rates in the bottom 20% for MAP testing. Does that mean he should fail? NO. Don't inflict this on our kids or our wallets.

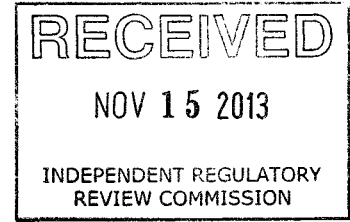
Thank you.

Tara Brooks  
19355-1517

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Rhian Tomassetti <prism@eastern.edu>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:07 AM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** We oppose the Keystone Graduation Exam



To whom it may concern,

It is fundamentally wrong for three standardized tests to determine a student's high school graduation. My son's graduation should be determined by his academic record, effort in class, project evaluation and experience with his teachers and professors. The Keystone exam should have no bearing on whether or not he will graduate after working hard for 4 years. I oppose this idea for change within our already confused education system.

Sincerely,

Rhian Tomassetti

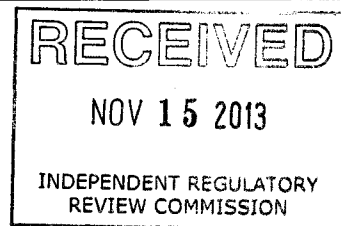
**Rhian Tomassetti**  
[tlrhian@gmail.com](mailto:tlrhian@gmail.com)



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Samuel Laird <cherylinsam@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:04 AM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Keystone exams



**This note will express my opposition to the proposed exams.  
Respectfully, Samuel Laird, 1447 W Strasburg Rd., West Chester, PA 19382  
Sent from my iPad**

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** William Bodish <bbodish@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:35 AM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Dissapprove

RECEIVED

NOV 15 2013

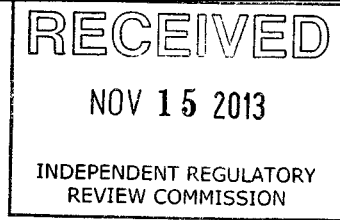
INDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
REVIEW COMMISSION

I highly disapprove of this measure. We are becoming a police state. We are losing rights and liberty. No mandates. I believe in better education but forcing children to perform outside their capacity is a disaster. Every kid learns differently. This is total bull. Again taxpayers on the hook for unwanted government intervention.

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** extonbicycles@aol.com  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:37 AM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Keystone Graduation Exams



Hi,

I would like to voice my concerns over making it mandatory to graduate high school, students would need to pass all the Keystone Graduation Exams. I can understand the thought behind it, but for one, I have notices as my kids have gone through the Pa. school system, the schools have been specifically teaching to the tests. Even spending class time taking sample questions and test to better prepare them to score high as the school districts have funding tied to performance. In my opinion, this is not teaching subject matter and I think that ultimately schools should be teaching our kids subject matter keying in on reading, writing and arithmetic.

On a personal note that would directly relate to one of my children (and I am sure she is not the only one), she does well in school. Gets mostly A's and B's. Does get C's, on honor roll very often, but misses from time to time. So I consider her a solid student. Well, as she has gone through her schooling, her teachers, my wife and I have always felt she knew the material, but did poor on tests. After research and talking to counselors and teachers, it turned out she has text anxiety. Freaks out before tests. We had some teachers do verbal test and she passed all those with flying colors. Point being, just because you cannot get a correct answer on a prepared test does not mean you do not know the material.

My last point would be in regard to fiscal responsibility. Administering the tests does not ensure increased quality of education. In these times, decisions like this should consider financial consequences and budgeting.

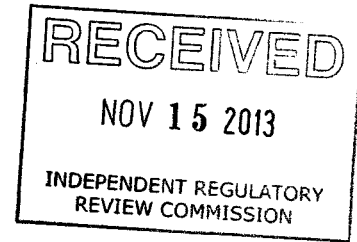
It seems odd to me that Pa dept. of education is so concerned about passing tests to graduate high school at the same time more and more colleges are disregarding ACT and SAT's scores as a criterium for admissions. I have two daughters 3 years apart and some of the school my older daughter applied to no longer require ACT or SAT scores.

Thank you for taking the time to read my opinions and concerns,  
Bob Jones

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** DelMonte, Thomas <t.delmonte@sap.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 14, 2013 12:11 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** FW: VOTE NO on Chapter 4 Regulations



Independent Regulatory Review Commission  
David Sumner, Executive Director  
333 Market Street, 13th Floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17101

RE: VOTE NO on Chapter 4 Regulations

Hello Mr. Sumner and Review Commission

My name is Tom DelMonte and I live in Narberth, PA, part of the Lower Merion School District. As a Pennsylvania taxpayer and father of two children in the Lower Merion School District, 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.

**Keystone exams are a waste of student and teacher time.** Teachers should be allowed to teach material according to their school district's curriculum. Each school should be empowered to give an exam or final project that they create. It makes no sense that a child that has completed all necessary coursework and has passed the school's necessary tests/projects could then possibly not graduate from high school due to one high stake exam.

Again, I urge you to VOTE NO on November 21st.

Respectfully,

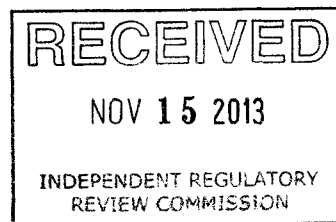
Tom DelMonte

*Stamp.*

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** kvj21@verizon.net  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 9:37 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Common Core



Mr. David,

**Please, please help stop this horrible thing that will hurt this country!! NOTHING that affects our children and education should just be allowed to quietly be approved when no one knew it was happening. Whether people are on the left or right, this is one thing that we can all agree that Common Core needs stopped!**

**Ron and Krista White**

**Cooper, Kathy**

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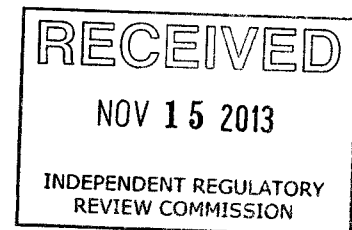
**From:** Robert Anderson <randerson815@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 9:40 AM  
**To:** David Sumner; Anthony Santore; George Blaszkowski; Ted D'Orazio  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams

Dear Sir:

There is a well written article in today's in the Daily Times of Delaware County newspaper by State Senator Andy Dinniman. It lists all the pertinent reasons why the Keystone Graduation Exams MUST be voted down at your meeting on Nov. 21,2013.

With all the other tests that a student must pass to graduate, there is no need for this test to be administered. In fact, it is detrimental to the primary mission of educating our children. It sets our students up for failure. It will cost the already overburdened taxpayers additional tax increases.

Please vote NO on the Keystone Graduation Exams.



## Cooper, Kathy

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**From:** Andi Johnson <AJohnson@shorrjohnsonmagnus.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 9:40 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** CC;; 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 Andrea Johnson. I live in Wynnewood, 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,

Andrea Johnson



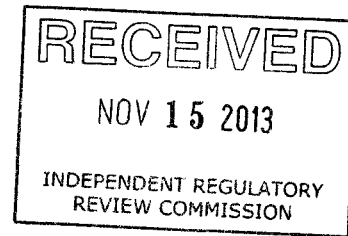
## Cooper, Kathy

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**From:** Rita Ninarello <ritaninarello@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 9:38 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone exams as graduation requirements

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.  
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.  
Thank you,

**Rita Ninarello**  
223 Edgehill Road  
Merion Station, PA 19066  
(610) 664-8142  
[ritaninarello@yahoo.com](mailto:ritaninarello@yahoo.com)





**Cooper, Kathy**

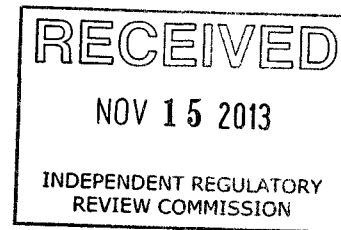
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**From:** Christine Harter <charter0919@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 9:50 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Graduation Exams

Good morning. As a parent of two children who will be affected by the Keystone Exams, I wanted to voice my opposition regarding the exams. For three tests to determine whether or not your child graduates, is wrong. There are so many reasons as to why a straight A or B student could not do well on one of the exams hindering them from graduating. These exams costs are also being passed onto the school districts unfunded. My two sons, currently are preparing for the testing of these exams.....they are in 3rd grade and 9th grade. They haven't received their first 9 weeks reports cards and we are preparing for tests already!!! This test preparation time should be spent on "learning" not test preparation. There has to be a better way to improve learning in our school systems.

Please reject the Keystone Graduation Exams and put learning back into the classrooms, rather than a little learning and much test preparation!

Respectfully a concerned parent,  
Chriss Harter



## Cooper, Kathy

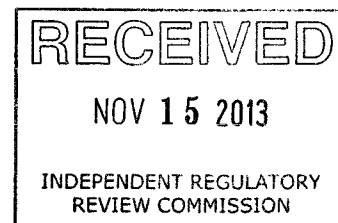
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**From:** Lisa Dailey <lisalambertdailey@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 9:55 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** IRRC No. 2976.

Dear Director Sumner:

I write to convey my opposition to the Commonwealth's implementation of the Common Core and Pennsylvania Core Standards. Local school districts are already facing a financial crises due to pension and other collective bargaining obligations. The Core Standards will place additional financial burdens on school districts and on local taxpayers, who are also dealing with economic adversities in their own right. If these standards are to be mandated, which I oppose, they should be funded by the state, not the local districts.

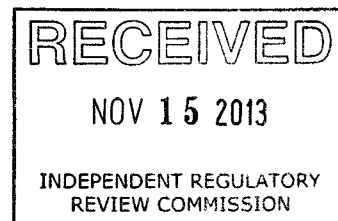
One size fits all standards based learning is ruining the way teachers teach and students learn and is forced upon us only for the sake of bureaucratic convenience. Standards will never be able to measure creativity, self motivation and the natural curiosity and mastery of different topics that connect with different students. Please stop trying to create robots and let students learn. Local school districts are best suited to find the most efficient and successful way to teach their local community.



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** ROBIN WILSON <wilson@pa.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 10:07 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Against Common Core



**Mr Sumner-**

I'm a concerned home school parent who wants to voice her opposition to Common Core in PA and in the entire US. I home school because as a parent, it is my right, duty, and responsibility to raise and teach my children my values to help create great citizens for our future. Implementing something so intrusive as Common Core will affect our family eventually. How can I go on teaching the way I see fit when all the College Boards and state standardized testing will be conforming to the Common Core standards? You will ROB me of my Constitutional freedom to pursue happiness which includes choosing how to raise and teach my children. This debacle will make all children and their parents "robots" as we'll all have to learn the same thing at the same time. How does this allow for creativity and free learning?

My other concern is the amount of money it will cost to totally change our system. All new curriculum must be bought and teachers may as well throw out their Teaching Certificates because of all the "retraining" they'll have to endure. That's a complete waste of time and money for the teachers and mostly for the taxpayer. Although I home school, I still pay taxes. We already have a screwed up property tax system in this state, so please DON'T MAKE IT WORSE!!

Finally, PLEASE don't allow the Feds to control what parents and local school boards should be in control of. We have a right to have a voice in our children's education and Common Core can't allow for it. Please do what's really right for our kids.

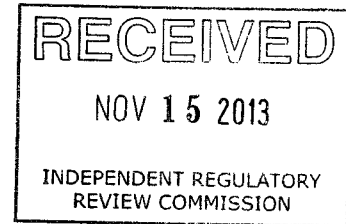
Sincerely,

Robin L Wilson  
East Berlin

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** rhopeingod@cs.com  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 10:07 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** against common core



I'm writing this brief note to beg your help in stopping Common Core in all of our schools in PA! I have a Masters degree as an elementary teacher and currently am employed as a librarian in our Catholic school. I also have had two children in Catholic schools. I say "had" because at the end of last year I pulled my 4th grader out of school and opted for the homeschool choice. Thank God we still have a choice! It was only after much consideration of the new Common Core Math texts and my child's failing grades in Math that we came to the homeschooling decision. I stand against Common Core mainly because it takes away the freedom of choice from all of our schools. I have seen first-hand how destructive the Math curriculum has been for my daughter who has a slight reading disability. Are you aware that the new Math Common Core has changed our Math to having all word problems? How does a child with any kind of reading problems get through a Math course like that? Do you know how demeaning it is for a child to have the teacher read each Math problem? My child who used to love Math simply because it was a respite from reading came to hate Math when it became total reading! I urge lawmakers to really delve into what they are allowing to happen to our educational system. Please, for the sake of our children and our freedoms!

Sincerely,  
Mars, PA

**Cooper, Kathy**

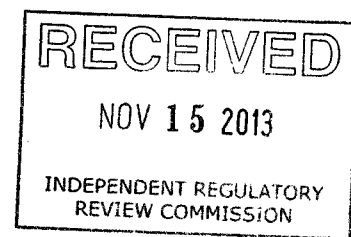
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**From:** Simona Hadjigeorgalis <simona7siv@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 10:09 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** dleach@pasenate.com; repbriggs@pahouse.net; repmaryjodaley@pahouse.net; mfolmer@pasen.gov; BONEill@pahousegop.com; repdelissio@pahouse.net  
**Subject:** VOTE NO on Chapter 4 Regulations

My name is Simona Hadjigeorgalis. I live in Ardmore, 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,

Simona



**Cooper, Kathy**

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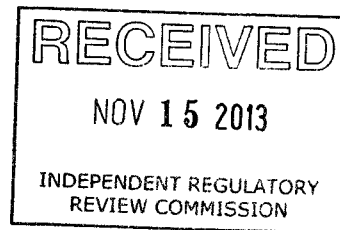
**From:** Peter Bickel <petebickel@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 10:31 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams

IRRC Executive Director David Sumner

Dear Sir:

I have two children attending schools in Lower Merion School District. I am writing to express agreement with school district leadership in its opinion about the negative implications of the proposed Chapter 4 regulations before the IRRC and state General Assembly. I, too, oppose the regulatory changes. Keystone Exams should not be the state's litmus test of either student academic achievement or school performance.

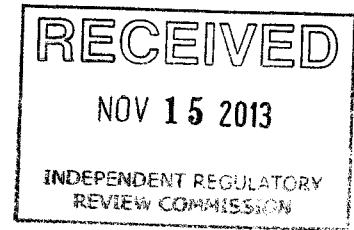
Sincerely,  
Peter Bickel



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Jennifer Lubic <jenniferalubic@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 10:40 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams



David,

I was very pleased to get the Interschool Council email regarding their opposition to the Keystone Exams and the opportunity to provide my opinion. I strongly oppose the Keystone Exams on so many levels.

- 1) Students are already tested enough with the PSSAs. There is no need for additional testing to indicate if a student is lagging behind or not. Schools know the students that are being left behind without the Keystone Exams.
- 2) More disturbing is the Keystone Exam being given as a graduation requirement. Students have enough pressure in high school without the Keystones Exams adding to it. Competitiveness with students is so intense the exams just make it worse.
- 3) It seems that no consideration is being given to students that fail it 1, 2 or 3 times in possibly multiple subjects. How emotionally scarring is that to those students. I know plenty of students who didn't pass the Keystone Exam given in 8th grade and did very well in Algebra I. Worst message possible being sent to the students that they aren't smart enough to pass.
- 4) The Keystone Exams seem to be more political than anything else.
- 5) I was appalled to learn that teachers get bonuses based on how many students pass the exam.

I would go to Harrisburg to give my opinion.

Regards,

Jennifer Poluka  
Harriton High School (Two Children)

## Cooper, Kathy

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**From:** Regina Melchiorre <we3browns@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 10:45 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** dleach@pasenate.com; repbriggs@pahouse.net; repmaryjodaley@pahouse.net; mfolmer@pasen.gov; BONEill@pahousegop.com  
**Subject:** VOTE NO on Chapter 4 Regulations

Dear Representatives,

We are Steve Brown and Regina Melchiorre. We live at 202 Williamsburg Road in Ardmore, PA. We are writing to say we adamantly oppose the Keystone Exams being tied to a student's high school graduation. We are asking you to REJECT the proposed Chapter 4 regulations. We urge you to VOTE NO on November 21st.

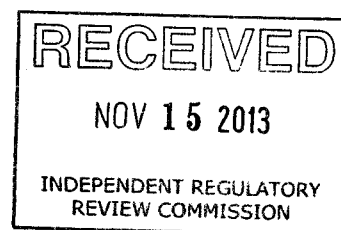
Respectfully,  
Steve Brown and Regina Melchiorre

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"We don't beat the reaper by living longer, we beat the reaper by living well and living fully" - Randy Pausch (1960-2008)

"Be bold and mighty forces will come to your aid." - Goethe

"As God is my witness," Mr. Carlson insists, "I thought turkeys could fly" - WKRP





**Cooper, Kathy**

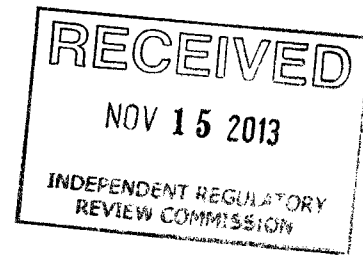
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**From:** Michael Simon <mssimon67@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 10:47 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** dleach@pasenate.com; repbriggs@pahouse.net; repmaryjodaley@pahouse.net; mfolmer@pasen.gov; BONEill@pahousegop.com; repdelissio@pahouse.net  
**Subject:** VOTE NO on Chapter 4 Regulations

My name is Michael Simon. I live in Penn Valley, 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,

Michael Simon



## Cooper, Kathy

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**From:** Cheryl Carliss <ccarliss@cmiweb.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 10:51 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone exam

To Whom it may concern:

My name is Cheryl Carliss and I live in the Rose Tree Media school district. I do not approve in the implementation of the Keystone graduate exam for the following reasons: Increase of cost to the district, taking the fun out of learning, some children are average students and we do not want to discourage them from furthering their education, lastly, teaching for the test....learning should be fun and we have so many test now that kids and teachers are not enjoying the subjects if the goal is a test.

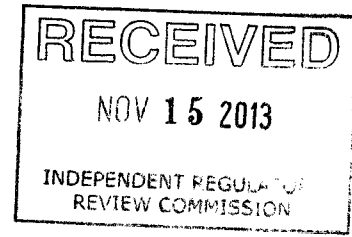
Please count my vote against Keystone exam.

Thank You,

Cheryl Carliss

Sincerely,  
Cheryl Carliss

VP of Client Services  
CMI Credit Mediators Inc.  
(610) 352-5151 ext 206  
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**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Annette P. Johnson <fivem.llc@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:47 AM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Cc:** DinnimanSenate@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Keystone Graduation Exams

Gentlemen,

We oppose the implementation of the Keystone Graduation Exams.

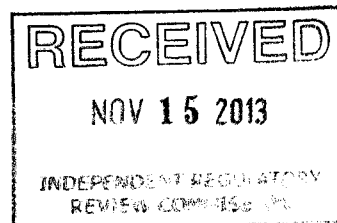
The costs would, obviously, pass the buck to the individual school districts which are having great difficulty now funding their current programs, testing, etc. with no additional funding from the state.

We must stop teaching 'to the test' and allow the educational community determine how best to teach our children.

The inevitable additional taxes will further the burden on property owners including the senior citizens of our communities.

Sincerely,

Mr. and Mrs. M. John Johnson



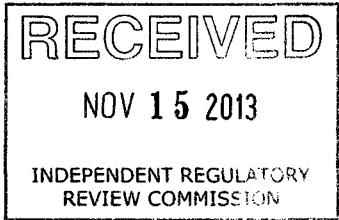
**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Nancy Gardner <nancygardner@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:41 AM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Keystone Graduation Exama

I have been a teacher for the last 42 years in Pennsylvania and a graduation exam does NOT measure what a student has learned nor what he/she's is able to achieve in the future. I strongly disagree with the exit examination.

Nancy R Gardner



**Cooper, Kathy**

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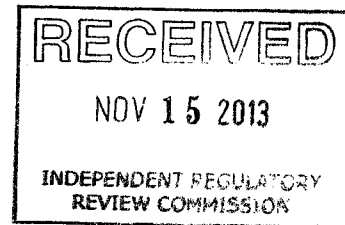
**From:** Debby Kern <dkern3@mac.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:40 AM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Keystone Graduation exams

Please do not vote to put the Keystone Graduation exams into effect. If all the IU directors and almost all the superintendents oppose this, there must be a good reason. Can you imagine if you were that kid who got all A's in all classes, then didn't pass this one test?!

---\*---\*---\*---\*---

Debby Kern

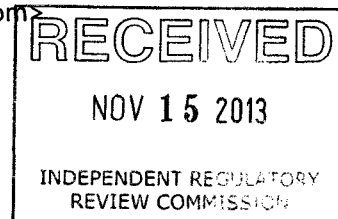
"A day without laughter is a day wasted." - Charlie Chaplin



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Michael D. Donovan, Esq. <mdonovan@donovanaxler.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:39 AM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Cc:** DinnimanSenate@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Keystone Graduation Exams



Dear Commissioners: I write to express my family's strong opposition to the Keystone Graduation Exams.

All three of my children graduated from Conestoga High School in Chester County. One of our daughters had a learning disability, which made it difficult for her to take standardized tests. Still, she went on to graduate from Penn State's main campus within 4 years, based in large part on the outstanding work of the fabulous teachers and support staff at Conestoga. My other daughter graduated from Temple within 4 years as well, again based on the superb education she received at Conestoga. My son is currently a sophomore at George Washington University, where a political science professor just complimented him with an A on an 8 page paper - observing in his notes that my son is a fantastic writer - after telling the rest of the class that they really needed to learn how to write.

I believe these real-world facts demonstrate that the Keystone Graduation Exam is misguided and misdirected. If the Commission is determined to implement some form of standardization throughout the Commonwealth, I suggest it take a cue from New York State and implement a form of regents test. While all students could be required to take such a test, a poor grade would not prevent graduation. Instead, a good grade (above some set minimum) would mean an automatic state-funded scholarship of \$1000 to be applied to tuition at any Commonwealth public university or college. Better yet, specific subject exams could also be included, to induce promising students to stay in-state by awarding even greater scholarship benefits to be used exclusively at Commonwealth universities and colleges.

Please reject the Keystone Graduation Exam plan and substitute a regents form of testing. In my experience, money motivates better than diploma punishment. Respectfully,

Michael D. Donovan  
Donovan Axler, LLC  
1845 Walnut Street, Suite 1100  
Philadelphia, PA 19103  
215-732-6067  
215-732-8060(fax)  
[mdonovan@donovanaxler.com](mailto:mdonovan@donovanaxler.com)  
[www.donovanaxler.com](http://www.donovanaxler.com)

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## Cooper, Kathy

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**From:** Diane <dianescraps@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:39 AM  
**To:** IRRRC; dinnimansenate@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Please stop the Keystone Exams

I am the adoptive mom of two daughters who we adopted from the PA Foster care system at the ages of 5 and 7. My daughters are now 13 and 15.

My oldest daughter took the Keystone math and reading exams. My daughter has hip dysplasia and had her hip and femur redesigned several years ago. The night before the exam she had a bad fall and spent the night at AI DuPont hospital in Delaware, she was not able to make it to school to take the exam on time and had to take it as a makeup. She was extremely stressed and in a lot of pain. She passed the Math, but failed the English.

Now my daughter is spending her school time in a remedial class for the Keystone instead of in a class that helps her prepare for her career after high school. She would like to be a pediatric radiologist to work with kids, like herself who have to spend so much of their childhood at the hospital.

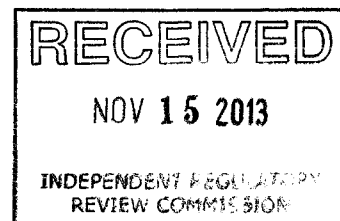
Even with her medical issues my daughter has always been a good student. Her grade average is normally a B. She has worked hard to make up any work missed, due to her medical issues, while also working to rehab her hip. Her hip rehab has come so far along that she was able to compete both this year and last year with the Spring-Ford Golden Ram Marching Unit, a highly competitive marching band that this year alone won their divisions Championship at Hershey for both Cavalcade of Bands and Tournament of Bands.

My daughters deserve an education that prepares them for their future, not an education that prepares them for a test.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me, my cell number is 610-220-2472.

Thank you,

Diane L Moore



## Cooper, Kathy

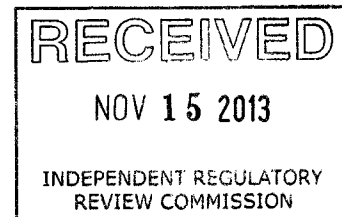
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**From:** Barbara Woodin <bwoodin441@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:39 AM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Cc:** Senator Andrew Dinniman  
**Subject:** Keystone exams are not teaching!

I agree with Sen. Andy Dinniman's article and his ideas that the Keystone Exams are nothing more than a waste of teachers and students time, and the state's money. He states that 58 of 61 superintendents feel that these exams only rely on teaching to tests, and not critical thinking and learning on the part of students. Yes, we need standards of education, but when teachers and schools have to teach material that is going to be tested, it takes away from the whole concept of learning – that is to develop well rounded students with a broad base of knowledge that will enable them to pursue higher education or technical training. We've seen that "No child left behind" has indeed left many children behind. Trying to run education with metrics and standards that work in the business world, is NOT the answer in education.

Part of the problem lies in the passage of students from one grade to the next when they have not learned the material for the grade they are currently in. But standardized tests are only part of the solution. They hamper teachers from using a variety of ways to teach so that all students can learn, take up valuable time to gauge progress that, in the end, may not be easily tracked. We are doing our youth a grave disservice by teaching only material that they will be tested on, and I urge you to reconsider passage of this bill for Pennsylvania education.

Barbara Woodin  
610.594.8142  
[bwoodin441@verizon.net](mailto:bwoodin441@verizon.net)





**Cooper, Kathy**

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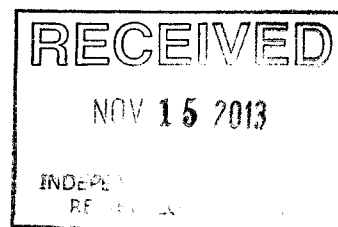
**From:** Diedra Heitzman <diedra.heizman999@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:52 AM  
**To:** IRRC; dinnemansenate@gmail.com  
**Subject:** graduation test

Please carefully consider that the proposed high school graduation test is likely to produce MANY more problems than it could possibly solve. The cost of the tests alone would be serious for some districts.

There have been multiple cases of erroneously electronically scored tests, as well as human errors, which can result in big problems for good students. The business of testing is far from a science, and even trained educators can disagree on what constitutes an adequate high school education-- and we know that teaching to a test disempowers professionally qualified teachers and creates unmotivated students. It takes individualized instruction programs out of the picture, and all students are not alike.

Of course high school graduates should be able to do basic math and reading-- and much more, but standardized testing will not create higher standards-- only the reverse. It would be a wrongheaded attempt to create higher standards which would backfire in numerous ways. Please put this bill into a deep sleep-- forever-- it is anything but reasonable. Thank you,

Sincerely,  
Diedra Heitzman

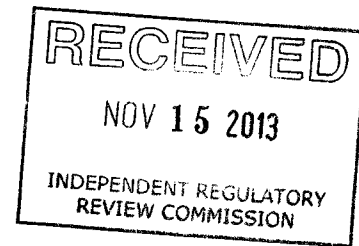


**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** wellsc690@aol.com  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:52 AM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Keystone graduation exams

Please vote to stop them. They do nothing to improve the quality of education in Pa.  
Carolyn Wells, Montrose P A



**Cooper, Kathy**

---

**From:** Tony Kennedy <tkennedy1313@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 1:58 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Keystone Graduation Exams



To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing as a resident and taxpayer of Pennsylvania, as well as a parent of children in Pennsylvania's public education system. I would like to let it be known that I completely oppose the Keystone Graduation Exam program being voted on next Thursday and request that you reject this program through your vote.

Thank you,

--

Tony Kennedy  
Northeast Regional Manager  
RoofOptions, LLC  
O: 877-460-7663 x228  
F: 484-726-3444  
M: 610-637-1380  
E: [tk@roofoptions.com](mailto:tk@roofoptions.com)

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Bill Gayle <bill.gayle@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 1:54 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Keystone graduation exams

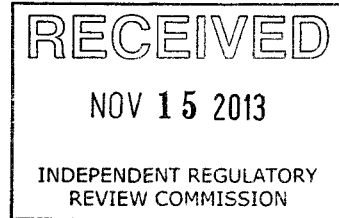


Please do not vote for the Keystone graduation exams. The process we have in place has worked in the past. Perhaps if we had better performance/accountability standards for teachers, we would not be graduating children intellectually unprepared for adulthood. Perhaps you should focus on the matter from this perspective given the current poor scholastic standards.

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Rich Trefz <rich@richtrefz.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 1:40 PM  
**To:** IRRC; David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Graduation Exams



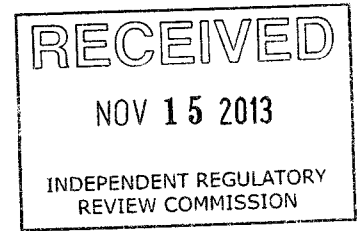
**We are definitely opposed to ANY change that causes significant unfunded mandates. The taxpayer burden is already too high. Any additional and we may have to consider at selling the house.**

**Rich & Mary Trefz  
Downingtown PA**

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Carol Klein <carol@writingcenter.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 1:39 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Cc:** Dinnimansenate@gmail.com; Bob Burleigh  
**Subject:** Opposed to Keystone Graduation Exams



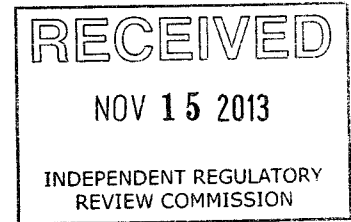
**I am opposed to Keystone Graduation Exams because of their cost to taxpayers and questionable usefulness/value. Use our tax dollars to improve schools, keep music and arts programs in schools, and pay good salaries to good teachers—not for more useless testing.**

Carol S. Klein  
1639 South Glenside Road  
West Chester, PA 19380

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Charlotte Valyo <cvalyo@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 1:31 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams



Dear Sir:

I am writing in objection to the proposal that high school students in Pennsylvania be required to take and pass the Keystone Exams as a condition of receiving a high school diploma.

Standardized tests have little value and result in large mandated costs to schools which drives property taxes higher.

I urge you to defeat this proposal.

Sincerely,

Charlotte Valyo  
35 Wincrest Drive  
Phoenixville, PA 19460

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Audrey Moskowitz <audrey622@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 1:31 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Exams



**Please STOP Keystone Graduation Exams.**

**They are not a good idea.**

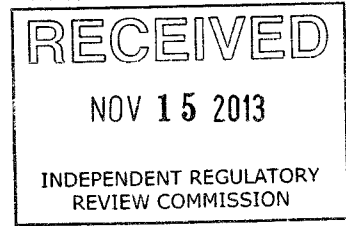
**Many thanks.**



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Marie Nigro <mrn1381k@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 1:24 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Keystone testing for graduation



Good Afternoon,

I wish to express my opposition to the use of standardized testing for graduation from PA high schools. As a college teacher for over 20 years, I believe that a student's work throughout the year should be the basis of passing or failing a course. As a resident of Pennsylvania, I also object to the expenses that would be involved in purchasing and giving the tests, resulting in increased school taxes.

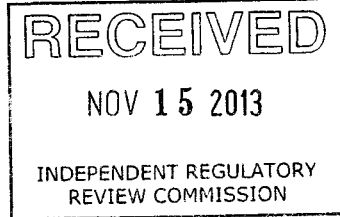
Thank you for considering my views.

Marie Nigro

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Kat O'Connor <tapnappers@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 1:24 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Oppose Keystone Graduation Exams



**To Whom it May Concern:**

Please note for the record that I am opposed to the implementation of the Keystone Graduation Exams. Our educational system absolutely does NOT need more standardized testing. What it needs is more arts instruction and critical thinking and creative problem solving opportunities in the classroom, NOT more teaching of how to take a standardized test. It's a waste of money that is not even available. The students who have earned a diploma will adequately be able to show their success through their grades and extra-curricular achievements; look at those statistics instead.

I do not believe that teachers and schools should be judged solely on standardized test performance. It can create an unhealthy loop of anxiety for all involved. I see it with my own and other children, who wonder why they are spending so much time on taking practice PSSA tests, and who can't really understand why they rarely have art, music, gym, and library classes anymore. I certainly do NOT wish for our school property taxes to be raised, but if they were, I'd want to see that money go towards giving the kids something they can really benefit from, and that something is NOT standardized testing.

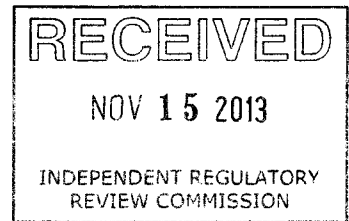
Thank you for your consideration,

Kat O'Connor  
parent of 2 children in the Allentown School District  
1015 N. 21st Street  
Allentown, PA 18104  
610-432-4983  
tapnappers@yahoo.com

**Cooper, Kathy**

---

**From:** John Gillespie <jcgillespie@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 1:11 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams



Dear Sirs,

It is my understanding that the proposed Key Stone exams will cost taxpayers about \$300 million dollars and that it is possible a student could have excellent grades, even straight "A"s and not qualify for graduation if he failed even one of the exams. Bottom line, let us not pay more money for testing. If we want to spend more money on education, let us pay it to increase the effectiveness of our education program, not spend it on more tests!

Sincerely yours,

John Gillespie

104 Fairfax Ct. Phoenixville, PA 19460

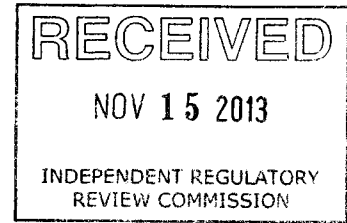
[jcgillespie@verizon.net](mailto:jcgillespie@verizon.net)

h:610-933-8822 c:610-513-3487

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Steve Dillon <steve@pennglassfender.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 1:09 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Common Core



To whom it may concern:

Please do not adopt the common core standards in Pennsylvania. It is very clear that these standards will necessarily lower the education of our children in some very important areas, especially in the truth in regard to U.S. History, our Christian Heritage, and so much more. I am convinced that Common Core is possibly the worst imaginable government takeover of American Society, by indoctrinating our children and not teaching them how to think for themselves. Using a one size fits all approach to education. Please, please be honest and open-minded about the underlying reasons and implications of this deliberately designed, control designed, product of the elite few. The federal government has held and is holding individual states and their Departments of Education hostage by demanding certain results in exchange for federal dollars. All the while, making themselves look like the good guys.

Respectfully,  
Steve Dillon

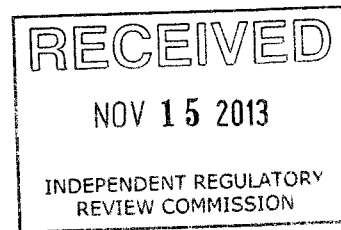


**Glass & Fender** Steve Dillon - President  
[www.pennglassfender.com](http://www.pennglassfender.com)  
531 Theatre Rd ♦ St. Benedict, PA  
800.222.9020 814-948-8029  
'Like' us on [Facebook](#)

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Jen Roth <jcwj.roth@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 1:06 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Oppose Keystone Exams!



Dear IRRC,

I am a parent in the West Chester Area School District, and I oppose the Keystone Exams. My children are good students who work hard at school, and are learning a lot from our fabulous and dedicated teachers. I trust their teachers to keep track of their progress, and I can see how much they are learning at home. I don't think we need yet another standardized exam. My son just took the first Keystone in Algebra, and while he passed it with no problems, I think it's unnecessary. He is taking 3 Honors classes, and 2 Seminar classes, and getting straight As. What if he had a bad day when he took the Keystone and failed it? What if he would be unable to pass it and then wouldn't not be able get a high school diploma? It seems redundant and unfair to add more standardized testing to the load. The students already spend way too much time getting ready for these tests than they do learning the actual material. Please oppose the Keystone Exam!

Jen Roth

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Girard, Claudine <GirardC@MLHS.ORG>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 12:59 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** opposed

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INDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
REVIEW COMMISSION

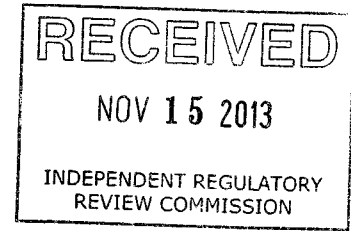
I am opposed to the keystone exams and higher taxes , stop making these kids constantly take exams and let them get on with learning

*Claudine Girard*  
*Patient Access*  
484-565-8455

**Cooper, Kathy**

---

**From:** WILLARD THOMPSON <willandterri@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 12:57 PM  
**To:** IRRC; John Eichelburger; Jerry Stern; Lois Kaneshiki  
**Subject:** Common Core



To whom it may concern:

I'm a school board director and I'm against any federal intrusion into our Commonwealth's Educational System. What other mandates will be coming funded or unfunded? We live in a time that those , who have gotten power, no longer listen to their citizens. We must not remove Constitutional Boundries of Governance! Our students should not be driven like cattle and put into chutes that lead to the slaughter house, meaning only one destination/career path. They should be able to choose their own destination as to career and not by standards by some elitist body.

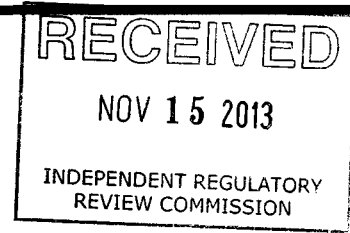
Freedom/ Liberty only come from God and not Government. It is Government's duty to protect not to destroy God given rights to choose .

Willard J. Thompson  
Spring Cove School Board Director  
Republican Representative Freedom Township #1 District , Blair County Republican Committee.

**Cooper, Kathy**

---

**From:** Daniel Fernandes <athenadaniel@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 12:53 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Opposed to Keystone Testing



Dear IRRC representative -

I am opposed to additional Keystone testing since we already have classroom tests and PSSA tests that consume all the available time, energy and bandwidth our children possess. Please vote against this test!!!

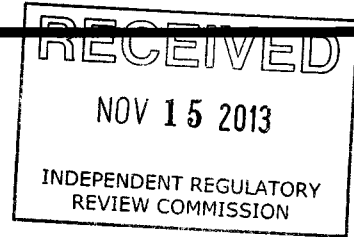
Thanks,  
Daniel Fernandes



**Cooper, Kathy**

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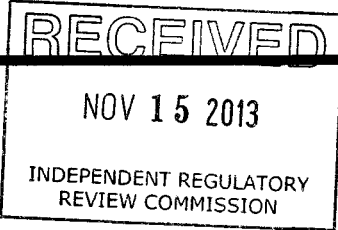
**From:** celia659@verizon.net  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 12:52 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Keystone exams



I am opposed to the addition of the Keystone exams – too much teaching for exams and not education

**Cooper, Kathy**

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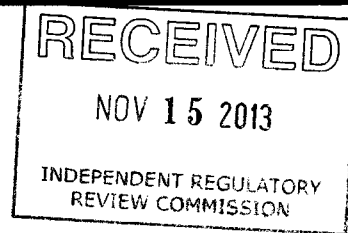
**From:** aodz@aol.com  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 12:50 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Keystone exams

Who profits materially from these exams? Who writes, manufactures and sells them? Who profits politically?? Certainly, students who are tested ad nauseum now, beleaguered teachers, and taxpayers do not profit educationally from them. anne dzamba, [aodz@aol.com](mailto:aodz@aol.com)

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** dshifdy@aol.com  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 12:50 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Keystone exams



To whom it may concern,

I don't think the Keystone mandatory exams have been thought through enough. The unfunded mandate is going to be an unfair burden to many property owners.

It will be, as well, a waste of classroom time, as teachers will be teaching to the test instead of spending time teaching students who need instruction. Perhaps we can squeeze out property owners until only large corporations can own land.

This seems to be the direction of the Corbett administration. Please don't add to the burdens of citizens and school districts with dubious mandates that may not be to the betterment of anyone, Sincerely, Dennis Schaefer

**Cooper, Kathy**

---

**From:** Desiree Cantwell <momwithtwins@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 12:41 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Keystone exams



Dear Sirs,

As a teacher and a parent of twins with special needs, I oppose the passing of the Keystone Exams as a graduation requirement. Teachers have been spending their time teaching students how to pass these tests. This large effort has taken their time away from teaching them 21st Century Skills that they will require in the working world.

As a parent of a daughter with Cerebral Palsy, it is unfair to ask a child with learning disabilities to pass the Keystone Exams in order to graduate.

Please consider the educational needs of the students and remove passing the Keystone Exam as a graduation requirement.

Sincerely,  
Desiree Cantwell  
608 Whiteland Hunt Road  
Downingtown, PA 19335

**Cooper, Kathy**

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NOV 15 2013  
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REVIEW COMMISSION

**From:** Jeffrey Sutton <suttonx4@msn.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 12:43 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Keystone exams

**THIS IS A COMPLETE AND TOTAL WASTE OF TIME AND MONEY. PLEASE DO NOT  
INSTITUTE THE KEYSTONE EXAMS.**

**Robin and Jeffrey Sutton**

**Sent from my iPad**

**Cooper, Kathy**

---

**From:** ccdiehl81@juno.com  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 12:37 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Cc:** dinnimansenate@gmail.com; kampfhouse@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams



Dear Review Commission,

I am writing to please request that you oppose the Keystone Graduation Exams. These exams are a burden to the taxpayers and an insult to the educational process already in place. Our students are already wasting way too many education days on test taking and test preparation. Please let our school districts do their job without this interference. Please use whatever budget money you are looking to spend on these tests on the unfunded pension liability that the state needs to take ownership of and fund.

Thank you very much.

Regards,

Carol Diehl

Tredyffrin-Easttown School District

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**How to Sleep Like a Rock**

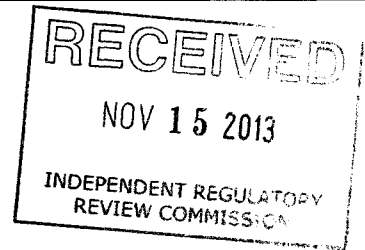
Obey this one natural trick to fall asleep and stay asleep all night.

[peaklife.com](http://peaklife.com)

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Kimberly Benston <kbenston@haverford.edu>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 12:39 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Keystone Graduation Exams



To whom it may concern,

I write as a concerned parent whose two children completed their wonderful education in the Pennsylvania school system ten years ago. When I read about the Keystone Graduation Exams I was horrified, recognizing immediately in that proposed legislation a serious threat to the quality of education in our state. "Teaching to the exam" has been proven for the past fifteen years to be an utter catastrophe for developing core competencies in students and sustaining vigorous, alert teaching in the classroom. We know this approach is disastrous by every measure of learning--be it content retention or critical thinking--and yet politicians persist in using crude, reductive, and destructive measures in order to discipline schools and produce "results" that make for easy public discussions of complex but important challenges. This proposed law is one of the worst examples of this reductionism ever produced by a state in the nation, and I urge its repudiation.

A final word from the vantage of someone engaged in higher education: students taught against metrics of this sort are very ill-prepared for the intricate challenges of higher-level academic work. They cannot tell the difference between information and noise, they use information uncreatively, and they cannot formulate the right questions or produce meaningful solutions. They are very difficult to prepare for the challenges they will face in the workplace and in confronting the key issues of our time. All of us in the educational world are responsible for improving this problem. But the problem--or solution--begins with K-12 education, where a provision like Keystone Graduation Exams will make an increasingly bad situation far worse. This law, then, will ultimately prove a disaster for our state's economy, producing young adults very ill-equipped to enter a world driven increasingly by knowledge and open only to those who are agile in sifting stuff from meaningful fact. A lot is at stake here. Again, I urge repudiation of this misguided proposal.

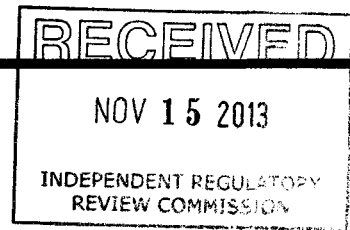
Best,

K.W. Benston  
Haverford, PA

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Ellen Hulnick <ellen@hulnick.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 12:38 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Keystone Graduation Exams



As a recently retired educator I am extremely concerned about the Keystone Graduation Exams. The testing put in place by our government programs have taken the spontaneity and creativity out of our classrooms. We waste our days focusing on what will be tested rather than how to make our students life long learners. How can you even think about not allowing a senior to receive their diploma if they have successfully passed all their classes and failed one exam? Have you ever had a bad day in your years of education? Would you have liked to be punished by not being allowed to receive your diploma for one bad exam? It appears that a lot more planning needs to be put in place before this exam is allowed to affect our students.....as well as our school taxes!

Ellen Hulnick



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Ginger Covington <gincov@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 12:35 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Opposition to Keystone Exams



Dear Members of IRRC:

As a taxpayer in Chester County and a voter, I would like to let you know that I am opposed to having Keystone Graduation Exams that allows high school students to complete their courses with passing grades and have their diplomas withheld due to failing these exams. I understand that too many kids graduate high school without learning some of the the basic fundamentals, but I think standardized exams like these would not be beneficial to these students. Teachers will stop their classroom instruction and just focus on teaching the students how to pass these tests!

Also, as a retiree, I do not want to see my school property taxes raised to support this type of unfunded state initiative. This type of mandate would put more financial stress on some already distressed local school districts!

Thanks for considering my concerns about implementing the Keystone Graduation Exam to students to allow them to receive their diplomas. I am requesting that you vote to reject the Keystone Graduation Exams on Nov 21.

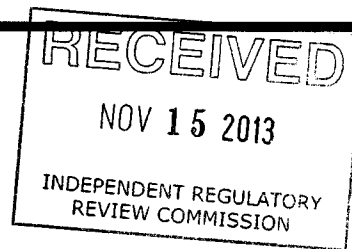
Sincerely,  
Geneva Covington  
406 Spackman Lane  
Exton PA. 19341

Sent from my iPhone

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** NANCY RUTHERFORD <ncr719@me.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 12:33 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Disapprove of keystone graduation exams

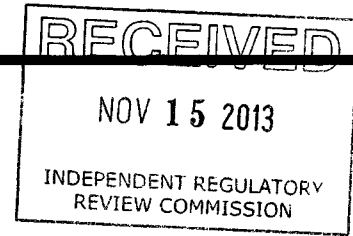


Sent from my iPad

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** mgehris11@verizon.net  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 12:31 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams

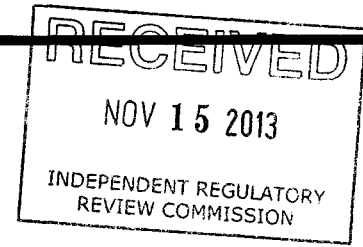


I oppose the Keystone Exams. It is fundamentally wrong for three standardized tests to determine a student's high school graduation, especially when those tests were developed with no input whatsoever from a course teacher or local district. It is irresponsible to implement a program of graduation exams that will result in the largest unfunded mandate in the past 50 years. The proposed Keystone Exams require school districts to provide remediation and supplementary instruction for students who do not pass. However, the Pennsylvania Department of Education provides no funding whatsoever for remediation costs. It is estimated that the exams will result in an unfunded mandate of more than \$300 million a year. This will be passed onto taxpayers in the form of massive school property tax increases. How can we, in good conscience, spend millions to implement a new testing program - a program that will likely bankrupt our poorest schools? It doesn't make sense for the Pennsylvania Department of Education to continue to expand standardized testing at a time when increasing evidence challenges the notion that it is the best way to gauge student achievement and learning. Already, anywhere from 10 to 20 days (out of a 180-day school year) of instruction time is lost to testing and test preparation. Almost all of the superintendents and Intermediate Unit Directors in the Philadelphia suburbs have signed onto a position paper opposing them. This is a clear indication that something is wrong.

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Angela Locher <imangel55@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 12:10 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Opposition to Keystone Graduation Exams



To Whom it May Concern,

Already, almost all (58 of the 61) of the superintendents and all four intermediate unit directors serving students and taxpayers in Chester, Montgomery, Delaware, and Bucks counties have expressed their opposition to the Keystone Graduation Exams.

If approved, high school students starting with current freshmen (Class of 2017) will face the possibility of passing all their classes with straight A's yet failing one of the keystones and not getting a diploma. This is completely unacceptable. A child's eligibility for a diploma should not be based on their ability to take a test. There are plenty of highly intelligent individuals that struggle with test-taking. This is a ridiculous solution and I oppose it entirely.

If approved, it is conservatively estimated that the exams will result in an unfunded mandate of more than \$300 million a year. There is no doubt that that will translate to soaring school property taxes, which no family (and especially no senior citizens) can afford in this awful economy.

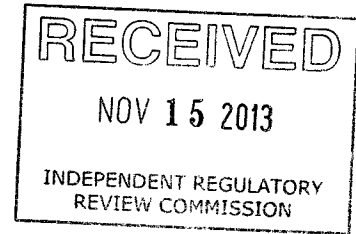
I urge you not to approve this legislation.

-Angela Locher

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** francisst1@aol.com  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 12:10 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** keystone graduation exams



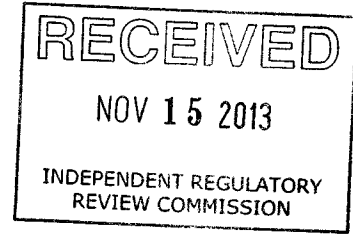
Please note that I am opposed to the keystone graduation exams.  
Sandra T. Francis, Ph.D  
West Grove, PA 19390  
registered democrat

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Neil Head <head@kleinhead.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 12:06 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** I hope your commission rejects the Keystone Graduation Exams. They make no sense.

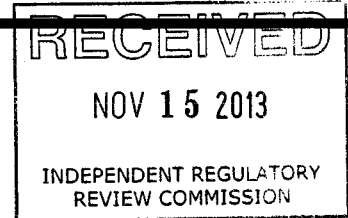
Neil W. Head  
[head@kleinhead.com](mailto:head@kleinhead.com)  
218 West Miner Street  
West Chester, PA 19382-2925  
610 436 4143



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Hoffman, Kathleen E. <khoffman@wcasd.k12.pa.us>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 12:05 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Keystones



**Do NOT allow these tests to be approved in the state of PA. They are unfair to students, school districts, taxpayers and communities.**

**Kathy Hoffman**

**West Chester, PA 19380**

**Employed by West Chester Area School District**

**Cooper, Kathy**

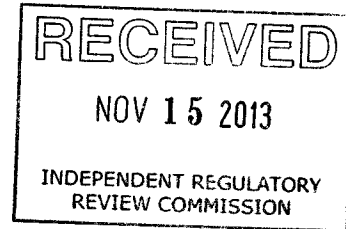
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**From:** Beth <bethhandwerger@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 12:02 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Keystone exams

Please if not pass the bill requiring Keystone exams. There are so many tests already at the schools. When is there time to teach ? I do not want my children's education based on what they need to know for an exam. Let teachers teach for the sake of teaching, rather than preparing students only to pass an exam.

Thank you  
Beth Handwerger, M.D.

Sent from my iPhone





**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** James Charnock <charnockjtc@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:59 AM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Keystone Graduation Exams

1. As per Rep. Andy Dinnimen's revelations I urge you not to vote yea to approve the passage of the Keystone Graduation Exams.
2. In addition, unless the state is willing to fully pay for this additional burden--and instruction-robbing time--on students, teachers and school districts, this proposal should not be approved.

Thank you,  
James T. Charnock



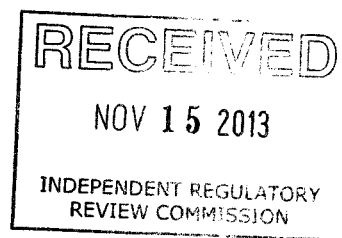
**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Stevens, Betsy <bstevens\_01@arcadia.edu>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:53 AM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams

I am opposed to the Keystone Graduation Exams. We need to change the way teachers teach and update the curriculum to be more multicultural rather than creating higher costs in Education that we the people can't afford.

Betsy Stevens



**Cooper, Kathy**

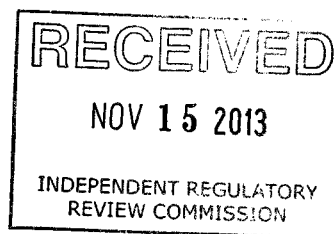
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**From:** Dombroski, Ruth <ruth.dombroski@siemens.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:52 AM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Opposed to the Keystone Graduation Exams

Please take note I am opposed to this and want to voice my concerns.

Ruth Dombroski

This message and any attachments are solely for the use of intended recipients. The information contained herein may include trade secrets, protected health or personal information, privileged or otherwise confidential information. Unauthorized review, forwarding, printing, copying, distributing, or using such information is strictly prohibited and may be unlawful. If you are not an intended recipient, you are hereby notified that you received this email in error, and that any review, dissemination, distribution or copying of this email and any attachment is strictly prohibited. If you have received this email in error, please contact the sender and delete the message and any attachment from your system. Thank you for your cooperation



**Cooper, Kathy**

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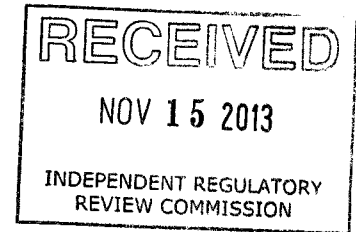
**From:** tom.barchfeld@juno.com  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 2:00 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Common Core

Common Core will lower our standards and cost PA taxpayers an extra 645 million over the next 7 years. You have to be insane to vote for that!

Tom Barchfeld  
Allegheny County

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**5 Ways to LOWER blood sugar**  
1 EASY tip to increase fat-burning, lower blood sugar & decrease fat storage  
[info.fixyourbloodsugar.com](http://info.fixyourbloodsugar.com)



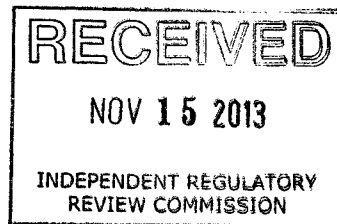
**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Kathleen Hevey <khevey61@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 2:01 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Keystone Graduation Exams

I am extremely opposed to the institution of the Keystone Graduation Exams. Leave education initiatives up to parents and individual school districts. No More Government Interference!!!

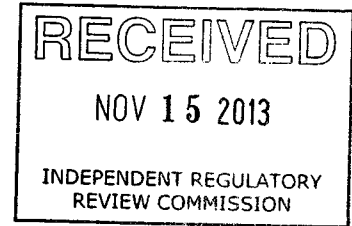
*Kathy Hevey*  
[khevey61@verizon.net](mailto:khevey61@verizon.net)



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Yohn, Cheryl on behalf of Help  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 2:50 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** FW: IRRC Website - New Message



**From:** [ContactForm@state.pa.us](mailto:ContactForm@state.pa.us) [mailto:ContactForm@state.pa.us]  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 12:49 PM  
**To:** Help  
**Subject:** IRRC Website - New Message



**IRRC**

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**Independent Regulatory Review Commission**

A new message has arrived from the IRRC Website

**First Name:** Jack

**Last Name:** Silva

**City/State:** Bethlehem, PA

**Email:** [jsilva@beth.k12.pa.us](mailto:jsilva@beth.k12.pa.us)

**Subject:** Chapter 4 Revision

**Message:**

Whatever you do, do NOT make passing the Keystone Exams a graduation requirement for the Classes of 2014, 2015, or 2016. It would be a complete betrayal of students, teachers, and administrators who have done much work (changed course sequences, schedules, etc.) to prepare students in the Class of 2017. As a parent and district administrator, I can tell you that putting current sophomores or juniors on the Keystone hook for graduation would be unfair and outrageous. Dr. Jack P. Silva Assistant Superintendent Bethlehem Area School District

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** JUDY WALKER <kulzer123@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 3:01 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Keystone Graduation Exam legislation

To Whom It May Concern,

I am opposed to passage of the above legislation for many reasons....primarily I don't believe in this type of testing...as I feel that then, teachers will only teach to the 'test' etc. There is so much more to the educational process that can't be tested by this means.

This hasn't worked with No Child Left Behind, that was a complete disaster and I don't feel this new proposal of testing will improve the educational system one iota.

Programs that are mandated but no funded means only one thing....my taxes will go up...and for a stupid reason. If I see value in the educational programs that may have an impact on taxes, then I don't mind paying, since I know that the quality of a school district, in the end, effects the value of my real estate.

My children are grown and have gone through the public school system. My grandchildren have recently entered into the public school system. I believe in that system - there must be other ways to improve it, not more testing!

Judith L. Walker  
343 Sharpless St.  
West Chester, Pa. 19382



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Richard Very, Jr. (PHOENIX) <rveryjr@phoenixbcinc.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:35 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** IRRC No. 2976 - OPPOSED !!!

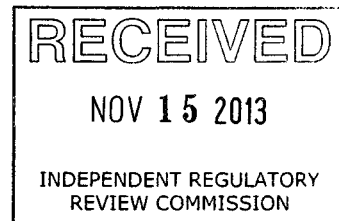
Dear David Sumner:

As a voting citizen, I wanted to express my DEEP CONCERN over our State Of Pennsylvania adopting the Common Core standards and principles.

Specifically, the unidentified costs of implementing and sustaining the requirements of IRRC No. 2976 would an extreme burden on taxpayers and MOST importantly, it significantly limits the freedom and imagination for our very capable teachers in our classrooms.

Richard M. Very, Jr.

**Richard M. Very, Jr., CPIM**  
PHOENIX Business Consulting, Inc.  
Cell: 412.855.6044 Fax: 425.988.7102  
[www.phoenixbcinc.com](http://www.phoenixbcinc.com)





**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** NateWolman@aol.com  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:45 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Opposition to the Keystone Exams

Dear Mr. Sumner:

I am writing to you to voice my opposition to the Keystone Exams. I do not feel that all the students in Pennsylvania are playing on the same playing field or with the same equipment when it comes to the Keystones.

I hope that the Keystones can be eliminated and we can come up with a more equitable way evaluating our teaching standards.

Regards,

Nate Wolman



## Cooper, Kathy

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**From:** Michael D. Donovan, Esq. <mdonovan@donovanaxler.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:48 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** andy@pasenate.com  
**Subject:** Keystone Graduation Exams

Dear Commissioners: I write to express my family's strong opposition to the Keystone Graduation Exams.

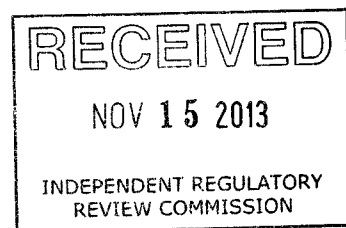
All three of my children graduated from Conestoga High School in Chester County. One of our daughters had a learning disability, which made it difficult for her to take standardized tests. Still, she went on to graduate from Penn State's main campus within 4 years, based in large part on the outstanding work of the fabulous teachers and support staff at Conestoga. My other daughter graduated from Temple within 4 years as well, again based on the superb education she received at Conestoga. My son is currently a sophomore at George Washington University, where a political science professor just complimented him with an A on an 8 page paper - observing in his notes that my son is a fantastic writer - after telling the rest of the class that they really needed to learn how to write.

I believe these real-world facts demonstrate that the Keystone Graduation Exam is misguided and misdirected. If the Commission is determined to implement some form of standardization throughout the Commonwealth, I suggest it take a cue from New York State and implement a form of regents test. While all students could be required to take such a test, a poor grade would not prevent graduation. Instead, a good grade (above some set minimum) would mean an automatic state-funded scholarship of \$1000 to be applied to tuition at any Commonwealth public university or college. Better yet, specific subject exams could also be included, to induce promising students to stay in-state by awarding even greater scholarship benefits to be used exclusively at Commonwealth universities and colleges.

Please reject the Keystone Graduation Exam plan and substitute a regents form of testing. In my experience, money motivates better than diploma punishment.

Respectfully,

Michael D. Donovan  
Donovan Axler, LLC  
1845 Walnut Street, Suite 1100  
Philadelphia, PA 19103  
215-732-6067  
215-732-8060(fax)  
[mdonovan@donovanaxler.com](mailto:mdonovan@donovanaxler.com)  
[www.donovanaxler.com](http://www.donovanaxler.com)



**IMPORTANT:** This e-mail message is not intended to be binding or relied upon and, without limitation on the foregoing, shall not create, waive or modify any right, obligation or liability, or be construed to contain or be an electronic signature, to constitute a notice, approval, waiver or election, or to form, modify, amend or terminate any contract. The information contained in this message is confidential and is intended only for the named addressee(s). This message may be protected by the attorney/client privilege. If the reader of this message is not an intended recipient (or the individual responsible for the delivery of this message to an intended recipient), please be advised that any re-use, dissemination, distribution or copying of this message is prohibited. If you have received this message in error, please reply to the sender that you have received the message in error and then delete it. Thank you.

**Cooper, Kathy**

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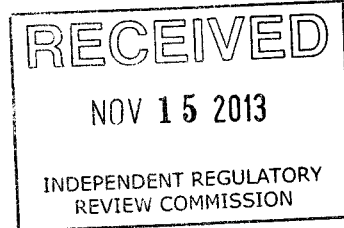
**From:** Lynn Strauss <lynnfstrauss@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:41 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** DinnimanSenate@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Keystone exam

Please consider removing Keystone exam requirement until such time as you can prove the state is providing adequate funding for all districts and all special needs students so the students can pass these tests. Also consider adding additional school days to cover testing time. At this point PA has districts (Phila. and Chester for example) lacking the basics of school guidance councilors, nurses, books, school supplies..... Fund education and then see if it is working. The Keystone should be used, if at all, to measure how a district or individual school is doing, not as a graduation requirement. **FUND PUBLIC EDUCATION IN PA!!!!!!!!!!**

Lynn Strauss  
West Goshen PA

Keep it Green Interiors

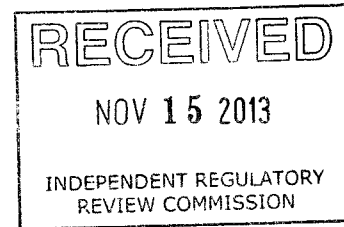
Sent from my iPhone



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** sherrie deegan <sherrie\_deegan@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:46 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** norrmetz@verizon.net  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams



To Whom It May Concern:

Why do we still think that a cumulative, standardized, 2-3 hour test shows the capabilities of an individual, and that the average score on these tests is the best measure of a district's performance?

I did not get into college or graduate school based on my SAT's and GRE's and I did not learn to be a counselor by passing my comprehensive exams in graduate school. Colleges look at the whole individual as do employers when they search for job candidates. Yes, the professions need tests to certify individuals to make sure they have met a standard to practice. But students in middle and high school are still learning, even learning how to learn, study, and take tests, just as people continually learn in their jobs and life. Is your job performance based on how you do 3 hours out of the 1600 hours you work in a year?

We know that there are so many variables that make districts unequal; SES, tax revenue, location, expenses, school condition, class size, curriculum offered, and the list goes on and on. In a perfect world all students in Pennsylvania (and in the US) would receive the same top notch education that my children receive. But the reality is that this inequality exists, so why not take the estimated 300 million dollars that Pennsylvania will spend annually to administer the Keystone Exams and use it to improve and support the schools/districts in PA that need more resources, teachers, training, better buildings, computer and science labs, libraries etc.

Once you score these tests, compile the data and report the results, then what? Are you going to punish the lower performing schools? Do we punish our students when they don't perform? Should we punish our teachers? This obviously makes no sense.

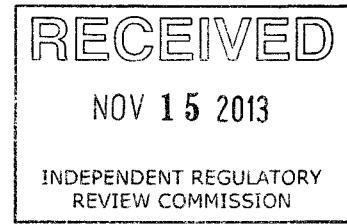
Please re-evaluate the purpose and administration of the Keystone exams and at a minimum do not link them to graduation requirement.. Do we really want to keep implementing practices that have little to no value?

Thank you,  
Sherrie Deegan (Lower Merion parent)

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Bonnie Simon <bonsipsy@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:50 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** dleach@pasenate.com  
**Subject:** VOTE NO on Chapter 4 Regulations



**SUBJECT: VOTE NO on Chapter 4 Regulations**

My name is Bonnie Simon. I live in Merion Station, 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,

Bonnie Simon  
[bonsipsy@aol.com](mailto:bonsipsy@aol.com)

**Cooper, Kathy**

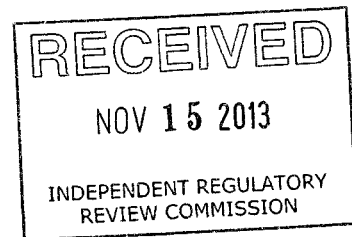
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**From:** irisrosenberg@verizon.net  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 12:03 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone exams

I am a parent of Lower Merion school students. I strongly opposed the required keystones as a graduation requirement. Please do NOT make the students to have to take this test.

Sincerely,  
Iris Rosenberg

Sent from my iPhone



**Cooper, Kathy**

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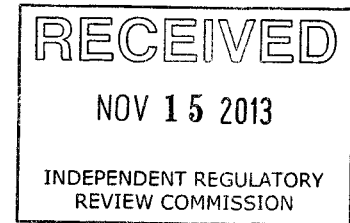
**From:** Holli <hmuffler@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:58 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Vote to reject Keystone Exams

Good Afternoon Mr. Sumner,

I fully agree with Senator Dinniman's article. My son is part of the class of 2017 and for one test to say whether he can pass or fail high school is ridiculous. Students already spend too much time preparing for the PSSA's and now the administration wants to take more quality teaching time for the Keystones? Teaching for the test is not going to create high level functioning kids.

I vote to reject the Keystone exam

Holli Muffler



**Cooper, Kathy**

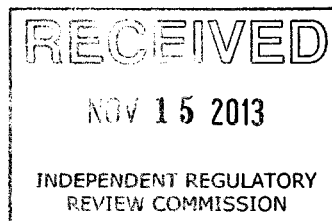
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**From:** george bierker <crankybier@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 12:03 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Disagreement with Dinniman

I believe opposition to uniform standardized tests is rooted in the "education establishments" unwillingness for student performance to be measured effectively. The notion that an actual straight A student could theoretically fail the test is ludicrous. Absent a meaningful test grade inflation would apply. That way all students would not only be "above average", as in Lake Wobegon, but outstanding. Gets the "educators" off the hook. A "C" grade used to mean average. Now any student breathing and well behaved gets an A.

I went to NY schools which have had a Regents exam for 100(?) years. Yes, teachers taught the test but in the process we actually learned something. Until modern education theory favoring self esteem over knowledge took over, NY had the best schools in the country. NY has now reintroduced a "watered down" Regents exams designed so that most students are granted a "Regents Diploma". That was not the case in the far past, say prior to 1960.

I urge you to disregard the whiners but am not hopeful. There are too many of them exploited by politicians like Dinniman playing to the crowd on behalf of the teacher's unions





**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Hoffman, Kathleen E. <khoffman@wcasd.k12.pa.us>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 12:04 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams

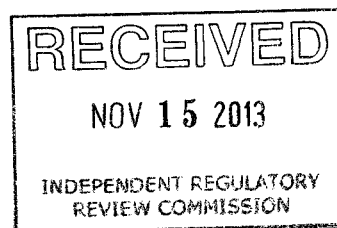
I strongly object to the Keystone Graduation exams proposed for the state of PA. They do not measure students' ability to learn and should not be required to graduate. I hope this gets voted down. It will be too much of a financial burden on school districts, in addition to not being fair to students who worked hard and got passing grades in their classes.

Sincerely,

**Kathy Hoffman**

**Concerned Taxpayer in West Chester, PA 19380**

**Also employed by West Chester Area School District**



**Cooper, Kathy**

---

**From:** Suzanne M Roth <suzannemroth@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 12:19 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Graduation Examinations

Dear Mr. Sumner and Board Members,

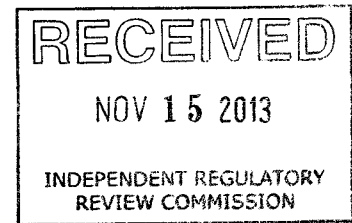
I am appalled that the Board would consider adding another layer of testing for graduating seniors and particularly since the cost of this testing could reach or exceed \$300 million. The \$300 million is needed today in our schools across the state. The children of Pennsylvania are being cheated of a first class education for lack of funding and teaching to tests.

I hope that your Board DOES NOT advance this testing idea. Instead, insure that all schools have libraries with librarians, music, art, physical education, counselors and enough teachers to bring class sizes down to a manageable level.

I thank you for your consideration in bringing Pennsylvania schools up to their former standards and educating our future generations for productive lives.

Sincerely,

Suzanne M. Roth (Mrs. George T. Graham)  
610.827.7527



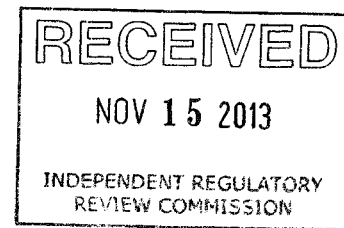
**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Angela Marvin <afmdbm1@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 12:10 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** IRRC No. 2976

From a teacher's point of view: I attended a Common Core workshop in August, 2012, and had several strong objections: The program is "light" on literature, "light" on history (We already have serious problems there.), and the math procedures are ridiculous. As a teacher with 30 years experience, I've seen many educational fads come and go. This one should "go!"

Mrs. Angela Marvin, M.A., M.S.Ed.



**Cooper, Kathy**

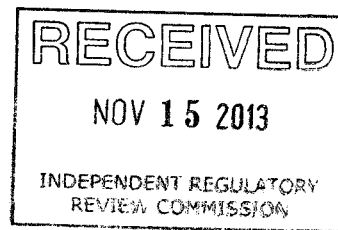
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**From:** anastasia frandsen <trayfran@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 12:39 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** dleach@pasenate.com; repbriggs@pahouse.net; repmaryjodaley@pahouse.net; mfolmer@pasen.gov; BONEill@pahousegop.com; repdelissio@pahouse.net  
**Subject:** VOTE NO on Chapter 4 Regulations

My name is Anastasia Frandsen. I live in Ardmore, 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,

Anastasia Frandsen



**Cooper, Kathy**

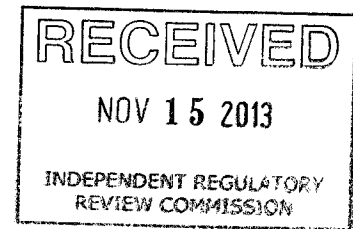
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**From:** Linda Novack <lnovack1@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 12:22 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Vote against the keystone exams

**As a retired Philadelphia public school teacher, I have to say that I'm sick of politicians ( who have never been in a classroom), deciding what is good for students.**

**Governor Corbett needs to be replaced!!!! Vote NO!!!!**

**Sent from my iPad**



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** McLaren S. <dawgcohnah@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 12:35 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** Senator Andrew Dinniman  
**Subject:** Keystone Graduation Exams

When will school districts understand that students are individuals with individual talents, and weaknesses, that need to be honored, not shoved into a box of standardized tests?

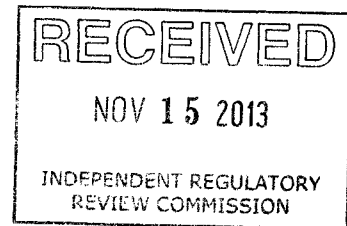
Keystone Graduation Exams are in your hands to support or not.

My vote is DO NOT SUPPORT Keystone Graduation Exams.

The people best qualified to pass a student out of high school, or not, are the teachers and school advisors. The multiple factors involved cannot be measured on yet another standardized test.

Consider a "certificate of completion" if needed, instead of a high school diploma but do not burden the students or the school system with yet another test to show a square peg just might fit into a round hole.

Sue McLaren  
105 Hoffecker Road  
Phoenixville PA 19460



**Cooper, Kathy**

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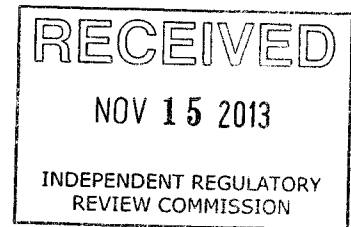
**From:** Naomi Langford <langfordtribe@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 12:42 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Oppose Common Core standards

Dear Mr. Sumner,

I'm writing to let you know that I oppose PA adopting the common core standards. It is unclear how much it is going to cost and our school budgets are already strained. It is also uncertain that these standards will improve learning outcomes for our students. Please allow our local schools to continue to choose their own curriculum and not be forced to follow standards imposed from the outside with little public knowledge and support of what is going on.

Thank you,  
Naomi Langford  
Pittsburgh, PA

Sent from my iPad



**Cooper, Kathy**

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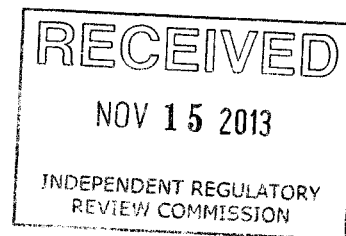
**From:** Naomi Langford <langfordtribe@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 12:46 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Oppose IRRC No. 2976

Dear Mr. Sumner,

I'm writing to let you know that I oppose adopting the PA core standards. It is unclear how much it is going to cost and our school budgets are already strained. It is also uncertain that these standards will improve learning outcomes for our students. Please allow our local schools to continue to choose their own curriculum and not be forced to follow standards imposed from the outside with little public knowledge and support of what is going on.

Thank you,  
Naomi Langford  
Pittsburgh, PA

Sent from my iPad





**Cooper, Kathy**

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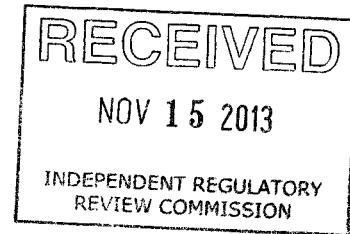
**From:** Suzanne Kane <samador@haverford.edu>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 1:01 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams for Pennsylvania schools

Dear Director Sumner,

I am writing to protest the implementation of Keystone Exams in our local public schools. These exams will further waste our children's time on exam preparation, when their time is much better spent studying real subjects. They already have to devote far too much of the school year to exam preparation. I have seen NO improvements since this whole nonsensical No Child Left Behind movement started. Improve the schools that struggle. Take this stupid big government burden off the schools that are working, and free up the resources to do what will actually do some good for a change.

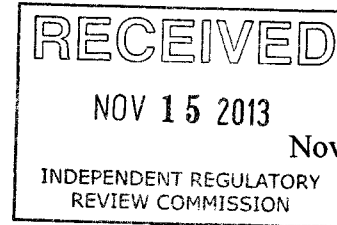
Sincerely,

Suzanne Kane  
407 Anthwyn Road  
Narberth PA 19072



Patricia Rasmussen  
103 Rose Lane  
Haverford, PA 19041

Independent Regulatory Review Commission  
David Sumner, Executive Director  
333 Market Street, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17101



November 14, 2013

Dear Mr. Sumner,

As a taxpayer and mother of three children in Pennsylvania's public school system, I am writing to publicly state my opposition to the Keystone exams and ask that you **reject the proposed Chapter 4 regulations** on November 21, 2013.

The Keystone exams do not gauge critical thinking skills. Nor do they account for the diversity of learners taking them. Having a "standard" test for a student whose first language is not English, or a student who has learning differences, or a student who has no access to textbooks because her district is bankrupt, or a student who passed the class with ease but struggles on tests, is **unjust** and should not dictate who "earns" a diploma.

In addition, the millions of dollars spent annually to administer these tests is also **unjust** given the different financial needs of different districts. Some Philadelphia Public Schools are bankrupt and don't have access to textbooks or libraries. Their budget cuts have forced lay offs of thousands of teachers and staff leaving classrooms well beyond capacity. Some districts are forced to shut down valued programs like art and music because they need to divert their money and time to test taking and preparation. Last year, Upper Darby School District was forced to cut art, music, and physical education because of budget cuts and the ever mounting pressure of state assessments. Our district, Lower Merion, is a high performing district whose AYP (Annual Yearly Progress) is consistently at the top. How can we have one "standard" for each of these districts?

The Keystone exams are my reason for writing today, but their removal is just a minor step in public education reform. As long as the common core standards do not embrace the diversity of learners in our various school districts, the high-stake testing movement will continue to be detrimental to our education system. It is time to place autonomy back in the hands of our schools and teachers!

Sincerely,

Patricia Rasmussen

**Cooper, Kathy**

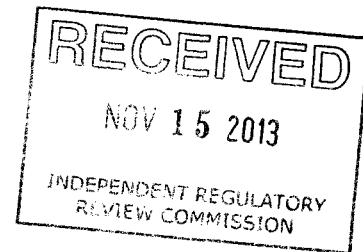
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**From:** Daniel Fernandes <athenadaniel@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 12:56 PM  
**To:** David Sumner

Hello Mr. Sumner -

I would like to register my opposition to the Keystone Exams. It is yet another burden on our children in addition to Classroom tests and PSSAs. Kindly vote against this on behalf of concerned parents.

Sincerely,  
Daniel Fernandes



**Cooper, Kathy**

RECEIVED

**From:** Diane Jones <runnerjones@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 1:05 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Common Core Concerns IRRC No. 2976

NOV 15 2013

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
REVIEW COMMISSION

I am a lifelong resident of Pennsylvania. The current Common Core or Pennsylvania Core Standards are of great concern to me and my family. I have three children who range in grade level from Pre-K through third grade. My third grader currently has six weeks scheduled for standardized testing this school year. Within the first six weeks of the current school year, one week was spent teaching the students to use the laptops and software that would be used to proctor the exams. The next two weeks were spent taking assessment exams. Half of the first six weeks of school were spent on assessments and not instruction.

I have seen both of my elementary school aged children lose math skills since the start of the school year. Over the summer, I worked with my children daily on math facts, reading and writing. They mastered appropriate grade level math facts. After a month of school, my second grader was unable to answer basic subtraction problems.

My children love learning new math concepts, science facts, challenging vocabulary words, and cultures from places on the map they never noticed before. They dread test days. Testing is stressful and creates a dislike of school. Each day of standardized testing takes away one day of instruction from my children. With six weeks of testing and then an extra week or two for test training, children are losing seven or eight weeks of instruction time.

Testing is a large part of the implementation of Common core. I send my children to school to learn, not to be constantly assessed by the government. I would love for schools to have the opportunity to foster and nurture learning with creative teaching methods that allow students to enjoy learning new things. Teachers are already feeling the pressure to teach to the test. The more tests we force on teachers and students, the more stress children undergo and they less they will learn and retain.

Please put an end to Common Core in Pennsylvania. Stop the testing. Let the teachers teach creatively and encourage each child to use his own thinking skills to solve problems. When students are spoon fed facts for testing, they will not learn how to problem solve. Please give my children the opportunity to learn in an assessment-free environment.

Diane Lipski

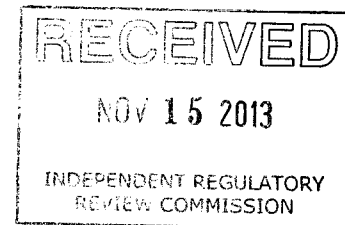
## Cooper, Kathy

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**From:** Mike Zellers <mike@jerseyshorewater.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 1:28 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** Pastor DI (dilonna@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** IRRC No. 2976

David Summer, Executive Director of IRRC,

Mr. Summer: the state government can run the department of education without the federal government. Look at the latest federal government signature program and just how well it was thought out and implemented on the American people, which also is the state of Pennsylvania. Yes the affordable care act. The short term and long term ramifications of that process speaks loud and clear to the lack of excellence in the process and finished product. We the people want smaller and more efficient government especially in the department of education. Over the past 50-years removing the pillars from education has done extreme damage and has lowered the standards. Go back to the basic pillars of education and watch the educational system prosper. A small administration staff and enlarge the number of teachers, putting them back to work in the class room teaching those excellent foundational principals which your grandfather grew up under and developed and made this nation and Pennsylvania the keystone state, great. With all the money and improvements we have attempted in the educational system over the past 40 or 50 years, how do we measure up to the rest of the world? We can do much better, revisit the basin foundational principals established by the writers of our constitution, at a young age they were doing ok, and so can we do ok, if we get back on track and following known and quality standard and clear and measurable objectives PA and America will prosper. Mike Zellers, Jersey Shore PA.



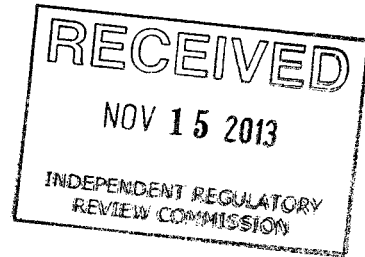
**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Larry Fuller <ljjf@ptd.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 1:31 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** KEYSTONE GRAD EXAMS

**DO NOT VOTE FOR, VOTE AGAINST THE KEYSTONE GRADUATION EXAMS.**

**LARRY FULLER  
PIKE CO. PA.**



**Cooper, Kathy**

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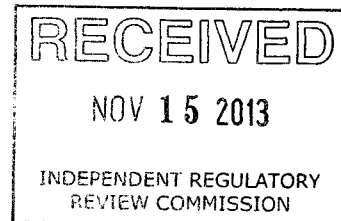
**From:** Sherley Young <frenchriver39@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 1:44 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone graduation exams are a travesty!

As a former high school teacher of history, I am appalled to hear that there is a bill to institute graduation exams for all candidates for graduation from high school.

What is needed is teaching that enables students to think critically- not more teaching for the test. Many brilliant people do not do well on standardized tests. They see too many gray areas to be able to choose the correct answer. They think outside the box, thank the good Lord. Teachers do not need to be saddled with yet another task which prevents them from having teachable moments because they are forced to cover certain material,,,to say nothing of the additional cost to design the test, correct the test, etc.

Graduation exams are NOT a solution to improve the horrendous state of the PA public school system!!

Sherley Young  
210 West Washington Square, 4NW  
Philadelphia, PA 19106



**Cooper, Kathy**

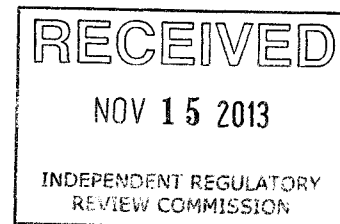
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**From:** wcstates@aol.com  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 1:34 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Please Reject Common Core for Pennsylvania

**First Name:**

**Walter** Last Name:

**States**



**Subject:**  
Please Reject Common Core for Pennsylvania

Message:

What we don't need is expanding the control of government over sound academic policy.

If implemented in Pennsylvania, Common Core will introduce a major new level of selective opportunity. This will in

fact dumb down the overall curriculum standards, take away local control and initiative, and collect intrusive personal data on every student and their families.

In addition, it will be funded through yet more additional taxes. What Pennsylvanians don't need is another tax burden at a time when taxes are already increasing rapidly in many areas. Dealing with a disastrous new government

healthcare program, taxpayers and our overall weak economy can ill-afford to take on more wasteful, poorly planned, and under-budgeted spending.

Please reject Common Core when it comes in front of you for consideration and preserve a sound education system in Pennsylvania.

Thank you for your support, Walter States



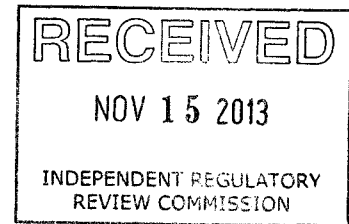
**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Rich Trefz <rich@richtrefz.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 1:40 PM  
**To:** IRR; David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Graduation Exams

We are definitely opposed to ANY change that causes significant unfunded mandates. The taxpayer burden is already too high. Any additional and we may have to consider at selling the house.

Rich & Mary Trefz  
Downingtown PA



## Cooper, Kathy

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**From:** Simon, Lawrence <larry.simon@marcumllp.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 1:51 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** dleach@pasenate.com; repbriggs@pahouse.net  
**Subject:** vote no on chapter 4 regulations

I am a resident and work in Lower Merion, 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 21<sup>st</sup>. Thanks Larry

**MARCUM**  
ACCOUNTANTS • ADVISORS

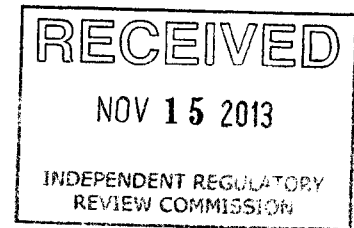
**MARCUM**  
**INNOVATOR**  
OF THE YEAR

### *Lawrence S. Simon, CPA/PFS Profile*

*Partner*

Marcum LLP  
3 Bala Plaza East, Suite 700  
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004  
P: (484) 270-2560  
F: (484) 270-2501  
[larry.simon@marcumllp.com](mailto:larry.simon@marcumllp.com)

**MARCUMGROUP**  
MEMBER



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**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Mary Schwingen <sanguine61@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 2:01 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams

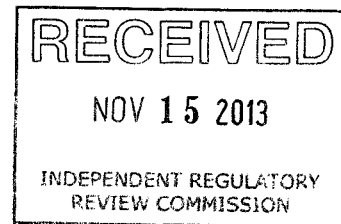
Dear Mr. Sumner,

As the parent of a high-achieving 8th grader who failed the Algebra 1 Keystone exam this past spring, I am writing to register my deep concern about the excessive testing pressures our children face.

Given that children in Pennsylvania already lose hours of instruction time each year, this movement to add additional, high-pressure tests is pure insanity. I am strongly opposed to the movement making Keystone exams a graduation requirement unless the administration of the PSSAs is seriously scaled back.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,  
Mary Schwingen  
112 Llanfair Road  
Ardmore, PA 19003



**Cooper, Kathy**

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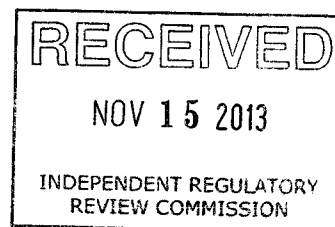
**From:** stacy raphael <stacyjr333@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 2:18 PM  
**To:** David Sumner; dleach@pasenate.com; mfolmer@pasen.gov; boneill@pahousegop.com; rebrigs@pahouse.net; repmaryjodaley@pahouse.net  
**Subject:** Opposition to Keynote Exams: VOTE NO on Chapter 4 Regulations

To My Legislators,

My name is Stacy Raphael, and I live at 916 Oak Ridge Road, Bryn Mawr, PA. I am writing to tell you that I am completely opposed to all of the state's poorly conceived and mandatory state testing. In particular, I am opposed to the Keystone Exams being a factor in high school students' graduation eligibility. I ask you to REJECT the proposed Chapter 4 regulations, and I strongly urge you to VOTE NO on November 21st.

Sincerely yours,

Stacy Raphael



**Cooper, Kathy**

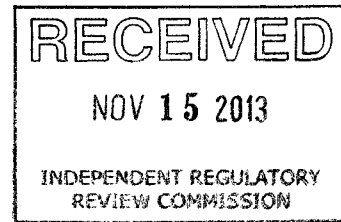
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**From:** Denise Schwanbeck <iris1@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 2:48 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams

Dear David,  
I am not in favor of the Keystone Exams for many reasons.  
Please do your best to stop these exams from becoming a reality that our schools, teachers, and children have to live with.  
Best Regards,  
Denise

Denise Schwanbeck  
Realtor  
Weichert Realtors  
home office 215 884-3502  
cell 215 588-4040

I'm never too busy for your referrals!



**Cooper, Kathy**

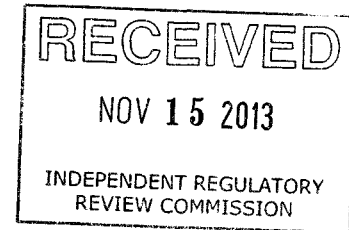
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**From:** NICOLE DITTY <n.ditty@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 2:08 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** dleach@pasenate.com; repbriggs@pahouse.net; repmaryjodaley@pahouse.net; mfolmer@pasen.gov; BONEill@pahousegop.com; repdelissio@pahouse.net  
**Subject:** VOTE NO on Chapter 4 Regulations BODY:

My name is Nicole Ditty. I live in Gladwyne, 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.

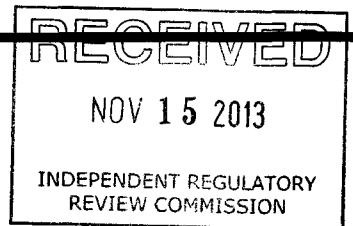
Respectfully,

Nicole Ditty



**Cooper, Kathy**

**From:** Julia Stone <juliaelizabethstone@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 2:50 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** I am opposed to the Keystone Graduation Exams



I went to a functioning public school for K-12 from the mid 80's through the mid 90's. We had some high-stakes testing, but not nearly as much as is currently required in Pennsylvania. I grew up in Fairfax County, Virginia, home to one of the top public school systems in the country. Also, not co-incidentally, on the of the counties with the highest per-capita income in the country. When we were not doing high-stakes testing (or when the government hadn't shut down the museums in Washington DC) we had field trips, art classes (not just painting and drawing but photography and possibly sculpture), music (several classes of both band and orchestra for various levels of students), driver's ed, CPR and First Aid (in health class), yearbook, newspaper, some club for young entrepreneurs, drama, sports (including swimming!), and all the other things that make it that much easier to get out of bed and get to class on time. Our field trip to the Holocaust museum was rescheduled (possibly twice, but that was many years ago and I was still a kid) due to Newt Gingrich's "Contract with America".

All children deserve at least the public education I had access to. All I did to become "deserving" was be born to parents who had initially not wanted children, allowing them to build a solid financial support before having children. On the 10th anniversary of my mother's father's death, my mother started having dreams of babies. My parents (together) spent a year interviewing their friends, family and neighbors about the experience of having or not having children. They were able to do this because they both had quality public educations and families which supported them in pursuing higher education. The availability of birth control and access to safe, legal abortion also made their success possible.

Poverty is the problem. If we can reduce economic inequality, we'll have created a world where students come to school prepared to learn. As a member of the 1% I encourage you to tax rich people more. The low rate of tax on capital gains is particularly egregious (though I get to keep more of my money because of it) since it gives more money to people who already have enough (plenty, really) by keeping money out of the hands of people who are working for their money. Investing is not work. I don't apologize to those who make thier living investing other people's money. They don't need my apology. It is extremely unusual for traders to do better than the index fund. However, if rich people want to pay them to not make money with their money - that's just another example of wasteful spending in the private sector by the rich. Nothing is created by people who move other people's money around in the financial system.

How much money is enough? How much money would you have to save to feel secure?

My security comes from my community and from working toward a day when every child will have a public school worth going to. I am currently embarking on a project to convince the government to tax people like me and to give away as much as I can until the government comes to it's sense and funds its self with money that rich people don't need.

Thank you for your time,  
Julia

--  
Julia Stone  
215-528-0010  
[juliaelizabethstone@gmail.com](mailto:juliaelizabethstone@gmail.com)

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** surecureantiques@aol.com  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 2:47 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** The Keystone Graduation Examinations

To Whom It May Concern:

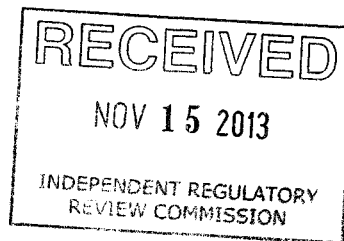
The Keystone Graduation exams are a bad idea. As a taxpayer, I oppose imposition of these standards without appropriate input from educators and taxpayers. The funding for this will no doubt come to my checkbook.

Between the curse of Commor Core curricula proposals and politicians who want their way with no experience or know-how in the area to be imposed upon, the course for public education is treacherous.

I object to this proposal for another unfunded mandate.

Thank you,

Ellen M. Buerklin  
605 Vassar Road  
Wayne, PA 19087





**Cooper, Kathy**

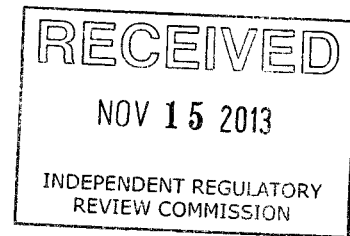
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**From:** mjkwbl <mjkwbl@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 2:42 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Oppose Keystone Exams

I am writing to express opposition to the proposed Keystone exams since the students already are tested extensively, with the result that precious instruction and critical thinking exercises are sacrificed so the teachers can grill the students on the exams instead.

That is not good learning; it is, rather, temporary memorization that serves no long-term (and a specious short-term) goal.

Melanie Kisthardt



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Susan Shaak <mgsatmsc@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 2:24 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Keystone Graduation Exams

The Corbett administration, in the false name of raising academic standards and accountability, is proposing implementation of the Keystone Graduation Exams.

I oppose these exams:

\*These standardized tests must be passed to graduate. The prospect of a straight A student, who fails one of the tests, not getting a diploma is deplorable.

\*The cutbacks in education funding by the Corbett administration have resulted in larger class sizes. Yet these tests will require hours devoted to "teaching the test".

\*It is irresponsible to implement these graduation exams that will result in the largest unfunded mandate in the past 50 years.

School districts will be required to provide remediation and supplementary instruction for students who do not pass. However the Pennsylvania Department of Education provides no funding for this.

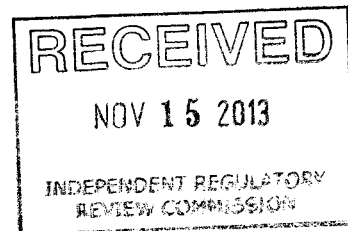
\*As a result taxpayers will face massive school property tax increases.

\*Investing \$65 million or more on developing the test, \$300 million on remediation, putting students through endless testing, taking time away from important instruction time? This is not a program for accountability and higher standards.

Implementing Keystone Graduation Exams is a failure. They fail students. They fail teachers. They fail schools. They fail local taxpayers.

Susan Shaak  
3440 Stoner Ave.  
Reading PA 19606

610 779-5360



## Cooper, Kathy

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**From:** Marianne & Jeff Williams <psu9293@juno.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 2:12 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Keystone Graduation Exams

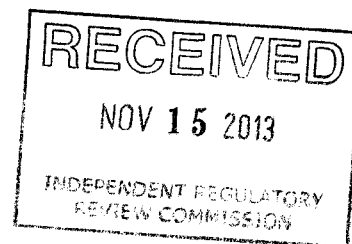
To Whom It May Concern:

As a concerned parent of young children attending public schools in Pennsylvania, I am completely opposed to the Keystone Graduation Exams. Prior to becoming a stay-at-home mom, I taught in PA public schools. The very strong push for high stakes standardized tests was just beginning as I was leaving my profession. Now as a mother, I see my elementary school age children completely stressed out during the time the PSSAs are given. We do NOT need more high stakes tests in Pennsylvania. What we need is support for our teachers to be able to do their jobs! Pushing more high stakes tests onto our children is doing NOTHING to improve their learning. If anything, from what I've seen, the "teaching to the tests" takes away from authentic, valuable learning the kids could and should be doing.

One test, the Keystone Graduation Exam, should NOT determine whether or not a child graduates from High School. There are so many factors that can go into a child's performance on one particular test on any given day. The whole year's worth of work should be sufficient to determine whether or not a student has passed a class. Pennsylvania schools do NOT need the Keystone Exams.

Thank you for your time.

Mrs. Marianne Williams  
Schwenksville, PA



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### **5 Ways to LOWER blood sugar**

1 EASY tip to increase fat-burning, lower blood sugar & decrease fat storage  
[info.fixyourbloodsugar.com](http://info.fixyourbloodsugar.com)

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Rick Beckner <rickbeckneriii@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 2:12 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Keystones graduation exam

voting members

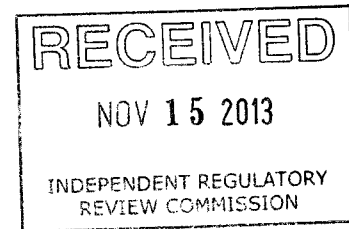
This just more federal oversight, the citizens of the state and the state who pay the school taxes should determine what is taught not the feds.

This is no different the the affordable care act and will fail us.

We have been dumbed down enough lets now take control and raise the standerds.

Vote no to common core the Keystone exam.

Rick Beckner tax payer



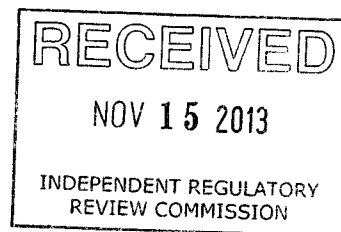
**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Donna Zimmerman <dulcimerz@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 3:16 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Exams

PLEASE, do not institute the Keystone Exams for Graduation.  
This is an unfunded mandate that will increase taxes to pay for it. Plus  
it is just a bad idea. If a student gets all A's yet fails one of the  
exams...no graduation for them. Where is common sense?  
We already cannot allocate funds to cover basic needs of students  
especially in inner cities and yet this mandate would further use up those  
limited funds.  
Please vote "No" on this issue.

Donna Zimmerman



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** traceysloan@comcast.net  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 3:16 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams

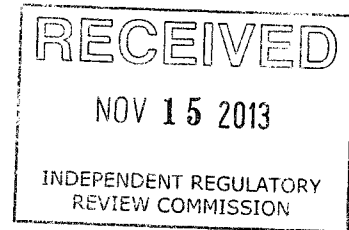
To Whom It May Concern,

I am a parent of three children in our public school system. I am completely opposed to the implementation of Keystone Exams as a graduation requirement. I have read the letter written by a Coalition of Pennsylvania's Public School Superintendents and Intermediate Unit Executive Directors and agree with the many points it expresses. If you have any further questions for me, please feel free to contact me via email.

Best Regard,

Tracey Sloan

Tredyffrin Easttown School District Parent



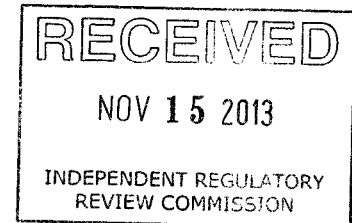
## Cooper, Kathy

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**From:** Virgina Turano <VTurano@wiblackawanna.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 2:52 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Support Letter  
**Attachments:** Support Letter - State Board of Education Chapter 4 Regulations 11-15-13.doc  
Signed.doc

Please accept the following support letter from the Lackawanna County Workforce Investment Board.

*Virginia H. Turano*  
Executive Director  
Lackawanna County  
Workforce Investment Board  
Scranton Enterprise Center  
201 Lackawanna Avenue Suite 215  
Scranton, PA 18503  
PH: 570.342.3649  
FAX: 570.346.7014  
[vturano@wiblackawanna.org](mailto:vturano@wiblackawanna.org)



**Cooper, Kathy**

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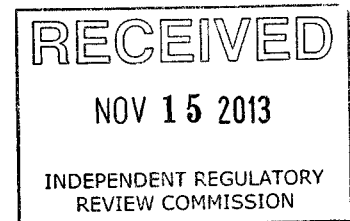
**From:** Cdbenzing@aol.com  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 3:20 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Opposition to Keystone Exams for H.S. Graduation

Good afternoon. I am a parent of a special education student and oppose the implementation of the Keystone exams as a graduation requirement. It is ridiculous to base a student's graduation on the outcome of a few tests. It is highly unlikely that my daughter could ever pass the Biology or Literature tests even with extensive tutoring. In addition, the Keystone exams are time-consuming and reduce instructional hours for our children. Finally, this becomes expensive when students have to be taught and tutored in order to pass. School districts on the brink can't afford this additional state mandate to their already fragile budgetary situation.

Finally, my son was required to take the Biology Keystone two years after he took Biology. He was unable to pass it and had to be retaught the material. To expect high school students to retain information two years after they took the course isn't reasonable.

Please stop the Keystone exams from being implemented as a graduation requirement!

Cynthia Benzing, parent and professor (West Chester University)





**Cooper, Kathy**

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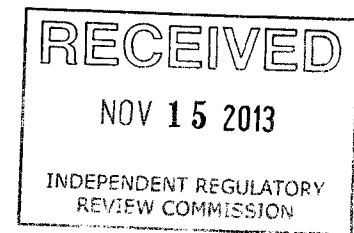
**From:** John DeLallo <j2delallo@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 10:53 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** Sam DeMarco; Kathie & Chuck  
**Subject:** Common Core is Rotten at its core

Dear Mr. Sumner:

I recently sat in a School Board meeting in Bethel Park. School Director Doctor Tim Campbell remarked that Common Core has serious flaws, not the least of which is the fair and balanced teaching of world religions. Any text that devotes 15 pages to Islam, with highlights and italics, and only 4 to all other religions, AND does not mention Jesus Christ so much as one time, is indeed flawed. You may view Doctor Campbell's comments here [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bn5JWSt6Xqc&feature=share&list=UUEy\\_qZ\\_VJZ9emjMPg0IGagA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bn5JWSt6Xqc&feature=share&list=UUEy_qZ_VJZ9emjMPg0IGagA) starting at 50:45.

Dr. Campbell is a learned man, and his comments bear listening. He speaks to the rise of Communism, but the lack of a mention of Stalin's pogroms. His comments on religion are well thought out, and point to the incremental dumbing down of our students.

Very Truly Yours,  
John F. DeLallo, Jr., MSgt, USAFR (ret.)



## Cooper, Kathy

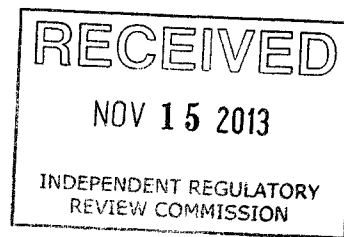
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**From:** Jonathan Shoolman <jshoolman@tech-works.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:09 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** 'Senator Andrew Dinniman'  
**Subject:** Keystone Graduation Exams

Dear Mr. Sumner,

I urge you and other members of the IRRC to reject the Keystone Graduation Exams (part of the proposed Chapter 4 Final-Form Regulations). I'm in agreement with the concerns expressed by State Senator Andy Dinniman, Ed.D.

Sincerely,  
Jonathan Shoolman  
417 Longview Drive  
West Chester, PA 19380-3879



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Fullerton, Pamela <pfullerton@Spang.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:12 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Reject the Keystone Graduation Exams

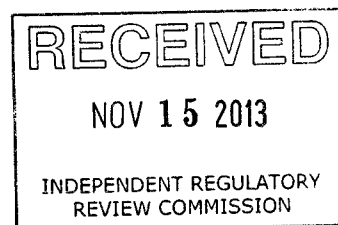
Dear Mr. Sumner,

I urge you to reject the Keystone Graduation Exams (part of the proposed Chapter 4 Final-Form Regulations). Standardized tests are a biased measure, result in teachers teaching to a test, and should not determine whether a student qualifies to graduate from high school.

Do not implement the Keystone Graduation Exams.

Regards,

Pamela Fullerton



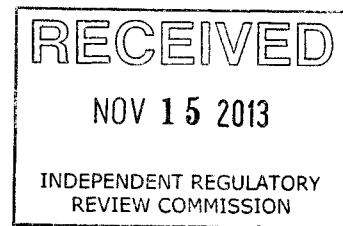
**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** kam\_psu@yahoo.com  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:09 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** No to Keystone Graduation Exams

I am in opposition to the proposed Keystone Graduation Exams. This is just another added cost to school districts with no basis for any improvement in the children's education. This will also lead to higher property taxes no matter what the Corbett administration says'.

Sent from Windows Mail



**Cooper, Kathy**

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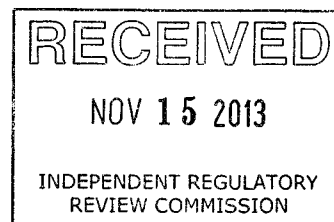
**From:** gramskis@aol.com  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:14 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Graduation exams

Mr. Sumner,

I would like to express my concern that the Keystone exams will not be a valid way of measuring our PA students accomplishments. Please note that we do not support the measure.

We are residents of Tredyffrin Township.

Wendy and Lawrence Kelly  
115 Paoli Pointe Drive  
Paoli, PA 19301



**Cooper, Kathy**

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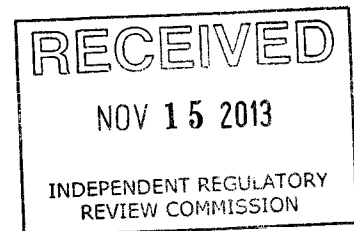
**From:** Audrey <audrey\_f@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:24 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Opposition to Keystone exams as graduation requirement and proposed Chapter 4 Regulations

We are Pennsylvania parents in the Lower Merion School District.  
We are OPPOSED to the Keystone provisions in the currently proposed Chapter 4 Regulations, as explained in the below link (i.e., Letter to IRRC from over fifty Pennsylvania school district superintendents dated 11-5-13)

We urge you NOT to require Keystone exams as a graduation requirement.

Thank you,  
Audrey and Bob Friedel

Link to Superintendents' Letter:  
[http://origin.library.constantcontact.com/download/get/file/1101630330592-851/IRRC+Superintendent+Keystone+Letter 11 04 13+%282%29.pdf](http://origin.library.constantcontact.com/download/get/file/1101630330592-851/IRRC+Superintendent+Keystone+Letter+11+04+13+%282%29.pdf)



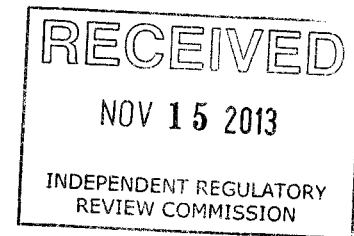
## Cooper, Kathy

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**From:** Mary Launi <mlauni8@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:24 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** keystone exams

Mr. Sumner, this letter is request that the IRRC reject the Keystone Graduation Exams (part of the proposed Chapter 4 Final-Form Regulations) in its deliberations next week. The Keystone graduation requirement puts an unfair burden on school districts, as the poorest (and academically disadvantaged) districts lack the resources to remediate their students that fail. Funding has been slashed from education by the current administration, leaving no funding to fulfill the obligations of these mandated exams. In addition, the results of the exam, also, as an indicator of graduation worthiness is dubious. I am a biology teacher and have combed through the questions available on the state website as samples, and found NUMEROUS mistakes in the questions. There is a plethora of inaccurate and misinterpreted information. We, as teachers, are not allowed to see the actual exams, so have no way to critique them. What we can see of questions are of very poor quality. Please consider rejecting this mandate and bring together, in the future, thoughtful participants to look at more realistic and authentic ways to evaluate student learning.

Thank you for your consideration  
Mary Launi  
[mlauni8@gmail.com](mailto:mlauni8@gmail.com)



**Cooper, Kathy**

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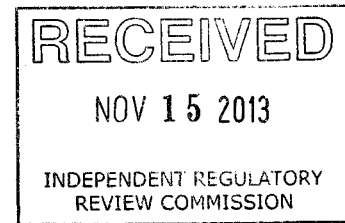
**From:** Jill Friedman <jill.friedman@rutgers.edu>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:25 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** i oppose requiring successful completion of the keystone exams as a high school graduation requirement in PA

Dear Mr. Sumner,

I am a resident of Merion, PA (Lower Merion Township). I oppose requiring successful completion of the Keystone exams as a high school graduation requirement in PA, and I urge further study on this topic.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best,  
Jill Friedman  
559 General Lafayette Road  
Merion, PA 19066



**Jill Friedman**  
Adj. Professor & Acting Asst. Dean for Pro Bono and Public Interest  
Rutgers School of Law - Camden  
217 North 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite E304  
Camden, NJ 08102  
T: 856-225-6263  
F: 856-580-6286  
[jill.friedman@rutgers.edu](mailto:jill.friedman@rutgers.edu)  
<http://camlaw.rutgers.edu>

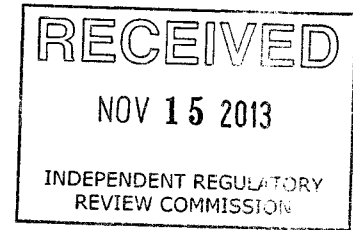




## Cooper, Kathy

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**From:** Carol Pochapsky <carol.pochapsky@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:27 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Say NO to the Keystone Exam!



I am opposed to these exams on so many levels.

For the students;

- On top of a full course load, they are being asked to add a study course in order to prepare for the exams.
- Classes that might be provided are now de-funded because the monies that are being spent on them, is now being used to fund preparation for these exams.
- These exams assume that every student can actually achieve a proficient level in these subjects. No two kids are like, nor do they all learn alike.
- Tests are stressful! Add to this stress that these exams will be required in order to get a diploma, and you may as well tell the kid to **drop out** of high school.

For the teachers:

- Tests should be there to guide the teacher as to where the kids are falling behind, and that is all. Their raises and jobs should NOT be dependent on the results of these tests.
- I'm not a teacher, but I'm going to guess that the rewards of this fields are few and far between, and these tests make it that much harder for them to enjoy helping kids learn and achieve.

School funding based on test scores? Really? Really?

- Does anyone in the legislature really believe that a school in poverty stricken areas where kids come in with empty stomachs and no hope are going to perform as well as their peers in affluent areas?
- Does anyone in the legislature really believe that these tests have an altruistic motive? Follow the money. You are all selling out our schools to the highest bidder.

Somebody is benefiting from these tests, and it is NOT our children.

Did you take a test when you were in school that determined your future?

I was horrible in Algebra in high school. I barely passed. I am a programmer now, working with complex banking software. High school does not determine your fate, Tests do not determine your skill level.

I am so angry with the direction of our public schools, and I will scream it to the papers and to anyone else who will listen, hoping that our national complacency will somehow end, as well as these tests.

Carol Scott

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Connie Hofmann <conhofmann@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:28 AM  
**To:** IRRC; David Sumner  
**Subject:** Please REJECT the Keystone Graduation Exams

Dear Mr. Sumner,

I am contacting you to register my opposition to the Keystone Graduation Exams.

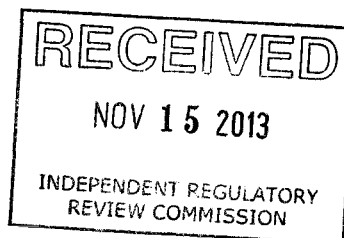
As a parent of children who will be directly in the bulls eye of this new testing mechanism, I do not want this additional burden placed on already overwhelmed teachers and as yet another stressor to students. Three standardized tests should NOT determine a student's high school graduation, especially when the tests were developed with no input whatsoever from a course teacher or local district.

As a taxpayer, I adamantly believe that a huge unfunded mandate is not the way to address student preparedness or to remediate for the many students who will require additional help to pass these tests. Our school taxes are rising every year to meet the basic needs of the students – this additional burden is not warranted and it is not the way to prepare the next generation.

PLEASE reject the Keystone Graduation Exams as part of the proposed Chapter 4 Final-Form Regulations.

Respectfully,

Connie Hofmann  
754 Laurel Lane  
Wayne, PA 19087



**Cooper, Kathy**

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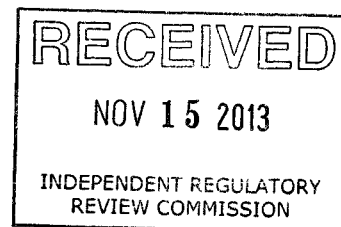
**From:** LEONARD G KUCH <lgk3rsk@msn.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:28 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Opposition to Keystone Exams

Sent from my iPad

I believe the proposed Keystone Exams should not be implemented. As a retired biology teacher I agree that it is a very important subject for students to know to help them understand the natural world around them and their own bodies; however, I believe there is already too much time spent on testing. By having to "teach to the test" a lot of creativity which often "turns students on" to a subject is lost.

The tests were not designed by teachers and funding is not provided to help with costs for remediation. I agree that students need to learn certain information to help them function as educated adults in our country and that math, literature, and biology should be part of that, but these tests go beyond the amount of testing that should be done. I wonder how many of the legislators who are pushing these tests could actually pass the tests themselves.

Ruth Kuch



**Cooper, Kathy**

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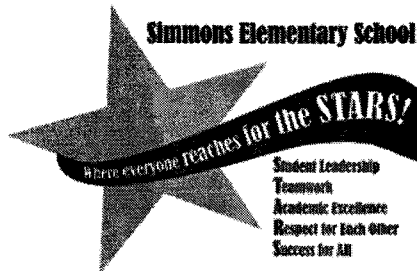
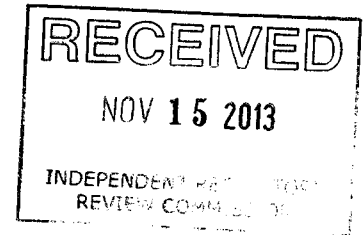
**From:** Greenberg, Ilene <IGreenbe@Hatboro-Horsham.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:28 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams

Dear Mr. Sumner,

I am writing to express my concerns over the Keystone Exams, and to ask you and the committee to reject them. As an educator, parent of 2 Bensalem High School graduates, and current taxpayer living in West Chester, PA, I am fully aware of the limitations of standardized testing. Much of teachers' time is already spent on test preparation. Having to pass a graduation exam seems to negate all the years spent in school, and the wide range of learning that occurs. Some students are not strong standardized test takers, and the results do not show everyone's potential. In addition to the lack of funding for the Districts, are the Keystone Exams good for students? I don't think so!

Thank-you for your time,

**Ilene Greenberg**  
*Reading Specialist*  
Simmons Elementary School  
411 Babylon Road  
Horsham, PA 19044  
215-420-5732  
[igreenbe@hatboro-horsham.org](mailto:igreenbe@hatboro-horsham.org)



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Tom Taylor <tomtaylor@afo.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:30 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** PA Core Standards

Dear David Sumner,

I am writing to you once again regarding PA Core Standards.

1. Again I ask you how much will this cost us taxpayers for initial startup and then continuing on into the future?
2. Where will this additional funding come from and what will its impact be on taxpayers and local school boards?
3. PLEASE DO NOT LET THIS GO FORWARD UNTIL YOU GET SOME SOLID ANSWERS ON THIS CRITICAL ISSUE
4. Much thanks for listening to my concerns.

Expectantly, Tom Taylor

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