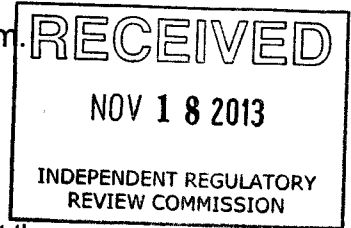


2970

Cooper, Kathy

**From:** Rose Maloney <roo7215@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 16, 2013 9:10 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Re: I do not support Keystone Exams, and do support my state senator's advocacy against them

I have not seen my comments posted on the IRRC website yet, please post them.  
 Thank you



**From:** Rose Maloney <roo7215@yahoo.com>  
**To:** "dsumner@irrc.state.pa.us" <dsumner@irrc.state.pa.us>  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 7, 2013 11:41 AM  
**Subject:** I do not support Keystone Exams, and do support my state senator's advocacy against them

## 8 Reasons Why We Oppose the Keystone Graduation Exams

By State Senator Andrew E. Dinniman, D.Ed.  
 Minority Chair, Senate Education Committee

1. It is fundamentally **wrong** for three standardized tests to determine a student's high school graduation. The implementation of high-stakes graduation exams runs contrary to all of our efforts to reform public education, recognize different learning styles and embrace an individualized approach. **If the Keystone Graduation Exams are approved, high school students starting with current freshman (Class of 2017) will face the possibility of passing all their classes but failing a Keystone Exam and not getting a diploma.**
2. It is **foolhardy** to spend more than \$65 million a year on testing while more and more of our school districts teeter on the verge of bankruptcy, despite school property taxes being at an all-time high. In Philadelphia, for example, schools face class sizes of nearly 50 students, have been forced to close their libraries and even struggle to afford textbooks and basic instructional materials.
3. It is **unfair** to stamp "failure" on the backs of teachers, schools and communities that lack the fiscal resources to adequately prepare students to pass these exams. Why should we expect students who are set up for failure to stick with the program? And how can we expect to revitalize economically distressed communities when their schools and students are labeled as substandard and second-rate?
4. It is **irresponsible** to implement a program of graduation exams that will result in the largest unfunded mandate in the past 50 years. If a student fails any of the three required Keystone Exams, the school district must provide supplementary instruction and student can take the test two more times. If a student continues to fail the exam, the student is entitled to a project-based assessment with a teacher. The Pennsylvania Department of Education provides no funding whatsoever for remediation costs. **It is conservatively estimated that it will result in an unfunded mandate of \$300 million a year. The buck will no doubt be passed onto taxpayers in the form of massive school property tax increases.** The enormity of the costs (associated with remediation) to local school districts is illustrated by the results of the recent statewide Keystone Exams, which were taken by all high school juniors on a pilot basis. Results were first issued this summer and oddly enough, a different and improved set of results was released in September. The September results are being questioned by a number of school districts:

### Exam Summer Fall

Algebra I – Failure Rate 60% 35.6%  
 Biology – Failure Rate 60% 54.4%  
 Literature – Failure Rate 45% 24.6%

The Pennsylvania Department of Education has not provided a fiscal note or in-depth analysis of the extensive remediation obligations of the Keystone Exams for local school districts. Unbelievably, the department claims that there is no cost to school districts, which is simply not possible.

**5. It is unscrupulous** for the Pennsylvania Department of Education to continue to withhold data that is necessary for weighing the costs to local school districts. In response, I have been forced to file seven Right to Know requests in an effort to obtain exam results and breakdowns by individual school district, as well as information regarding the potential costs or estimates of such remediation. Keep in mind, such costs will weigh heavier on lower-performing and financially distressed school districts as they face a higher potential for students requiring remediation.

**6. It is preposterous** that a test developed by the state with no input whatsoever from a course teacher or local district should be the main deciding factor on whether a student passes and graduates. The school code leaves the decision as to who graduates to the local school district. **The imposition of state-required, make-or-break graduation exams represents a serious threat to local control.**

**7. It is illogical** for the Pennsylvania Department of Education to continue to expand standardized testing at a time when increasing evidences 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. If the Keystone Exams are approved, an eighth-grade student taking Algebra I would face taking a class test for a class grade, the PSSA Math Test and the Keystone Exam, which would be banked for graduation purposes. **The keystones will only further promote "teaching to the test," while sacrificing more valuable instruction time in the name of standardization.**

**8. It is clear that the Pennsylvania Department of Education is not ready for prime time and neither are the Keystone Exams.** The department is now under its third secretary in less than a year and in my view, lacks the ability to provide the leadership necessary to initiate and supervise the implementation of state-wide required graduation exams. The department has lost the confidence and trust of numerous school district superintendents. The fact that almost all (58 of 62) superintendents and Intermediate Unit Directors in the Philadelphia suburbs have signed onto a position paper in opposition to the Keystone Exams (due to the resulting loss of local control and its massive unfunded mandate) is a strong and clear expression of the loss of confidence in the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the State Board of Education.

Best Regards,  
Rose Doolittle  
31 Shady Hollow Lane  
Malvern, PA 19355

parent, resident of Pennsylvania, employed tax-payer, and concerned citizen

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** kcosentino@comcast.net  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 16, 2013 1:24 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams

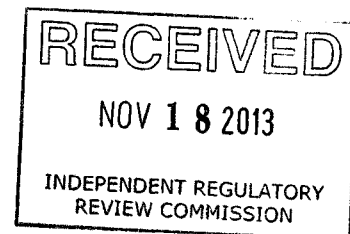
Dear Mr. Sumner;

I am writing in support of the correspondence, dated November 5, 2013 and submitted to the IRRC by 55 local superintendents (including my children's own district superintendent, Dr. Chirstopher McGinley) regarding Reg. #6-326.

Specifically, I urge you to reevaluate high-stakes testing in Pennsylvania and urge you NOT to require Keystone Exams as graduation requirements.

Sincerely,

Karen Cosentino  
262 Hathaway Lane  
Wynnewood, PA 19096



**Cooper, Kathy**

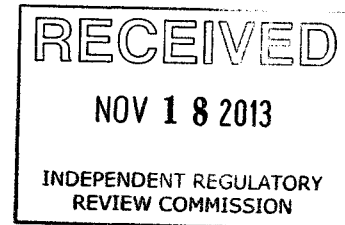
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**From:** Lisa Prosnitz <lisa.prosnitz@me.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 16, 2013 11:12 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** dleach@pasenate.com; repbriggs@pahouse.net; repmaryjodaley@pahouse.net; mfolmer@pasen.gov; repdelissio@pahouse.net  
**Subject:** VOTE NO on Chapter 4 Regulations

My name is Lisa Prosnitz. 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,

Lisa Prosnitz



## Cooper, Kathy

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**From:** cbierzonski@verizon.net  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 16, 2013 1:24 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** IRRC No. 2976

Mr. Sumner:

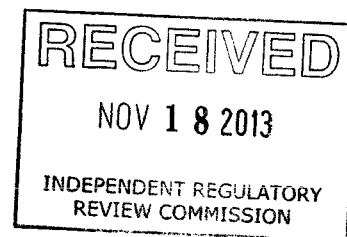
I am writing to tell you I oppose Common Core State Standards for Pennsylvania schools. First and foremost is the cost: School districts and their taxpayers will be required to pay plenty for the technological 'improvements' at a time when school districts are already strapped for cash. Since 70% of the taxpayer money for education is already being spent on teachers and their benefits/pension costs (which will be increasing soon), it is ill advised to come up with a system that requires a huge initial outlay of money for infrastructure throughout the state. The remaining 30% of available funding will easily be used up, and we have no assurance (except from the tech firms that will be implementing the CCSS) that the new system will be effective with students. Technology may be sexy and up to the minute, but it may have no lasting effect on student learning. I urge you to be cautious when considering the impact as projected by IT firms that benefit from these large expenditures. It is in their interest to show all the good, and little of the bad, results involved in their proposed systems. As a taxpayer, I am very concerned about the future costs of public education, and feel this shrinking economy cannot support the expenditures necessary to implement CCSS in Pennsylvania.

I also have concerns about the tracking of students according to their supposed abilities. Not every student works to capacity; some take longer than others to hit their stride, and I think students should not be pigeon-holed by Administrators who only consider academic function. There are plenty of success stories in business, education and medicine that would never have happened if CCSS were in place during that period of education. After years of telling students they are special and have unique gifts to develop and offer, why are we trying to create a 'common core' of students that are interchangeable with each other in different locales? Education, and student aptitude, are necessarily 'messy' and the best program is one that considers many aspects of personality, ability, background, incentive, and determination. From what I see today, CCSS only measure outcomes and visible abilities. Late bloomers would be ignored by CCSS, and society and the economy would suffer the loss of their special abilities.

CCSS is an untested system that should not be forced on cash-strapped school districts until the Department of Education can offer proof that the money and effort is well spent and the students will have improved outcomes. I say NO to CCSS.

Connie Bierzonski  
232 Glenn Road  
Camp Hill, PA 17011  
717 732 3416

First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win.  
- Gandhi



**Cooper, Kathy**

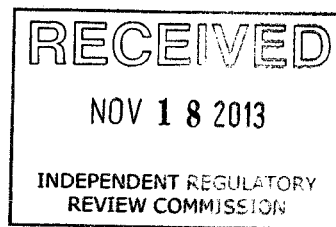
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**From:** Caroline Manogue <cbmanogue@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 16, 2013 11:32 AM  
**To:** David Sumner; dleach@pasenate.com; repbriggs@pahouse.net;  
repmarijodaley@pahouse.net; mfolmer@pasen.gov; BONEill@pahousegop.com  
**Subject:** VOTE NO on Chapter 4 Regulations

My name is Caroline Manogue, and I live and vote in Wynnewood, PA. I am writing again to say that 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,

Caroline Manogue



**Cooper, Kathy**

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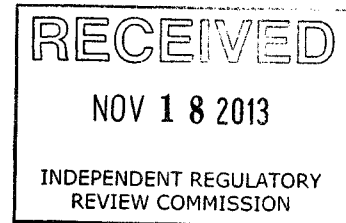
**From:** Corey Shdaimah <shdaimah@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 16, 2013 11:05 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** dleach@pasenate.com; repbriggs@pahouse.net; repmaryjodaley@pahouse.net; mfolmer@pasen.gov; BONEill@pahousegop.com; repdelissio@pahouse.net  
**Subject:** VOTE NO on Chapter 4 Regulations

My name is Corey Shdaimah. My husband and I, both of whom vote in all elections including primaries, live in Ardmore, PA. We have three school-aged children in grades 4, 9, and 12. I myself am an educator at the graduate school level, and believe strongly in the value of a good education that will prepare our children for a productive and successful future. These regulations are not the way to ensure such an education and, I fear, will have the opposite effect, particularly on vulnerable children.

I write to you on behalf of both of us to say that we adamantly oppose the Keystone Exams being tied to a student's high school graduation. We ask that you REJECT the proposed Chapter 4 regulations. Please VOTE NO on November 21st.

Respectfully,

Corey and Amichai Shdaimah  
210 Williamsburg Rd.  
Ardmore, PA 19003



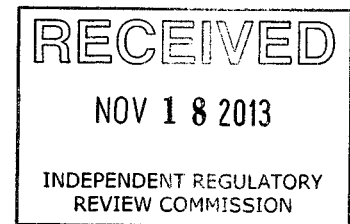
**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Pamela Herlong <herlongpi@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 16, 2013 2:50 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Graduation Exams

As a former teacher, I am 100% opposed to mandating these exams for PA school students. Teaching to exams is not the best way for students to learn what they need to know to succeed. We are sacrificing the teaching of creativity and thoughtful thinking in order to have students pass the already burdensome Keystones. I urge you not to pass this legislation and burden schools, teachers and students with the additional need to teach to these tests.

Pamela I Herlong  
Morrisville, PA 19067  
215-736-2906





**Cooper, Kathy**

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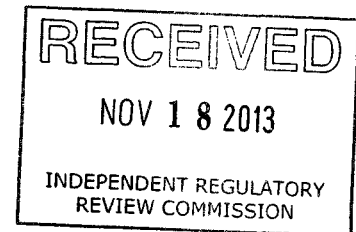
**From:** MaureenSiobhan@aol.com  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 16, 2013 11:29 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** reference IRRC No. 2976

I do not want to common core in our schools. The math takes you back to the time we used Roman numerals. They don't even teach cursive writing. The many reading selections are pornographic in nature. It promotes immorality while promoting only political views of the group that put the common core together, the internationalists. They do not talk about facts only political beliefs, even in the science curriculum which is supposed to deal with facts.

Pennsylvania has a right to its on tax money. It should not fall for the manipulation by the federal government to ruin the education of PA's children. Stand by the Lord and He will stand by you.

Regards,

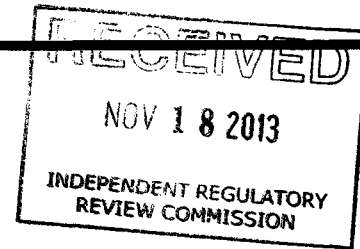
Maureen Sungenis



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Tim Butler <tbutlerenglish@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 16, 2013 10:45 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone graduation exams



As a parent of two students in PA, one of whom has special needs, I ask that the members of the IRRC reject the proposal that the Keystone Exams be a requirement for graduation.

My oldest son is an intelligent young man who does well in school, but does not do well on standardized tests that are not modified to accommodate his special needs. Additionally, he will need to spend hours of time on a project-based assessment because he will not do well on the test. Furthermore, hours are spent in the classroom to prepare students for the test, hours which he could be learning other things to prepare him for life instead of standardized tests which do not occur in any other situation.

For students like my son, whether or not they have special needs, who may not be able to pass the test, it may result in frustration, depression, and eventually cause the graduation rate to plummet.

I am also concerned that my taxes will need to be raised to assist students who don't do well on tests but are otherwise intelligent young people.

Please, for the sake of students who do not do well on standardized tests and for tax payers, reject the requirement for proficiency on this exam for graduation.

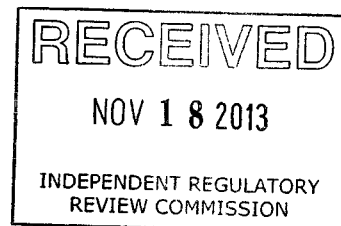
Thank you,  
Tim Butler

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** bustleton1@peoplepc.com  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 16, 2013 2:07 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Common Core

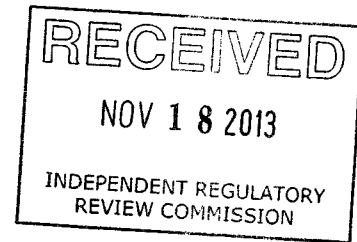
Keep Common Core out of Pennsylvania public schools. Thank you. George Ellis; Royersford, PA 19468.  
[Bustleton1@peoplepc.com](mailto:Bustleton1@peoplepc.com)



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Kate Kimbel <kkimbel@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 16, 2013 10:39 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams/Chapter 4 regulations



Dear Mr. Sumner,

Thank you for taking the time to review emails from concerned parents and professionals who have great investment in our childrens' education. I am both a parent of children in the Lower Merion School District, as well as a psychotherapist working with teens and their families. One of my areas of expertise is that of kids with learning differences and the effects of school performance on self-esteem. My own 11th grader is also such a child.

There are many children, those with learning differences and those without, whose learning and classroom performance cannot be measured by standardized testing. I've worked with kids who were unexpectedly excited by course subject matter taught by talented teachers, only to experience the bottom falling out because they were not able to perform well on that subject's Keystone exam. The consequences, of needing to use other academic time to attend remedial classes, to perhaps fail again, to become terrified that they will not graduate high school, are enormous. For children for whose learning styles do not conform with the norm, who have already suffered poor self-esteem, shame, and poor confidence because of academic struggles, feel "punished" (I have heard this over and over again from these kids), and the enthusiasm and excitement of learning and grasping new material, is quickly snuffed out. While failure can sometimes become a means of developing greater resilience, experiencing repeated, humiliating, and often predictable testing failures surely does not. The potential of a child's success can become irrevocably minimized, if not lost.

So it is with a depth and breadth of experience that I urge the Commission to reconsider the regulation that prohibits high school graduation for kids that cannot perform to a standardized measure of learning, one that does not always accurately reflect a child's true learning capacity and mastery of subject material. The toll on the individual student, his or her family, the school, and community, perhaps is not measurable in any standardized way, but it is clearly evident and requires great consideration.

Thank you, again, for your time and attention to this matter.

Best,

Kate Kimbel, MFT  
203 N. Wynnewood Avenue  
Narberth, Pa. 19072

**Cooper, Kathy**

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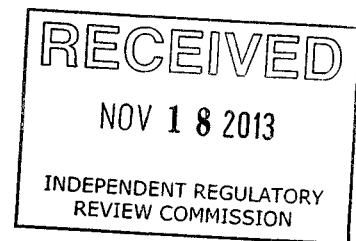
**From:** Dieter Scheel <dieter@landfillfree.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 16, 2013 8:42 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** IRRC 2976 Common Core

Mr. Sumner,

Please consider the following regarding Common Core:

- This is an untested method which will be forced upon many school that are very successful already.
- **No one has any idea where the funding for achieving this questionable method will come from.**
- Many schools are already so strapped for resources (both fiscal as well as personnel) that these additional requirements may well break them.
- From a common sense standpoint, when does a "one size fits all" solution ever work???

Dieter M. Scheel  
10 Bridle Drive  
Furlong, PA 18925



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Gerry Jaffe' <gcjaffe@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 16, 2013 7:16 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** dinnimansenate@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Keystone Tests

I am a parent in the Tredyffrin Easttown School district and have served on many board there most importantly the Curriculum Counsel. I have watched, with sadness, our rich curriculum change time and time again as new tests were mandated by the State. The most recent of these are the Keystone tests. For a school district like ours, who score in the top percent in every test that is given, it is another waste of taxpayers money, teacher's time and added unnecessary stress for students. I have put two children through the school district and I am saddened to see what little flexibility teachers have to create exciting and new instruction because they are continually "teaching to a test". Our children are OVER tested which takes time out of their every day schedules when they should be learning not tested. I am, and have always been, vehemently opposed to the Keystone Tests. I understand what the goal of the tests are but I do not think more testing of our children translate into better workers in Pennsylvania. Thank you for taking the time to read my comments.

Geraldine Jaffe'  
795 Avonwood Drive  
Wayne, PA 19087

610-989-9899



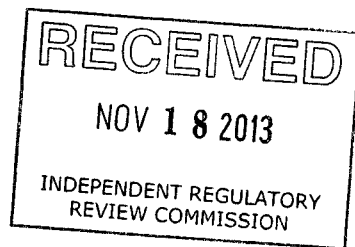
**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** mindy ortenzio <mao5@me.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 16, 2013 7:46 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams

I am writing to you this morning to urge you to REJECT the Keystone Graduation Exams. My daughter is in 9th grade and is a member of the National Honor Society. I attended Back to School night and all the teachers spoke about preparing the kids for the Keystone Exams! What about teaching our children?! Schools are too focused on their "grade" and that's taking away from the education our children should be receiving.

Mindy Ortenzio  
717-805-0927  
Sent from my iPad



**Cooper, Kathy**

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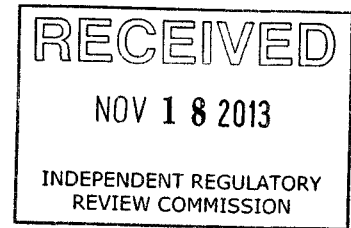
**From:** OWEN KELCHNER <slk1948@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 16, 2013 10:20 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** IRR#2976

Dear Sir,

I'm very concerned about the implementation of Common Core Standards in our state. I understand that it is an unfunded mandate, as part of the stimulus package, and could cost millions of dollars. Also, what about Special Needs Children's teachers having freedom in the classroom to teach according to individual needs? Common Core is untested, and has received poor reviews from educators. Common Core math is 2 years behind the international benchmark.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Sharon Kelchner





**Cooper, Kathy**

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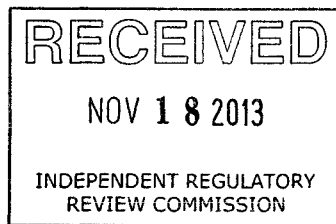
**From:** Jason Tako <luke\_tako@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 16, 2013 8:39 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** No to PA Core Standards, aka Common Core

Dear Mr. Sumner

I am emailing to express my opposition to the PA Core Standards, which is really Common Core. I do not think it is a good idea to nationalize the methods of education. Do you know how much it will cost? How it will be funded? Where are the test results that show it will improve education? I have grown tired of our federal government creating crises after crises so they can pass more legislation, all because they think they know what is best for the rest of us. Please do not support Common Core in PA. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jason Tako  
Dover, PA



**Cooper, Kathy**

---

**From:** Kate Kimbel <kkimbel@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 16, 2013 10:39 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams/Chapter 4 regulations

Dear Mr. Sumner,

Thank you for taking the time to review emails from concerned parents and professionals who have great investment in our childrens' education. I am both a parent of children in the Lower Merion School District, as well as a psychotherapist working with teens and their families. One of my areas of expertise is that of kids with learning differences and the effects of school performance on self-esteem. My own 11th grader is also such a child.

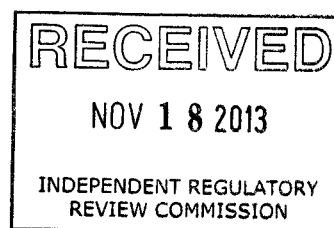
There are many children, those with learning differences and those without, whose learning and classroom performance cannot be measured by standardized testing. I've worked with kids who were unexpectedly excited by course subject matter taught by talented teachers, only to experience the bottom falling out because they were not able to perform well on that subject's Keystone exam. The consequences, of needing to use other academic time to attend remedial classes, to perhaps fail again, to become terrified that they will not graduate high school, are enormous. For children for whose learning styles do not conform with the norm, who have already suffered poor self-esteem, shame, and poor confidence because of academic struggles, feel "punished" (I have heard this over and over again from these kids), and the enthusiasm and excitement of learning and grasping new material, is quickly snuffed out. While failure can sometimes become a means of developing greater resilience, experiencing repeated, humiliating, and often predictable testing failures surely does not. The potential of a child's success can become irrevocably minimized, if not lost.

So it is with a depth and breadth of experience that I urge the Commission to reconsider the regulation that prohibits high school graduation for kids that cannot perform to a standardized measure of learning, one that does not always accurately reflect a child's true learning capacity and mastery of subject material. The toll on the individual student, his or her family, the school, and community, perhaps is not measurable in any standardized way, but it is clearly evident and requires great consideration.

Thank you, again, for your time and attention to this matter.

Best,

Kate Kimbel, MFT  
203 N. Wynnewood Avenue  
Narberth, Pa. 19072



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Laura Boquist <boquistl@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 16, 2013 10:29 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Vote No on Keystone Exams

**TO: Independent Regulatory Review Commission**

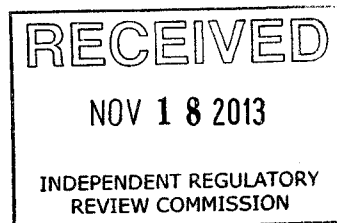
David Sumner, Executive Director  
333 Market Street, 14th Floor  
Harrisburg, Pa. 17101

Dear Mr. Sumner,

Please add my letter of opposition to the Keystone Exams to the growing number of parents, teachers, administrators, and district leaders who also oppose Chapter 4 regulations. While I support investing in the quality of education in the state of Pennsylvania, I do not believe this regulation accomplishes this goal. In fact, the funds and instructional time that are being diverted to preparing for and implementing these exams are taking instructional resources and time away from our students.

Please vote no on Chapter 4.

Thank you,  
Laura Boquist  
100 Candlewood Way  
Harleysville, PA 19438



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Tim Butler <tbutlerenglish@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 16, 2013 10:45 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone graduation exams

As a parent of two students in PA, one of whom has special needs, I ask that the members of the IRRC reject the proposal that the Keystone Exams be a requirement for graduation.

My oldest son is an intelligent young man who does well in school, but does not do well on standardized tests that are not modified to accommodate his special needs. Additionally, he will need to spend hours of time on a project-based assessment because he will not do well on the test. Furthermore, hours are spent in the classroom to prepare students for the test, hours which he could be learning other things to prepare him for life instead of standardized tests which do not occur in any other situation.

For students like my son, whether or not they have special needs, who may not be able to pass the test, it may result in frustration, depression, and eventually cause the graduation rate to plummet.

I am also concerned that my taxes will need to be raised to assist students who don't do well on tests but are otherwise intelligent young people.

Please, for the sake of students who do not do well on standardized tests and for tax payers, reject the requirement for proficiency on this exam for graduation.

Thank you,  
Tim Butler



**Cooper, Kathy**

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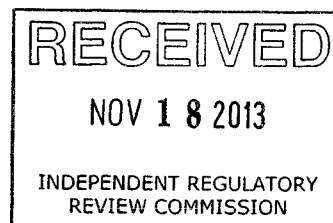
**From:** Corey Shdaimah <shdaimah@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 16, 2013 11:05 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** dleach@pasenate.com; repbriggs@pahouse.net; repmaryjodaley@pahouse.net; mfolmer@pasen.gov; BONEill@pahousegop.com; repdelissio@pahouse.net  
**Subject:** VOTE NO on Chapter 4 Regulations

My name is Corey Shdaimah. My husband and I, both of whom vote in all elections including primaries, live in Ardmore, PA. We have three school-aged children in grades 4, 9, and 12. I myself am an educator at the graduate school level, and believe strongly in the value of a good education that will prepare our children for a productive and successful future. These regulations are not the way to ensure such an education and, I fear, will have the opposite effect, particularly on vulnerable children.

I write to you on behalf of both of us to say that we adamantly oppose the Keystone Exams being tied to a student's high school graduation. We ask that you REJECT the proposed Chapter 4 regulations. Please VOTE NO on November 21st.

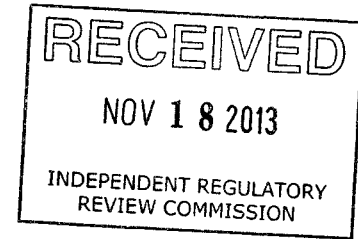
Respectfully,

Corey and Amichai Shdaimah  
210 Williamsburg Rd.  
Ardmore, PA 19003



Cooper, Kathy

**From:** Celwil <celwil@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 16, 2013 10:17 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Common Core



Dear Mr. Sumner,

I OPPOSE COMMON CORE STANDARDS and the adoption of them because:

This is promoted as education reform & ties federal funding to curriculum which takes control of our childrens education from the families, local communities, and state and moves it further(No child Left Behind initiated it),to **Federal Control of our Educational System. All regulations are not even written yet. Like Obamacare, you have to accept it before you find out what is in it.**

1. No variations for children with different needs. All standard regardless of culture, special needs, and abilities. Schools can add only up to 15% additional curriculum to remain in compliance.
2. Questionable content regarding age appropriateness, morality and politics.
3. Through data mining, privacy for students is being violated regarding grades, discipline,health issues, political affiliations, religion. It can be sold to to third parties with the consent of the school district! (According to Bill Gate the common core state standards will provide an endless supply of new consumers.The Gates Foundation has given the Pa Partnership for Children over \$900,000)
4. Regardless of federal subsidies, we pay for this & it is too expensive.The cost projection done by the Pioneer Institute gave a total for Pennsylvania of over \$650 Million dollar. ( New texts, new curriculum,texts, software for government reporting,data maintenance, new beauracacy for implementation, new report card system.) It is taking money away from programs that have been proven to work.
5. Misrepresented by the source of drafting it (2 unelected trade organizations based out of DC, the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO))**there were no Governors, State Superintendents of Schools, or State Legislators actively involved in the process of creating the Common Core State Standards.**The role of state governments was literally restricted to signing onto the standards created by the two trade associations. Many of the states that did sign onto Common Core State Standards did so to receive waivers to No Child Left Behind requirements or to qualify for Race To The Top money. They were literally bribed into signing onto the standards before they were even drafted.
6. The federal standard was never voted upon by the legislature or the public. The federal government inticed states by offering stimulus money. The US Department of Educatiion was deeply involved in the meetings that led to creation of Common Core. The parents and local communities have a right as to the curriculum/education of their children. It is about freedom from an overreaching federal government and executive branch.
7. Lowers math expectations. (The only mathematician on the validation committed wouldn't sign off on it because it hurt the students in competing in advanced math. The College Board alone indicated over the summer they may well eliminate the AP Calculus test indicating that Calculus no longer follows the Common Core Math sequence. It uses an experimental approach to math: It hasn't been successful in any sizable system & failed where it was pioneered at a school for gifted children in Moscow. It delays progression to Algebra I by 2 years.
8. Lessens study on Science: Changed from applied science with chemistry labs & math to "science appreciation". Most of science would be incorporated into other subjects.
9. Reading appreciation & creativity: Students read predominately informational texts vs traditionally required fictional works. Reduces the amount of classic literature, poetry & drama taught in English classed by 60%
10. State Representatives like Duane Milne are sending out Newsletters that are totally erroneous and misleading. From Representative Duane Milne Newsletter:Question #1: Just what is this idea of Common Core? "It is not a federally mandates program. ...It is also called school to work. The best analogy of this national movement is it is like corrective shoes. One student in a classroom needs corrective shoes but under this movement all the students get corrective shoes. The standards are those corrective shoes, and this is now not only limited to individual schools but all schools across the country. Question #2: Is Common Core actually a national curriculum? ...No, and this gets into the distinction between standards and curriculum.

...The curriculum used to meet the standards will remain a decision made by each school district.

Cheryl Boise: No one handed each state a copy of a curriculum. However, the states aligned their existing standards to the NATIONAL common core framework. Also when the textbooks- which is what is happening right now- are aligned to the Common Core then clearly there is a direct influence on local curriculum. If districts are using online computer programs for their students-and most of those programs are now written around Common Core-then again the curriculum is being influence by Common Core objectives and standards.

Question #3: Does Common Core include a required reading list? R. Milne: No, Common Core creates no such list.Cheryl Boise: Did each school district receive a specific list of required titles of books the students must read? The answer is no, but again the standards define what type of materials the students will be required to read in order to pass the class, and also the

tests. Those who influence the standards, and tests define the direction of materials the students will have to read. There is a definite shift in the required reading materials moving more from classical literature to informational texts like documents. Language Art's specialists like Dr. Sandra Stotsky has outlined in detail the problems with this type of change in literature and reading. Do we want to move students from reading "To Kill A Mockingbird" to reading a government regulation?

Question #4: Will Pennsylvania students be required to take a national test under Common Core? Rep. Milne: No. Common Core does not call for such, and I for one would object if these were pushed for Pennsylvania. Cheryl Boise: Good question, because Pa Dept of Education says no. However, Pa received Race to the Tops (RTTT) funds, and are currently applying for further RTTT Funds for Early Learning. Pa. also asked for, and received a waiver over the past summer getting the districts out of some of the No Child Left Behind requirements. Based on the requirements for the funds, and waiver it appears PA is obligated to the national testing.

Question #5: Will Common Core collect massive amounts of data about children and families? Rep. Milne: No more than is currently done. A

In an attempt to better the education of students Cheryl Boise: Again the Pa Dept of Education is saying no, but their involvement in Race to the Top and their acceptance of the waiver for No Child Left Behind indicates otherwise. People have to realize when the Pa Dept of Education says they are not involved in data collection that is again semantics. Question #6: Does Common Core weaken state standards? Rep. Milne: No Cheryl Boise: Based on the analysis of national experts the Common Core Standards are not rigorous, internationally benchmarked, and are not college ready. When saying college ready that does not mean a community college, but rather what is necessary for a 4 year college or university. The University Pennsylvania did an analysis of the actual CCS framework and has said this will not give the students the foundation they will need in order to move towards a 4 year college program. We had the Pennsylvania version of the standards analyzed, and were told that we not only weakened our own standards, but revised them several times causing them to decrease in rigor with each change.

Question # 7: Is there Federal Funding tied to Common Core? Rep Milne: No

Cheryl Boise: Yes, To date we know we received \$43 million 2-1/2 years ago. That was the carrot that caused the states to get involved in the first place. One of the conditions to take the money was Common Core. The competitive grant application process for Race to the Top again required Common Core, testing, a teacher evaluation system, and data. Even though no money was involved with the waiver from No Child Left Behind, that was also a motivation for a state like Pennsylvania to get involved with the National Common Core Initiative.

Question #8: How much, then, will Common Core cost? Rep. Milne: Good question.

Cheryl Boise: The cost projection done by the Pioneer Institute gave a total for Pennsylvania of over \$650 Million dollar.

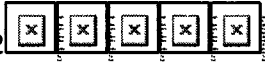
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In unsuccessful learning situations, the response in Common Core is to bring everyone to the same level by implementing a plan that is founded by people not in education, using unproven curriculum, compromising most aspects of the privacy of the students, and taking control of the welfare of our children and handing that responsibility over to the Federal government without a law, a vote, or a choice. This is a HUGE GOVERNMENT TAKEOVER OF OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM. Like Obama Care, you have to accept it before you find out what is in it. What could go wrong?????

Sources: [http://www.irrc.state.pa.us/full\\_list.aspx?IRRCNo=2976&type=2](http://www.irrc.state.pa.us/full_list.aspx?IRRCNo=2976&type=2)

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**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Celwil <celwil@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 16, 2013 10:22 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Common Core



I hadn't signed this so I am re-sending it.

Dear Mr. Sumner,

**I OPPOSE COMMON CORE STANDARDS and the adoption of them because:**

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Sincerely,

Celeste Wilson

Sources: [http://www.irrc.state.pa.us/full\\_list.aspx?IRRCNo=2976&type=2](http://www.irrc.state.pa.us/full_list.aspx?IRRCNo=2976&type=2)

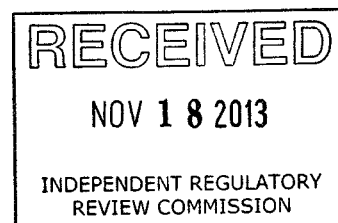
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**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Bill Morgan <bilhee@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 16, 2013 9:02 AM  
**To:** David Sumner



**From:** Lipkowitz, Bruce <LipkowitzB@MLHS.ORG>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 17, 2013 12:27 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Graduation Exams

To whom it may concern,

I want to express my opposition to the Keystone exams. I am someone with a learning disability and my son is also someone who has several disabilities. Standardized tests are a frustrating, unrealistic portrayal of someone's academic success, both current and in the future. Teaching to these tests is a waste of valuable class time and unfair for those with disabilities or students in a district with limited resources.

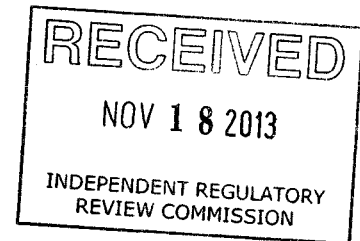
By the way, although this test did not exist when I was in school, and I scored a poor 880 on my SATs after 2 attempts, I graduated college and achieved an advanced degree as well. Had so much weight been placed on a test like this one, I might have never had a chance to enter higher education and ultimately be as successful as I am.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you for your consideration,

Bruce Lipkowitz

610-662-2957



**Cooper, Kathy**

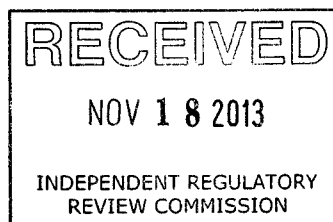
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**From:** Sabrina <sabrina@sabrinaann.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 17, 2013 9:38 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** dleach@pasenate.com; repbriggs@pahouse.net; repmaryjodaley@pahouse.net; mfolmer@pasen.gov; BONEill@pahousegop.com; repdelissio@pahouse.net  
**Subject:** NO on Chapter 4 Regulations

My name is Sabrina Sigler. 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,

Sabrina Y Sigler  
Parent of two elementary school age children



**Cooper, Kathy**

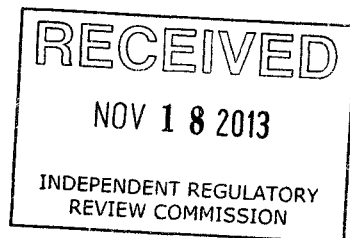
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**Sent:** Sunday, November 17, 2013 9:38 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** dleach@pasenate.com; repbriggs@pahouse.net; repmaryjodaley@pahouse.net; mfolmer@pasen.gov; BONEill@pahousegop.com; repdelissio@pahouse.net  
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Respectfully,

Sabrina Y Sigler  
Parent of two elementary school age children



**Cooper, Kathy**

---

**From:** Eileen <E.Leyoldt.121@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 17, 2013 8:40 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams

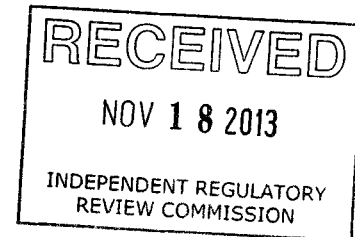
Nov. 17, 2013

Dear Mr. Sumner,

I am opposed to the Keystone exams. Students are already being tested so often with standardized tests. It will cause more teaching to the test, instead of helping every student to feel that they are making progress toward being productive and contributing citizens of PA.

Thank you for understanding my opposition to this bill.

Eileen Leyoldt  
121 Milbury Road  
Coatesville, PA 19320





**Cooper, Kathy**

---

**From:** Anne Rosenberg <annelewisrosenberg@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 17, 2013 9:23 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone exams

**To:** [dsumner@IRRC.state.pa.us](mailto:dsumner@IRRC.state.pa.us)

**Subject: Opposition to Keystone exams as graduation requirement and proposed Chapter 4 Regulations**

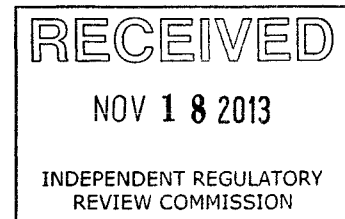
We are Pennsylvania parents in the Lower Merion School District.  
We are OPPOSED to the Keystone provisions in the currently proposed Chapter 4 Regulations, as explained in the below link (i.e., Letter to IRRC from over fifty Pennsylvania school district superintendents dated 11-5-13)

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

**Link to Superintendents' Letter:**

<http://origin.library.constantcontact.com/download/get/file/1101630330592-851/IRRC+Superintendent+Keystone+Letter+11+04+13+%282%29.pdf>

Anne Rosenberg

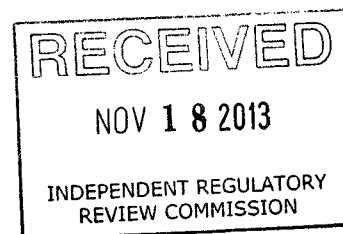


## Cooper, Kathy

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**From:** amy loser <amywloser@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 17, 2013 8:33 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Reject Keystone Exams

I agree with Andy Dinniman that the Keystone Exams are not the answer to better education. Schools are already experiencing a huge deficit in human and financial resources. Please do not add more mandates to education that do not make sense. Teachers are good, competent professionals. Listen to them!  
Amy Loser



**Cooper, Kathy**

---

**From:** Deborah Aronson <deboraharonson@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 17, 2013 8:43 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

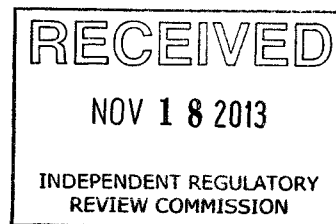
Hello-

My name is Deborah Aronson. I live in Wynnewood, PA. I have two children in elementary school and already feel the amount of testing is excessive and takes away from actual learning. I also adamantly oppose the Keystone Exams being tied to a student's high school graduation and am asking you to REJECT the proposed Chapter 4 regulations.

PLEASE VOTE NO on November 21st.

Respectfully,

Deborah Aronson  
421 Wister Road  
Wynnewood



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Abby Spector <abbyspector@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 17, 2013 6:56 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams

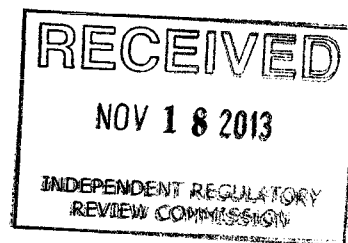
Dear Mr. Sumner,

As the parent of an 11th grader in Lower Merion High School (Ardmore, PA), I urge the IRRC to withhold approval of the proposed Chapter 4 Regulations regarding the Keystone Exams.

I believe strongly that the Keystone Exams should NOT be a graduation requirement.

Thank you,  
Abby Spector

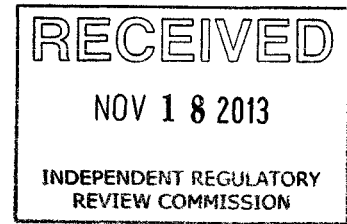
Abby Spector  
541 Cynwyd Circle  
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004  
610-664-0917  
[abbyspector@comcast.net](mailto:abbyspector@comcast.net)



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Haddon <dnkhaddon1@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 17, 2013 12:49 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Common Core Implementation?



*Dear Mr. Sumner,*

*In reference to IRRC No. 2976:*

*We are writing to express our opposition to the PA Core Standards for primary and secondary schools in the state. In previous correspondence we expressed our concerns for the manner in which these standards are being adopted throughout the nation; without the consent of informed representatives and their likewise knowing constituents. In addition, it is deeply disconcerting to have decisions about curricula and standards made at a federal, versus state and local level. Parents and educators working in cooperation utilize first-hand knowledge and understanding of students and their needs far more effectively than government employees in far-away Washington, DC. Without the ready ability to tailor programs for local students, educators and parents will be unable to address concerns in a timely manner, nor for that matter, without a great deal of expense because their supplications need be relayed to the federal level decision-makers.*

*Another practical consideration is the cost of implementation of this program and the long-term fiscal consequences of it. There is no question that initial and continuing costs resulting from the mandates of this initiative could prove to be prohibitive for PA taxpayers at a time when we are already facing severe budgetary problems in the midst of an adverse economy. In fact, the entire educational package to which this and other states will be required to submit, and financially support, are not yet even fully developed!! This is not just impractical, it is insanity! Please reject everything having to do with the Common Core Standards. Return the authority and responsibility for educating our children to the people of this state and it's localities.*

*Respectfully yours,*

*Mr. and Mrs. David & Kathy Haddon  
604 West Walnut Street  
Lancaster, PA 17603*

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** jebrown46@1791.com  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 16, 2013 8:24 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** Paul Clymer; Gov Corbett; John Lawrence; Dominic Pileggi; Joe Pitts  
**Subject:** IRRC #2976 - I am against PA Core Standards -

Dear Mr. Sumner,

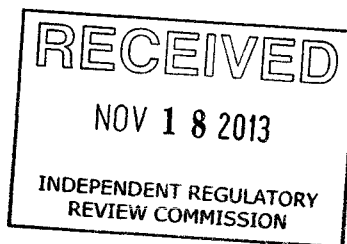
PA already has tremendous budget problems. The PA Taxpayers cannot afford PA Core Standards - not now, not later. We are 'taxed out' already; no way can you / the State continue to put more burden on us, please. Our state just cannot afford this....

Our school districts are already at the maximum we can carry and property owners 'cannot' afford to pay more' - our school taxes are some of the highest already.

And I want to ask you why this is being mandated/forced on our school districts in Pennsylvania. It is untested and there is no earthly proof it will improve learning.

please note: I AM AGAINST IRRC NO. 2976

Jane Brown  
Chester County  
Franklin Township



**Cooper, Kathy**

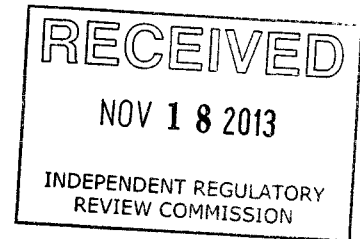
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**From:** Deborah Moody <d.moody1@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 16, 2013 8:43 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Oppose Keystone Exam Changes

I am oppose increasing standardized test form three to five, and I oppose Keystone Exams as graduation requirements.

I oppose the changes that was introduced.

Deborah D Moody  
PO Box 464  
Ardmore, PA 19003  
267-339-4714



**Cooper, Kathy**

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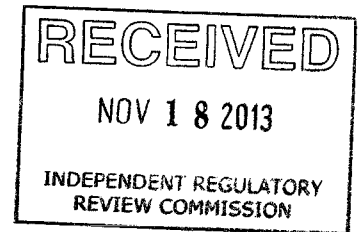
**From:** Heath Miller <heathmiller11@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 16, 2013 8:42 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Oppose PA Core Standards

Mr. David Sumner,

As the father of a young child, I would like to briefly voice my opposition to the adoption of Common Core Standards in Pennsylvania, IRRC No. 2976. A national system of one-size-fits-all education is not in the best interests of our children. We need to give our teachers and administrators the flexibility to teach our students as individuals. Additionally I am concerned about the cost of the system to the taxpayers; attempts by the federal government to throw more money into our educational system have proven time and again to not be the answer.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this matter.

Regards,  
Heath Miller  
Ruffs Dale, PA 15679  
[heathmiller11@hotmail.com](mailto:heathmiller11@hotmail.com)





**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Robyn & Steve Pennay <pennay@nep.net>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 16, 2013 8:36 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** comment

I urge you to NOT pass the request for Keystone Graduation Exams. More standardized testing is not going to help students or teachers. What it will do is increase dropouts, increase pressure on kids who don't perform well on standardized tests, as well as the damaging derision many already receive, and increase school property taxes. Those of us who live in rural areas with smaller school populations and working farms will find the downsides especially steep.

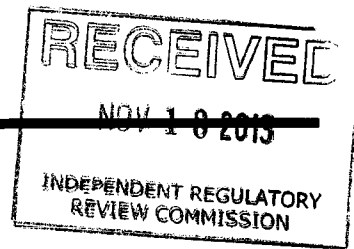
**Robyn & Steve**

*Be who you are and say what you feel, because those that matter don't mind and those that mind don't matter. Dr. Seuss*



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Peter and Nancy Naylor <pnnaylor1@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 17, 2013 4:17 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** No more testing!

Dear Mr. Sumner,

As a parent of a freshman and eighth grade student, I am respectfully requesting you reconsider adding more testing in the form of the Keystone Graduation Exams. The standardized testing has grown like a fungus in Pennsylvania and it is insidious. I firmly believe my children have been cheated out of many educational opportunities due to the demands of testing placed on both the teachers and the students. I send my children to school to learn, grow, create and thrive. I am not sending them to take tests.

In addition, I am concerned how we are going to fund this new testing. In order to provide the services needed for all students to pass, funding will be needed. I believe this will come in the form of higher taxes. I do not mind increased taxes for programs that educate, but I do have an issue with tax increases for more tests.

Finally, I believe an unintended consequence will be more students dropping out of school. The students who are not able to pass will get frustrated and not complete their high school education. I do not even want to think about what that will mean for our state.

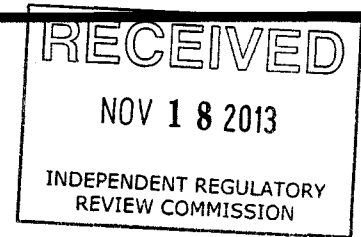
Please do not move forward with the Keystone Graduation Exam requirement. It is bad for our students, our schools, our taxpayers and our state.

Sincerely,  
Nancy Naylor

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Linda Simcheck <lsimcheck12@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 16, 2013 7:38 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams



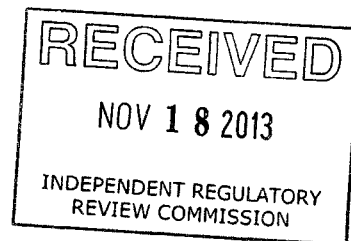
I am writing to ask you to reject the Keystone Graduation Exams which are part of the proposed Chapter 4 Final Form Regulations. I work with learning support children in grades 9 through 12. These tests put a tremendous amount of undue stress on our children. Comments that I have recently heard include I might as well drop out now, there is no way I can pass these tests. If you spent time looking at these tests, you would realize that these children probably will not pass them. Also, our teachers are being forced to leave behind instruction of basic fundamentals, because most of their time must be spent teaching to the test. Governor Corbett needs to spend time in a classroom. Obviously he knows nothing about educating our children AND unfunded mandates. Please think of children!

Linda Simcheck  
Learning Support Aide

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Jill Stein <jstein9192@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 16, 2013 5:24 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams



Dear Mr. Sumner,

I am a parent of my 10th grade daughter who is Very Frustrated along with many others regarding the Keystone Exams. My daughter did not pass the exam over three (3) Points!! After that what occurred was truly Very Negative. We found out that she Now Needed to take a Summer Course so that in the fall She would be able to have Chemistry! Needless to say, it ruined my daughters summer because she was then pulled out of her summer routine to go back to school to study with teachers so she could try to pass the retake test. That didn't happen! She not only felt horrible about not passing it the 1st time she felt worse going to summer school & Felt Very Stressed about the retake. She missed again only by a Few points!!

My daughter does Work Very Hard Everyday to be the Best she can be in School. Things Do Not come easy to her. She repeated 1st grade because of her late July Birthday & School is her Priority. I do Not Want this Wonderful Attitude to Change. I want her to Feel Positive & know that Hard Work Does Pay Off.

The Keystone Exams are Proving to be a Nightmare for Some children who do not test well. The whole other issue is that some of the material on the Keystone Exams isn't even being taught in school. That's another BIG Issue.

I along with Many other Parents are Hoping This Can be Rectified!!

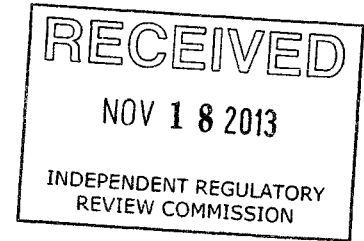
Very truly,  
Concerned Parent  
Jill Stein

Sent from my iPad

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** mrwein@comcast.net  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 17, 2013 7:01 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Regulation#6-326 and IRR#2976



Dear Mr. Sumner,

I am writing to you to voice my concern regarding the overreach of the Federal Government into education. Common Core has no business in our schools because it simply **reduces** the current standards and completely eliminates any local input by teachers and parents. I was so horrified by the poor quality of the common core math books at our school, that I no longer send my child to public school.

The collection of personal data on students and their families is completely **unconstitutional** and the cost of such a sub par curriculum to the tax payers is a burden on society with detrimental results for the future of our country.

Also, Keystone Exams adds an unnecessary cost to schools without truly measuring a students knowledge on any given subject. This exam should **not** be used as a requirement for graduation.

I sincerely hope that you will take this matter very seriously and please consider the consequences that will adversely affect our current Pennsylvania educational system. Our children futures depend on your courage to stand up to this assault on education.

Sincerely,

Marsha R. Weinstein  
(Lower Merion Township with top performing schools!)

**Cooper, Kathy**

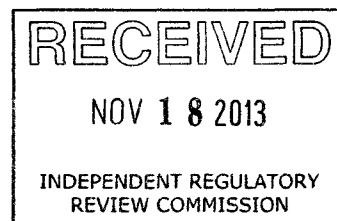
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**From:** Lynne Torbeck <torbeck9@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 16, 2013 6:44 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Opposition to Keystone exams

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

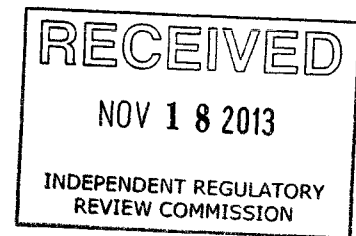
Thank you,  
Lynne Torbeck  
312 Gatcombe Ln.  
Bryn Mawr, Pa 19010



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Dorothy Manou <drbmanou@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 17, 2013 3:59 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** KEYSTONE GRADUATION EXAMS



I am writing to urge you to reject the passing of the Keystone Graduation Exams.

I have a grave concern that 3 standardized tests will be used to determine a student's high school graduation. I can only imagine how tragic it will be if students who otherwise do well in school don't fare well taking standardized tests.

What is used to determine a student's success in school is never just a couple of standard tests at the year end. A student's performance is measured throughout each year, semester by semester, based on testing, classroom participation, special projects, and papers turned in during each semester that demonstrate the student's grasp of the subject matter.

I understand as much as \$65 million dollars are projected for this Keystone testing program. With what we hear constantly about the difficulty so many school systems are having keeping up with costs from county to county in PA, I would hope these funds would be used to innovate and build support for the programs that are suffering within each school system. Teachers and innovating teaching methods are desperately needed if we are to build our schools across Pennsylvania in ways that show growth and promise.

If a student fails the Keystone exam, the school district will have to provide supplementary instruction. Imagine how expensive this will be, particularly if the number of students in low-income neighborhoods don't fare well in droves. The only option the government will have is to raise property taxes. Many, if not most, of us who are tax paying citizens in Pennsylvania today are still getting back on our feet as a result of lost jobs, failure to meet mortgage payments, crashed and burned 401 savings back when the economy crashed and the stocks plummeted. Our house has been on the market for over 2 years. We are struggling just as many folks in the great state of Pennsylvania are. Our property taxes are already very high. Not easy to afford on our budget these days. There is no room in the lives of most Pennsylvania citizens for tax increases. This economy needs boosting. Enough knocking down our citizenry while we're attempting to make a come-back.

Please, please do not approve the Keystone Graduation Exams. I believe this will create havoc and result in enormous financial disaster and leave some outstanding students worrying about how to mitigate their failure to do well on these standardized tests.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of my concerns and for deciding not to approve this new program that doesn't seem to have the support of PA legislators and school leaders.

All the best,

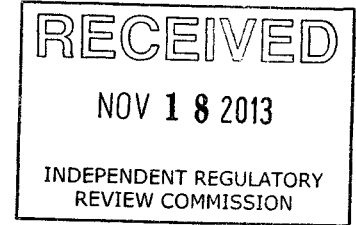
Dorothy RB Manou  
Downingtown, PA



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Lisa Hecht <lisahecht11@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 17, 2013 11:48 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** No to Keystone Exams



To whom it may concern,

I am not in favor of Keystone exams for the reasons listed below.

**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.

**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.

**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.

### **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.

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. 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.

Thank you

Lisa Hecht

Parent of Lower Merion High School

Cooper, Kathy

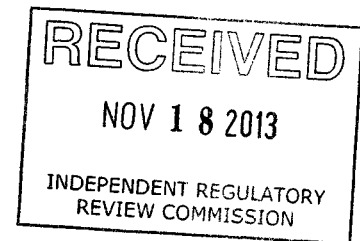
2976

**From:** Elizabeth Vandiver <ewitheyvandiver@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 17, 2013 12:24 PM  
**To:** David Sumner; dleach@pasenate.com; repbriggs@pahouse.net;  
repmarijodaley@pahouse.net; mfolmer@pasen.gov; BONEill@pahousegop.com;  
repdelissio@pahouse.net  
**Subject:** VOTE NO ON CHAPTER 4 REGULATIONS

Elizabeth Vandiver  
1106 Beech Road  
Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania 19010

November 17, 2013

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



**Re: Vote NO on Chapter 4 Regulations**

Dear Mr. Sumner:

I urge you to **vote NO on the Keystone Exams** and **STOP the standardized testing madness** that is overwhelming our public schools, undermining education, wasting our taxpayer dollars and is overstepping the boundaries of local rights and separation of powers. The Keystone Exams, other standardized testing such as the PSSAs and The Pennsylvania Common Core are dismantling quality education in Pennsylvania in public school districts where quality already exists and is widening the education gap in areas where public schools are academically struggling. These exams have been promoted by testing corporations that earn billions of dollars on the backs of our children, while undermining their education in the process. Thus, the current momentum of standardized testing and The Pennsylvania Common Core must stop now in its tracks before more damage is done.

Contrary to the public relations spin of the testing companies – ie. Pearson -- standardized exams, such as **Keystones and The Common Core Standards do not correlate at all with a quality education.** In fact, they hamper the ability to provide a truly intellectual education both monetarily and academically. This one size fits all diluted version of learning as a result of The Common Core is proving to be detrimental to our students because it is synonymous with the McDonaldization of education – this is hardly intellectual and is exceedingly boring. It is dumbing down the academic learning experience in districts that are succeeding and it is failing the students in districts that are struggling. It takes the fun and wonder out of learning and it does not inspire critical thinking. A truly rich education is inspirational and teaches critical thinking and scholarship -- it does not turn children into robotic drones who are great at filling in bubbles as both The Common Core Standards and standardized tests do.

**The purpose of public schools is to inspire children and provide them with a well-rounded education. It is not intended to provide hefty profit margins to the multi-billion dollar industry of testing corporations.** The Common Core Standards and standardized tests, such as Keystones, which support The Common Core is a business model to support the publishing industry suffering financial losses from the digitalization of text books --and our children are being used to achieve this goal, as well as our tax dollars. It is not a model that provides a well-rounded intellectual education, which teaches strong critical thinking skills.

Moreover, the time children spend in school must be used for intellectual development and academic growth and their **success should be measured specifically by the teachers** who know their students and can personally discern each child's understanding of the material -- not by a machine in Harrisburg. The Keystone Exams, by their very nature, imply that teachers and administrators who actually know our children are not capable of deciding whether or not each student has mastered academic material. This is an insult to dedicated individuals who are academically trained to make such determinations and have a far better understanding of the nuances of their students' knowledge of material and academic potential. Our teachers must be treated with trust and respect. To fail to do so will drive our quality teachers away from the profession and thus our children.

**Standardized tests are stealing from the time allocated for learning** and as a result there has been a reduction of recess. Recess is not a luxury but rather a necessary time children need to move their bodies and clear their minds so that they are ready for the next academic presentation. In

addition, art, music, foreign language and physical education classes are being reduced to allow for the time needed to prepare for and administer these exams. This is wrong and is detrimental to a truly well-rounded high caliber education.

**The Keystone Exams are mandated yet the funding is not provided.** This is an egregious overstep of power. Moreover, to administer the Keystone Exams is a tremendous expense that is not beneficial to students. The limited financial resources available to school districts must be used for teaching and learning not for administering standardized exams. Districts that are struggling need these financial resources to provide additional tutoring support, books, paper, inspiring classes and devoted teachers. Standardized exams are not the answer to helping the children in these districts.

The very notion of mandating local school districts is an egregious overstep of power and the very important system our Founding Fathers wisely put in place. The Common Core and standardized exams that set the notion of a "national standard" in place is contrary to our founding framework of local, state and federal rights and the very important separation of powers. Different regions and localities have different needs for different reasons. Those needs and subsequent accountability are best met at the local level. Our system of checks and balances can be employed when necessary; however, macro governing at all times is dangerous and is not acceptable.

**Fundamentally, the goal is to provide our children with a truly intellectual education that develops rigorous critical thinking skills and fosters a life long love for learning and intellectual curiosity.** This type of education will develop the adults we want and need as our future leaders, scientists, inventors, and business owners. **Say NO to the Keystones Exams! Say NO to The Common Core Curriculum!** Allow our school districts to do their jobs at the local level. Abandon this macro approach that is not preparing our children. The power of curriculum and expectation belongs at the local level and the administrators should be directly accountable to local parents and taxpayers. **If you really care about educating our children and our country's future you will STOP the madness of standardized testing!**

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Vandiver

**Cooper, Kathy**

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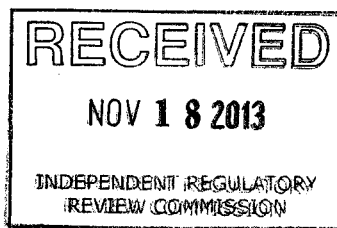
**From:** Alanna Lewis <alannaclaire@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 17, 2013 9:11 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Key Stone Testing

Dear Mr. Sumner,

This testing seems random and unnecessary for students already taking SAT's and other nationally standardized tests. Perhaps you could just require three achievement tests with a particular score. Don't burden the students or waste school money unnecessarily. Further, how will dyslexic and special needs children graduate? They may be able to write but not spell, or they may be able to spell, but not write, or be great writers all around but will never be able to perform mathematics proficiently as compared to their peers.

Thank you,

Alanna Lewis



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** bahh@zoominternet.net  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 17, 2013 8:08 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** PA Core Standards IRRC No.2976

Dear Mr. Summer, As a concerned citizen I OPPOSE the implementation of Pa Core Standards for the following reasons: 1. The unidentified costs of implementation and the cost of sustaining the requirements of IRRC No. 2976 will be a burden on PA taxpayers at a time when we have other budget issues. 2. PA Core Standards were never voted on by the State or local government. The States were bribed into implementation of Core Standards via "Race To the Top". Core Standards are much like "No Child Left Behind" which is teaching to the tests. It promises NATIONAL TESTING and a "ONE SIZE FITS ALL EDUCATION". 3. PA Core Standards creates a CONFLICT of INTEREST in the way we learn. Not all tasks of teaching are QUANTIFIABLE. You cannot measure creativity, appreciation, inquisitiveness that is the purpose of education. We teach to free minds, inspire, and equip for a career that will naturally follow. 4. Pennsylvania has always been a leader in Education Standards. I feel that PA Core Standards will make us into followers of Federal Standards which is the purpose of Common Core Standards. Sincerely, Barbara Heintz





**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Johanna Werbach <jwerbach@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 17, 2013 9:02 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** NO to Keystone Exams

Please do not make the Keystone Exams yet another standardized testing hurdle for our children in Pennsylvania. There is already way too much time taken up during the school year teaching toward standardized tests, and precious little devoted to making them critical thinkers and teaching skills to prepare them for lives after 12th grade. I urge you not to adopt this additional standardized test as a condition for graduation.

Sincerely,

Johanna Werbach  
610-526-9748  
(Mom of 4th and 6th grader in Lower Merion School District)



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Chris Rizzo <clizzo@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 17, 2013 8:48 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** NO vote on Chapter 4 Regulation

Dear IRRRC Executive Director,

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

Respectfully,

Christine Chodkowski



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Bradley Eastman <bradleyeastman@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 17, 2013 7:48 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** IRRC 2976 Common Core

11-17-13

Mr. David Sumner, Executive Director, IRRC

Re: IRRC No. 2976 Common Core

Mr Sumner,

I strongly oppose the Common Core principals. Aside from the cost, the disruption, and the removal of Teachers ability to move with the class, it is another way for large government to catalog their subjects. The intrusion into personal liberties is unmistakable and life long. In a world where the government is keeping records of all our contact info, using the IRS and other agencies against political opponents, and now going to have everyone's medical records, do we really want them to have intimate information about a child's response to various questions and problems. And who gets to pick the questions, and what are the truths? This requires the teachers to teach to a test, not to the curiosity and skill of the students.

Our tax dollars would be much better spent, with today's technology, in tailoring a curriculum from a child's home outward. Start History with the founding of their town, science with the needs of their community. A child who moves to a new area would not be as knowledgeable as the locals, but he would have knowledge and understanding that would be unique and a teachable moment.

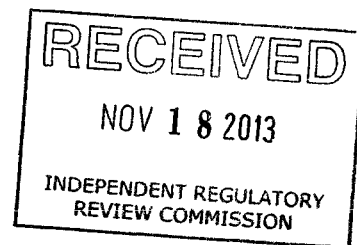
We need less government in every aspect of our lives.

Sincerely,

Brad Eastman

PO Box 111

Wheatland, PA 16161



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Michael Finkelstein <mdfinkelstein@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 17, 2013 8:57 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** 'Michael and Jennifer Finkelstein'  
**Subject:** Chapter 4 Regulations

To whom it may concern:

As parents of two fifth graders in Lower Merion School district, we are adamantly opposed to the implementation of the Keystone Exams as graduation requirements. Please log our concerns.

Sincerely,  
Michael and Jennifer Finkelstein  
1111 Maplecrest Circle  
Gladwyne, PA 19035



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Jennifer Sobol <jensobol@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 17, 2013 8:37 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Testing

Mr. Sumner,

I am a teacher and a parent of children who are in the Lower Merion School District of Pennsylvania. I am writing to let you know that I am firmly against the Keystone exams as they relate to graduation. The focus on testing this state has adopted is ridiculous. These tests do not take the "whole child" into account. All the tests, and the teaching to the tests that is going on in all the classrooms are crippling the schools and making most children hate learning. There is no longer an opportunity for kids to learn through discovery, nor is there much opportunity for teachers to creatively present the curriculum. Please support us in trying to improve our school systems, not worsen them.

Jen Sobol



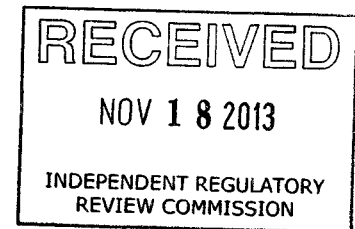
**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Dawn Morningstar <dawnmorningstar4@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 17, 2013 7:44 PM  
**To:** David Sumner

I am writing to say I **adamantly oppose** the Keystone Exams being tied to a student's high school graduation. It puts undue stress on the students. They are taking other tests to place into colleges as well as working on other non academic but equally important parts to learning including the arts and physical education. It is an unnecessary burden on children, parents and teachers.

Respectfully,  
Dawn Morningstar



**Cooper, Kathy**

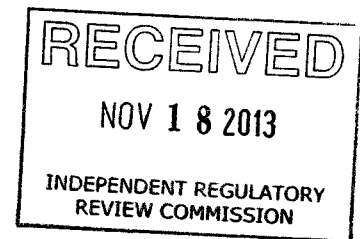
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**From:** Lisa Isenberg <lmc622@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 17, 2013 7:18 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams

I am writing to urge you, the Independent Regulatory Review Commission and the General Assembly not to require Keystone Exams as a graduation requirement for PA Public Schools.

Thank you,  
Lisa Isenberg

Lisa Isenberg  
[lmc622@aol.com](mailto:lmc622@aol.com)



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Danielle Patterson <danielp@fairpoint.net>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 17, 2013 7:08 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** IRRRC 2976

I as a parent of an 7 and 9 year old is COMPLETELY AGAINST COMMOR CORE, my children are so frustrated with this education.

I saddens me as a parent to have to witness this!!





**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Michael Barnes <4riverrafters@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 17, 2013 6:46 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** IRRC No. 2976.

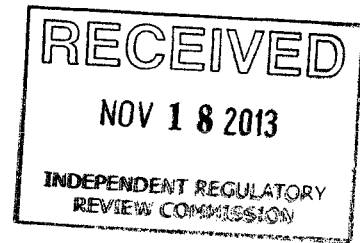
Dear Mr. David Sumner,

I am against Common Core which is being pushed on the national level by the Obama administration with heavy backing from the Gates Foundation. Why do we need the Federal Government to be involved in the design of our education system? Education should only be the result of state and local involvement from teachers and the children's parents. One size fits all does not work in education where millions of students have different personalities, varied levels of intelligence, and come from diverse backgrounds. I object to how Common Core is being implemented. It is very controversial and there is little mention about it as this insidious agenda is pushed into our schools on students and many unsuspecting parents who do not understand what it is. This will add more cost to the already most expensive per student system in the world. How is Pennsylvania, as well as school districts, with already strapped finances supposed to handle an added expense of Common Core too? This can only mean higher taxes which no one can afford. I urge you to stop Common Core implementation.

Sincerely,

Julie Barnes

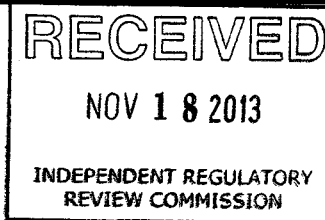
Pittsburgh, PA 15237



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Sandy Sasso <sanjonsas@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 17, 2013 7:13 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** IRRC 2976



There is much concern on the new "Common Core" 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. Many teachers and professors have opposed this method. Too much social engineering and not enough truth in history, critical thinking in math and english.

It is a one size fits all standard for children. It has been brought to our attention the questionable content with regards to age appropriateness, clarity and content of the assignment, political indoctrination, and social morality.

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.

Our traditional textbooks on math, history, english, spelling, geography, has served us very well and produced very competent adults. Please scratch this program for the sake of future generations.

Sincerely,  
Mr. & Mrs. John J. Sasso  
1932 Foster Rd.  
Hatfield, PA 19440  
215-855-4412  
[sanjonsas@verizon.net](mailto:sanjonsas@verizon.net)

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Randy Lipkin <ranlipkin@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 17, 2013 7:08 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams

As a resident of Lower Merion Township we urge you to abandon plans to make Keystone Exams mandatory. Implementing the Keystone exams will cause more teaching time to be derailed in order to reach to the test. This is NOT the way to make students smarter or have a better education.

Please vote NO when asked about implementing this for our state.  
Thank you,

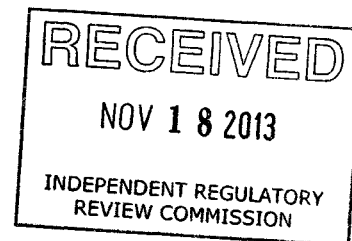
Brian and Randy Lipki



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** xtraguin <xtraguin@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 17, 2013 6:40 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Common Core Concerns - IRRC No. 2976



Dear Mr. Sumner,

I am writing to express my concerns about the fiscal ramifications relating to IRRC No. 2976, the common core standards.

These standards have not been tested in a small number of school districts to determine their merit, yet we are considering forcing every school district in the state to begin using them. I am very concerned about the costs this could levy upon those districts that are already struggling.

Please stop the passing of this common core until we have seen a complete fiscal analysis.

We cannot approve unfounded mandates. It is fiscally irresponsible.

I also urge this policy to be piloted in school districts who freely choose to pilot test it by a vote in their district. Once it has been tested and proven, other districts will surely follow suit.

Thank you for you time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Marissa Mayo

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** pfluisi@comcast.net  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 17, 2013 6:30 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** IRRC No. 2076

Common Core is the same "one size fits all" approach to education that Obamacare is to healthcare. Both will dramatically increase costs without evidence that they will improve outcomes. That, plus the distorted teachings about American history and the role of government in America are also obvious indications that these new national education standards must not be pushed on Pennsylvania teachers and Pennsylvania students. Pennsylvania does not want, does not need and cannot afford this unproven system.

Say NO to PA Core Standards!

P Luisi



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** John Beiter <beiterjohn@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 17, 2013 6:13 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Reject the Keystone Graduation Exams

Dear Mr. Summers,

I am writing you to ask you to reject the Keystone Graduation Exams. I am a mother of two teenage students. As a result of these exams, I now have a son who probably will not be able to graduate. He falls just below the need for special assistance in school. He is an average student who gets "C" grades. However, he struggles with testing. He is scheduled to take a portion of the Keystone test again in December. My son is upset and anxious about this upcoming test. I hope that he does not become static and dropout of school.

This testing is wasting valuable time in the classroom for my son. Teachers need to be able to teach to the needs of the students, not "teaching for the test."

Lets stop these Keystone Exams, before they fail Pennsylvania.

Thank you for your time.  
Maria Beiter  
Concerned parent/ taxpayer



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Chardelle Hull <chardellehull@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 17, 2013 5:43 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams

Dear Sir,

As a retired educator and grandmother I strongly urge you to reject the Keystone Exams.

Sincerely,  
Chardelle F.Hull

Sent from my iPhone



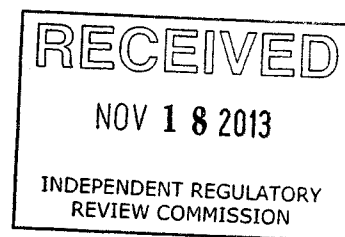
## Cooper, Kathy

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**From:** Melissa Sayer <melissasayer@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 17, 2013 4:49 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Exam Requirement

I oppose requiring Keystone Exam completion for graduation. I am the mother of a special needs student who already is burdened by a tremendous volume of testing which directly reduces the amount of time he receives instruction that he is dependent on. We have a tremendous school district with excellent teachers.....give them time to teach and the students will learn. The journey in education that occurs in the classroom is everything especially for special needs children.

Respectfully submitted,  
Melissa  
Melissa Sayer CNM MS  
Certified Nurse Midwife  
[melissasayer@aol.com](mailto:melissasayer@aol.com)

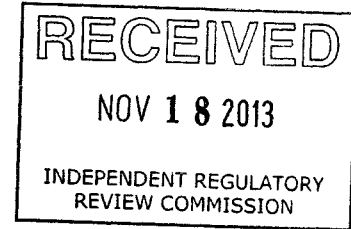




**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** ljallison324@gmail.com  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 17, 2013 5:56 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone graduation Exams don't make the grade



I oppose the keystone graduation exams they are fundamentally unfair. Since the PA dept. of Ed is not providing adequate funding to our public schools.

There wouldn't be the love of learning for the sake of learning. Teacher's would be forced "to teach to the test"

It is wrong for 3 standardize tests to determine a student's high school graduation. Kids need more of the education that I grew up on the 3Rs and full stocked libraries access to current books & technology.

Please vote against Keystone Graduation Exams

Leslie Allison

714 Bradford Terrace

West Chester PA 19382

**Cooper, Kathy**

RECEIVED

NOV 18 2013

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
REVIEW COMMISSION

**From:** Mary Cay Milliner <mcmilliner@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 17, 2013 4:51 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Common Core

Dear Mr. Sumner,

I am writing to voice my opposition to continued implementation of the Common Core Standards in Pennsylvania. The Common Core Standards were developed in secret over an eighteen-month period by nonfederal (and non-education) business-orientated organizations (e.g., the National Governors Association & Achieve) with heavy funding from the Gates Foundation. Experienced educators, early childhood specialists, and education researchers were virtually shut out of the process until the Core was a fait accompli. Thus, the Common Core standards are not research-based or classroom tested. I am greatly concerned that the Common Core are not developmentally appropriate for young children since they will subject children in early grades and pre-kindergarten to standardized testing.

I am also concerned about the Language Arts standards and their great curricular focus on non-fiction texts. The end result of this stress on nonfiction texts will be a generation of students graduating from our high schools with seventh grade reading skills. They will not have the language skills for admission into four-year colleges but will be regulated to community colleges (which will further widen the gulf between socio-economic classes). In addition, future graduates will not be critical thinkers who are capable of understanding complex texts, appreciating layers of meaning, or uncovering inherent biases. Instead they will be citizens with a limited literacy skills set --- a set that has prepared them to understand brochures, popular press articles (written on the 7th grade level), and owners manuals.

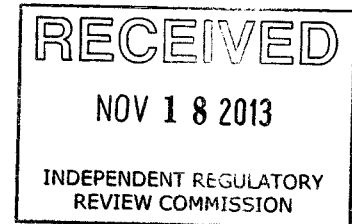
Finally, the purpose of education in Pennsylvania should not be to prepare future workers for corporate America. Students in Pennsylvania should be educated so that they can be full participants in governing our Commonwealth --- citizens who are capable of making nuanced decisions for the common good.

Mary Cay Rojtas-Milliner, Ed.D., NBCT

## Cooper, Kathy

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**From:** robkennedy@comcast.net  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 17, 2013 8:48 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** Robert Kennedy  
**Subject:** Keystone Graduation Exams



I strongly oppose this Exam for graduation, my reasons follow:

- First with a group of individual on the PA Board of Education making up these exams and rules within themselves, it strikes me as this is a group hiring a group to supply the exams. Without any public input, a small group decides for a large group ( parent of all children in school), as I pay their salary I/we the parents should have input. Once again with no public input is makes me think "monies" are changing hands, as the expense of my children.
- With the exams being the criteria for graduation and since school districts and teachers are being critiqued everyday, the teachers and the school district will teach my children what they need to pass these exams, not what my children need.
- Also a child can do well and not pass the exams and then not get a diploma, how can alleged educated people come up with a stupid / dolt plan as this.....once again the "monies" changing hands come into play.
- How can the PA Board of Education just impose this on not only the School Districts but on the teachers, parent and children with our input, how much will this cost?
- The results release to us have changed once already to improve the PA Board of Education's position, so we all not how the numbers games works.
- I think the Right to Know law needs to be requested to find out who voted for this and what stake they have in this with the company supplying the test material.
- Was someone brought into bring this "idea" (only word I could think of) to PA? Was this individual compensated?
- Some children just do not test well, they do good with classwork and homework and thoroughly know the work, but struggle with test, this is not fair to them.
- With the Right to Know how many Legislatures backed this ridiculous plan.
- Hopefully smarted and more reasonable people will stop this horrible plan and possibly we can get rid of the current PA Board of Education.
- I just wonder if the PA Board of Education was given a test for their current job would they pass? Would they pass if I pick the test and test supplier, I think not as they have lost touch with what and who their jobs are for.

Thank You,

Robert B. Kennedy Jr.  
1348 Valley Road  
Coatesville, PA 19320

484.401.4069

[robkennedy@comcast.net](mailto:robkennedy@comcast.net)

## Cooper, Kathy

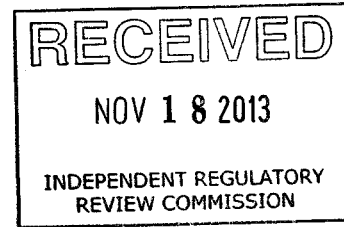
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**From:** Sandra Hair <hair716540@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 17, 2013 7:08 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** PA Common Core Standards

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Kelli Byrne <kelli\_byrne@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:29 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams



15 November 2013

Dear Mr. Sumner,

I am writing on behalf of my children, Annabel and Ryan, and my spouse, Kevin, to oppose the use of Keystone Exams as a requisite to graduate high school. I have read some information about the Keystone Exams and also the letter signed by Lower Merion's Superintendent Dr. McGinley (as well as many others) opposing the exams. I find many of the concerns outlined in that letter mirror my own.

Testing has its place in helping to measure learning. But there are scores of children (and certainly I was one of them) that are poor test takers. Kids who have attentional issues or other mild disorders that function in a normal classroom environment with slight or no interaction with any kind of special service (such as both my son and daughter) already face a considerable challenge to succeed relative to their peers in high-stakes testing. The remediation for children's subpar scores is effectively 'teaching for the test', which, I don't think is interchangeable with a quality education. Consider that some children will have to take it more than once, and this becomes a crippling amount of time consumed by these tests, along with the others required of our children for both high school and college admissions.

As my children progress through elementary school, I am saddened and concerned about the number of seemingly duplicative and overlapping number of tests and assessments that they undergo each year. From a parent's view, this looks like a bureaucracy of tests, a cottage industry blooming inside our education system. This school year marked a slightly expanded school day and other adjustments to our elementary school teaching schedule aimed to "maximize" every moment of free time and effectively eliminate time cushions for teachers. Whether we admit it or not, this leads to a distinct change in tone (part of which is a mild feeling of panic) which we parents all sensed at back to school night. This same tone, though not overt, is invariably felt by children, consciously or otherwise. Every moment matters, indeed, but the layers of testing and assessment and curriculum requirements already in place has second guessed our teachers and their ability to test students for comprehension independently and deliver curriculum in a timely way. The lack of efficiency in the layers of testing could be improved.

I often think if I were a child in this current environment I would feel this stress. I was a 'late bloomer' in my own education. It wasn't until college and graduate school where I really came into my own and excelled. It was like I had been wearing blinders before and now I could see everything. With the increased focus on testing today, I often wonder how this generation of 'late bloomers' will get their much needed break and the time to come into their own with respect to their educational journey. Learning isn't an assembly line process. There is a qualitative and discretionary element that should be allowed to flourish.

Tests are valuable in the educational process, and necessary, but when the extent of their use crowds out educational instruction time, or small pockets of time for teachers to use discretion to pace curriculum to the cadence of the class, or create zero-sum scenarios for 17 and 18 year olds, like the Keystone Exams, its time to rethink their extent of their value and role. I hope the IRRC finds a more balanced way to meet our children's needs.

Sincerely,

Kelli Byrne  
520 Winding Way  
Merion Station, PA 19066

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Patsy Macaulay <heathermacaulay@me.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 4:34 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** dleach@pasenate.com; repbriggs@pahouse.net; repmaryjpdaley@pahouse.net; mfolmer@pasen.gov; BONeill@pahousegop.com  
**Subject:** No to Keystone Exams, Common Core



Dear Mr. Sumner,

I am writing to request that you REJECT the proposed Chapter 4 regulations.

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 receive a high school diploma because I scored high enough on some standard test that I was required to take for graduation, but because of my hard work and my teachers who taught me information and concepts and who did not teach to a test. I did not get into Syracuse University based solely on my SAT's scores and I did not graduate from Syracuse because of another standard test that was required to prove I learned enough to graduate. 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. Maybe the money earmarked for the Keystone test would be put to better use but giving our teachers and school district administrators more resources to make sure that every student in every school district gets a fair chance. And what about the kid who gets great grades, but just doesn't test well?

Our education system is in need of a major overhaul, but adding another exam is not going to fix the problem. Education is suppose to open the minds of our children to possibilities, new ideas, different ways to solving a problem, breed creativity and critical thinkers, develop writers. Please re-evaluate the purpose and administration of the Keystone exams and at a minimum do not link them to graduation requirement. Our children have enough pressure placed upon them already and do we really want to add more? Do we really want to keep implementing practices that have little to no value?

Sincerely,

Heather Macaulay



Mother of 2 in Lower Merion School District

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** rcboyle@verizon.net  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 5:00 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** andy@pasenate.com  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams

Dear Mr. Sumner,

As a retired teacher with 36 years experience as a Mathematics teacher in the Coatesville Area School District, I would like to salute your efforts to improve education in Pennsylvania. However, I do not believe the proposed Keystone Graduation Exams are the way to do it.

Over the years, Harrisburg has mandated various programs for the public schools without providing necessary funding. As a result, academics were sacrificed in order to provide resources for these unfunded mandates. There are only so many hours in the school day and only so much information students can be expected to absorb. You cannot improve education by merely adding money to the budget but you can only weaken the educational program by overstressing the already limited resources of the school systems.

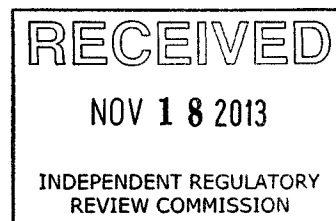
Today's students, teachers and schools are not responsible for the current state of the educational system, state legislators over the years are. Labeling students, schools and teachers as failures based on the results of a test is unfair and really unjustified.

Administering exams as students complete their course work can provide important road signs for progress as well as indicate needed corrective action. One exam at the end of the senior year is only punitive.

I respectfully suggest you reject the Keystone Graduation Exam idea and concentrate on how to best facilitate the educational programs that will improve the opportunities for all students in Pennsylvania schools.

Sincerely,

Roland C. Boyle  
1608 Harbour Ridge Lane  
Downingtown, PA 19335-4551



**Cooper, Kathy**

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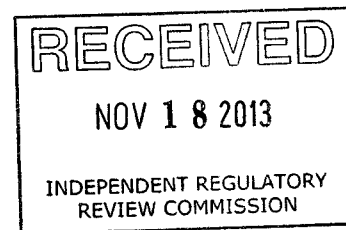
**From:** Jeffrey Pitkow <pitkow1@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 4:50 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone exams

Dear Mr. Sumner,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the Keystone Exams and their requirement for graduation. My daughter is a 10th grade student at Abington High School and is one of the many students who has not passed the bio and algebra keystones. As an honors bio student she missed being proficient on the bio keystone by 3 points and the math by 8. My child spent 40 hours of her summer along with private tutoring and doing online work in order to prepare to retake both of the tests. The end result was that she again was just points away from proficient. Now she will have to retake both tests again. What if she does not pass the third time? How much of her time will be spent on these tests? How much of her teachers time will be spent away from current class work to prepare students like her to retake theses tests?

I believe that these tests are flawed and that for students like her, who are not good testers but are still good students they are not a true judge of their knowledge. These tests are only adding to the pressures that students are facing today in high school. Will the 3 or 8 points that she needs to be proficient change the outcome of her life? There has to be a better way to determine which students are really falling behind.

Jane Pitkow



**Cooper, Kathy**

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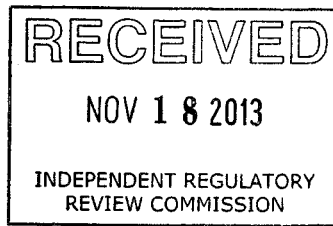
**From:** Sheri Herzberg <sherihz1@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 4:59 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams

I am opposed to making the Keystone Exams part of the graduation requirement for high school. There is not enough time to prepare the teachers or students. It may discourage students from going to college. Please remove this requirement.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Sheri Herzberg  
Wynnewood, PA  
610 642 1135



**Cooper, Kathy**

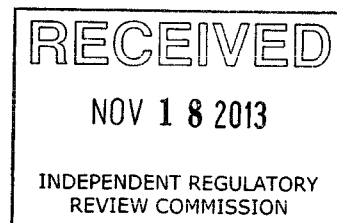
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**From:** Kristen <krguare@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 5:34 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Eliminate the Keystones

I have had enough testing of my children. It's time to spend school days learning.

Please reject the Keystone Graduation Exams (part of the proposed Chapter 4 Final-Form Regulations) that is currently being proposed. My son has a reading disability. This is just another test that will stand in his way of graduating and which will have an impact on his self-esteem. Reject it for all students. I have had years of "teaching to the tests". Enough is enough.

Kristen Guare  
Sent from my iPad



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Deb <debshots@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 5:53 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Fwd: IRRC No. 2976

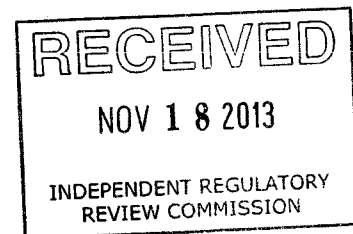
Dear Mr. David Sumner,

I am 100% opposed to PA Core Standards (Common Core nationwide) and I am counting on you to help get rid of this. The most insidious part of the Common Core curriculum, which is now mandated in 45 states, is that it will be used to mine information nationally through our school systems. As the professor of education policy and research at D'Youville College, Buffalo pointed out, he said information gathering is the "main goal of (Common Core)... The enabling of data-collection across state boundaries by establishing a single (educational) standard. This concerns me greatly.

My next issue is how are we paying for all these changes and how much more are we going to be taxed for something we don't want? Seems to be the way of Washington these days. How many more good teachers are going to walk away from doing what they love because they are being mandated to do things they know are wrong and won't work. WHO HAS THE COURAGE TO STAND AGAINST THIS FORCE? I've attached a link to a video of a young man who has articulated my sentiments exactly regarding Common Core, please watch. Please for the sovereignty of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the privacy of Pennsylvania citizens, uphold the Constitution of the USA and please do something to stop this madness.

Thank you,  
Concerned Mom of two,  
Mrs. Coury

<http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2013/11/15/this-could-be-one-of-the-best-cases-ever-made-against-common-core-no-one-expected-it-to-come-from-a-high-school-student/>



**Cooper, Kathy**

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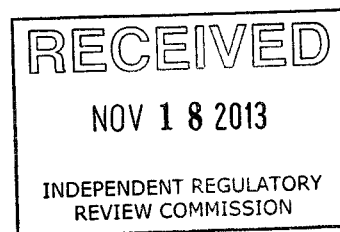
**From:** Dick Allebach <rsallebach@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 5:40 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Graduation Exams

Dear Mr . Sumner,

I want to express my dismay about the Keystone Graduation Exams. Please do not implement these exams for the schools in Pa. until there is more support of them by the school districts in the State. My taxes to fund the schools are already too high and this will only increase them. It is time that the current administration and the Dept. of Education stop bringing proposals to strengthen education without providing funding for these projects.

Richard Allebach

P.S. I have recently had some dealings with the Dept. of Education as a result of something proposed by the Phoenixville School District and am disappointed to tell you that the way it was handled and the results are ridiculous. This, to me, is an example of the complete disregard of how education should be handled in the State of Pennsylvania. If you would care to speak to me about this matter, I would be glad to talk to you on the phone about it. My number is 610-933-1846. Please do not hesitate to call me so I can arrange to talk to you about this situation as an example of how poorly the Dept. of Education is functioning at this time.



**Cooper, Kathy**

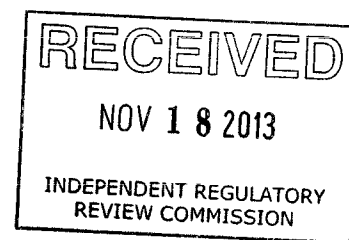
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**From:** Legs Jackson <legs88651@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 5:40 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** My Senator Andy Dinniman

advised me of the Keystone Exams.

I am opposed to their use.

Karen





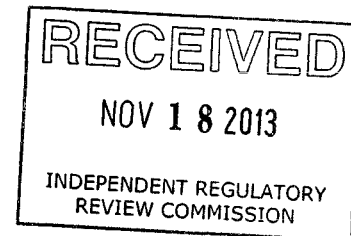
**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Katy Morris <morriskaty@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 8:24 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** dleach@pasenate.com; repbriggs@pahouse.net; repmaryjodaley@pahouse.net; mfolmer@pasen.gov; poneill@pahousegop.com  
**Subject:** VOTE NO on Chapter 4 regulations

**My name is Katy Morris. I live in Wynnewood, PA and I vehemently oppose the Keystone exams 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.**

**Respectfully,  
Katy Morris**



## Cooper, Kathy

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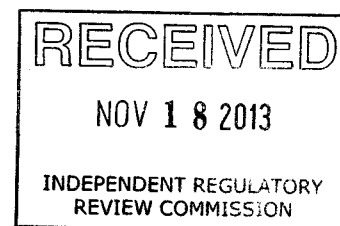
**From:** dentalhy2007@msn.com  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 3:48 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone graduation exams

Please think about what you are doing. The Keystone exams are setting already underfunded schools up to close their doors. Maybe this is what you want. The exams will also cause property taxes to go up since tax payers will have to foot the bill for the extra support needed for the students who do not pass the test. You may say this won't increase operating costs but, it will. How can you add something to a already broken system an not expect it to cost more. Testing is not the answer. Our school system is out dated. The system is ran like a factory. That was fine when the system was first introduced but no longer. Look around our factories have changed but, our schools have not. Take a look at the S.T.E.M. philosophy of teaching that's the direction ALL of our schools should be heading. Not just the schools for the privileged few who can get in. This does not mean shut down failing schools an replace them with charter schools. (That's another one of your bad fixes for our schools) It means our teaching philosophy has to change in all of our schools. Passing a test does not mean one has mastered the material. It just means the individual has learned to pass the test. I passed Spanish class with an A but could not speak Spanish. I knew how to pass the test. Fix the way our student are taught don't just teach them to pass a test. Lets start doing something to truly improve our schools!

Do the right thing,  
Carrie Stanley-DeGiorgis

[shttp://www.vipvoice.com/Toluna.MR.TrafficUI/MSGUI/Page.aspx?pgtid=20&di=8IKszPQRJZtoH88gE2CQghD6A9Achools](http://www.vipvoice.com/Toluna.MR.TrafficUI/MSGUI/Page.aspx?pgtid=20&di=8IKszPQRJZtoH88gE2CQghD6A9Achools) it means

Sent from my Verizon Wireless 4G LTE Smartphone



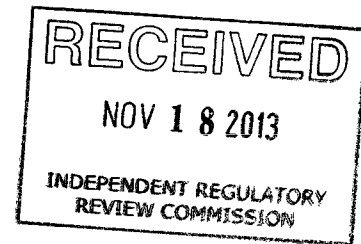
**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Joseph A. Getley <jomage@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 4:17 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Graduation Exams

I a pose any further testing than there already is. We need to have better classroom time with good teachers with better discipline to get through to our children. They are not learning the things we are teaching now, how are they going to pass another test.

Sent from my iPad



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Suburbanb@aol.com  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 3:43 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Graduation Exams

I am opposed to the Keystone Graduation Exams. They will only promote teaching to the test, and avoid real learning. They are not the best way to examine student learning. Grades are enough. Students already face the pressure of SAT and ACT exams. To fail a student from high school because they didn't pass the Keystone Graduation Exams just isn't fair. What about students who transfer into Pennsylvania high schools after going to high school for most of the time in another state? They will not be prepared to pass the Keystone Graduation Exams. The Keystone Graduation Exams are a bad idea, and I am firmly opposed to them.

Sincerely,

Caroline Colwill



**Cooper, Kathy**

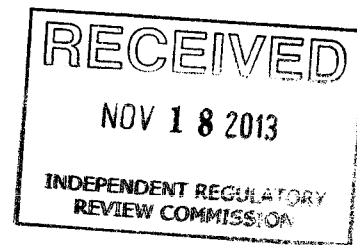
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**From:** Nikki Maloney <nikkimaloney@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 3:48 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Vote NO on Chapter 4 Regulations

My name is Nikki Maloney and I live in Villanova, PA. My children attend Lower Merion Public schools. As a parent and educator, 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>.

Respectfully,

Nikki Maloney



**Cooper, Kathy**

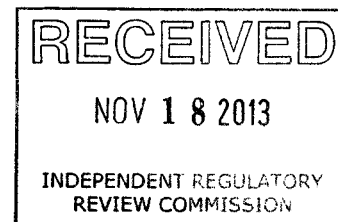
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**From:** Lisa Brown <lisaabrown@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 4:19 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone test

I am a parent of three children my oldest is in 9th grade he is an honors student and will be taking these exams. I have confidence that he will easily pass these exams but feel they are unnecessary and using our tax dollars badly. They try to rush kids to graduate early now they wAnt to hold some back with these tests. Our country is behind every year with math and reading and writing put the money back into the basics then we won't need extra testing. Get the basics down and motivate kids to be successful adults not hold many back who will never pass these tests or graduate because of them. Kids in college have no clue what they want and can't write a paper. Key should be to get kids to graduate find productive jobs and find a purpose in life. Keystone testing does not prove any value in helping our kids or preparing for their future to help our society. First teach basic math reading and writing which our seniors are lacking starting in grade school.

Lisa brown

Sent from my iPhone



**Cooper, Kathy**

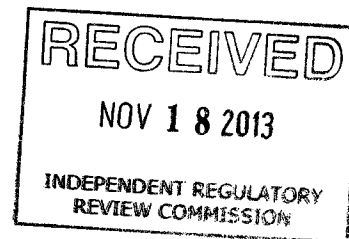
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**From:** Alison Clark <aclark831@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 3:44 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** VOTE NO on Chapter 4 Regulations

My name is Alison Clark. 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 21<sup>st</sup>.

Respectfully,

Alison Clark



**Cooper, Kathy**

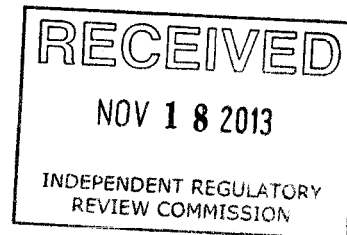
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**From:** Nanna hesuru <nhesuru@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 3:45 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** dleach@pasenate.com; repbriggs@pahouse.net; repmaryjodaley@pahouse.net;  
mfolmer@pasen.gov; BONEill@pahousegop.com  
**Subject:** VOTE NO on Chapter 4 Regulations

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

Respectfully,

Nanna





**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Arlene Kreider <arlenek@avweather.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 3:51 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Common Core

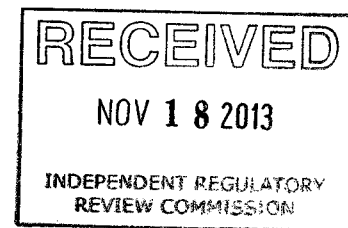
Sir,

I am sending my comments for the IRRC No. 2976. From my research I understand that 37 States have adopted the Common Core Curriculum since 2009 when President Obama began to push states to nationalize their curriculum. That takes away parental and local control of a child's education. This is a usurpation of power by the federal government since education is not specifically authorized as a power of the federal government in the constitution of the United States it is therefore the state's power.

**Common Core sets minimum standards for students and is a "one size fits all" program. Every child is unique so how can that be what is best for students? Teachers should be able to challenge their students to their highest potential, not just to get by. What about special needs children? Are they left to fall behind?**

This curriculum was imitated by private interests in Washington D.C. and without any representation from the States. Since parents know what is best for their children any curriculum being used should be approved by parents and educators before implementation.

Arlene Kreider



## Cooper, Kathy

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**From:** Kay Schleifer <kayschleif@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 3:41 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** IRRC No. 2976

To: Mr. David Sumner

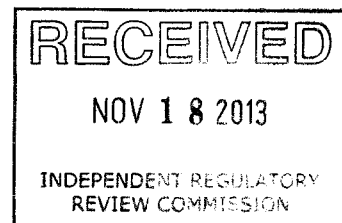
Common Core was formulated in the Federal Department of Education and by the Administration. Common Core is supposed to raise test scores and to eliminate the gap between higher income and lower income students. The Administration wants us to believe the remedy is to turn over control of our public schools to the Federal Government.

Common Core was launched by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers. These organizations have very official names but they are actually very private groups financed by Bill Gates and other large corporations. Their plan is to induce all elementary and secondary schools to accept Common Core, which is a comprehensive national curriculum. National standards will be locked in by the tests students must take, which in turn are tied into teacher evaluations. The standards instruct teachers what, how and when to teach so their pupils can pass the tests. Teachers are evaluated by how many students pass. If too many students fail, teachers will be fired and replaced by government facilitators. So, will teachers have to cheat to keep their jobs? They did in Atlanta. Do you really want that happening in Pennsylvania? This process by-passes parents and local school boards. Let's see...no more teachers, no more administrators, no more school boards, no more state department of education. Everything will be Federally controlled.

This is why I am concerned. I do not want the Federal Government dictating what our local schools deem important for our school curricula. Better education occurs under local control not federal control, and local school boards are better than state school boards or a single federal office. It doesn't matter whether it is Achieve, No Child Left Behind, Race to the Top or Common Core. It's about CONTROL and indoctrination.

What is the cost for Pennsylvania? After a lot of research, I could not find a definite or positive cost. I will say, I wouldn't buy a car if I didn't know what it cost. So please, do everything you can to cancel buying this car (Common Core).

Kay Schleifer  
138 Whispering Acres Lane  
Wind Gap, PA



**Cooper, Kathy**

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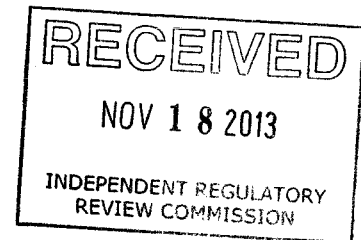
**From:** Margy Gamble <margyanngamble@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 3:22 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams

To whom it may concern:

As a parent of four children in the West Chester Area School District, ranging in age from elementary to high school, I am concerned with the increased focus on standardized testing. I do not feel it is an accurate indicator of our children's knowledge. It takes away valuable time from the regular curriculum so that teachers can focus on teaching what is on the test. My children have already experienced the Keystone Exams. Talk about stressful. Both of my sons took Algebra a few years before they were required to take the Keystone Exam. Do you think they had to stop what they currently learning in math to revisit Algebra 1? You bet they did. So right there we see time lost on the current subject so that the teachers can be assured the children are ready for the test. The same thing happened with the Biology Keystone exam. My oldest took Biology a year ago and was focusing on Chemistry. He was faced with reviewing Biology on his own, while trying to keep up a demanding advanced paced Chemistry class.

Test scores should not be the final say in whether a child receives their diploma. Their coursework should speak for itself. How can the state deny a child their diploma due to poor standardized testing? Not everybody does well on standardized test, no matter their knowledge. The child's school record shows what they have learned. It is ridiculous in this economic climate to incur more costs because of the Keystone Exams. Let's turn the focus onto teaching our children well without the added burden and stress of standardized testing on both the teacher and the student. The Keystone Graduation exams are a detriment not an asset to our educational system.

Sincerely,  
Margaret Gamble  
West Chester, PA

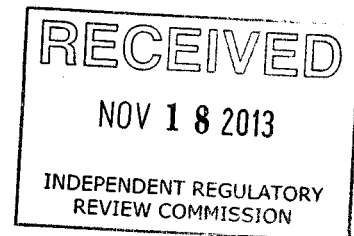


**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Donna Zimmerman <dulcimerz@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 3:19 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**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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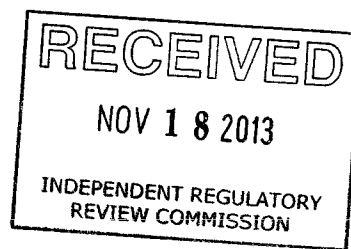
**From:** BRADLEY <ericculb@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 7:56 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** IRRC No 2976

Dear Mr. Sumner,

After reviewing the comments made by Mr. Alan Walter, which are very thorough, I would agree with what Mr. Walter has commented about the Common Core Curriculum. I am not in favor of these Nationalized standards. Thank you.

Sincerely,

B. Eric Culbertson

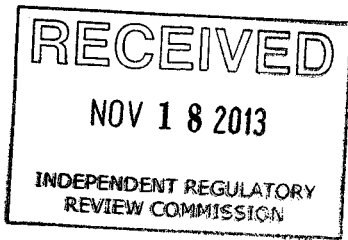


**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Mary Lou Pelin <mlpelin@centurylink.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:42 PM  
**To:** David Sumner

Dear Mr. Sumner: I oppose the Keystone Graduation Exams. This is a relic of the failed "No Child Left Behind" movement that failed to deliver its promises. Instead, the state should provide funds for remediation which include all students, including those on the lowest academic levels. The Intermediate Units are not even set up to help these neglected students. Failing students need INDIVIDUAL help from tutors who are trained to teach them, such as Reading Specialists. The "No Child Left Behind" movement, which was initiated by Laura Bush, began with the right idea. A committee was formed to identify research proven effective techniques to teach reading to ALL children. Then George Bush abandoned the effort when he decided to invade Iraq. I know because I went back to school and became certified as a Reading Specialist. Then I could not get a job , and Reading Specialists were actually being laid off. I got a job as a TSS, and I was forced to watch teachers and teacher's aides try to teach these children to read following the most ridiculous reading programs that cost the schools a lot of money.No one seemed to have a clue as to how to teach the children to read. It was sickening to me. Then I was fired because the teacher's aides didn't like me! And I am still paying the student loan! The exams will not teach the children anything. They will only prove to us what we already know- that the children cannot read. Mary Lou Pelin



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Darlene Cohn <darlene.cohn@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 9:10 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** keystone exams

Please know that my family, with 2 children in the Lower Merion School District and 2 having gone through, is are opposed to the Regulations and we are urging the IRRC and General Assembly not to require Keystone exams as graduation requirements.

Darlene Cohn  
1442 Flat Rock Road  
Penn Valley, PA



**Cooper, Kathy**

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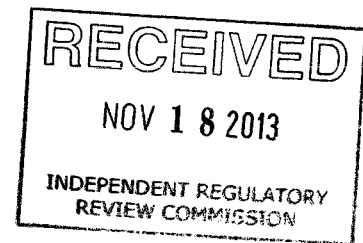
**From:** Dan&Angela <danfrat@msn.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 16, 2013 12:16 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Reject the Keystone Grad Exams  
  
**Importance:** High

Dear Mr. Sumner,

I am writing this email ask that you and all the member of the IRRC reject the Keystone Graduation Exams, part of the proposed Chapter 4 final-Form Regulations as it is fundamentally wrong. They will fail our students, our teachers, our schools and our local taxpayers.

Sincerely,

Angela Frattarelli





**Cooper, Kathy**

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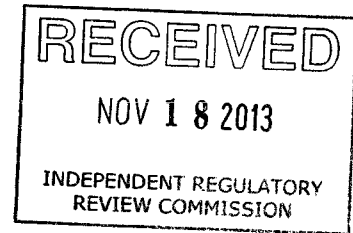
**From:** Maria Heider <theheiders1@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 10:39 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** IRRC No. 2976

To whom it may concern:

Common Core threatens to dumb-down curriculum standards, take away local control, and collect personal data on every student and their families. And the government will take even more of our hard-earned tax dollars to do it! Please vote against this curriculum.

Yours truly,

Maria T. Heider  
Springfield, PA 19064



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** MINYONG CHEN <tuc06593@temple.edu>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 16, 2013 12:22 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Graduation Exams

Dear Director Sumner I am writing to you in reference to the keystone graduation exams. There are already a litany of examination that is in place in PA. Being in PA much of my life and going through my middle school education to my current doctorate, I have taken many standardized, some of which include PSSA, SAT, DAT, enough to make an alphabet soup! I would like to conclude by saying that I strongly oppose the Keystone, and hope you could voice my opinion.

Sincerely  
Minyong Chen



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Bob House <rghtwx@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 2:42 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Standardized Test

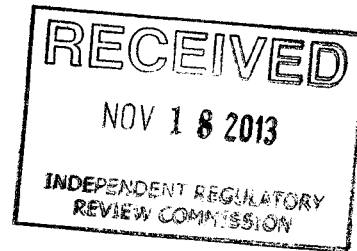
Dear Sir:

I oppose the Keystone proposal, There are better ways to teach and test. Try sticking to the basics of homework, memorization, repetition and recitation such as we did many years ago in Catholic grade schools.

BR,

Bob House

Robert G. House  
610 504 9832  
[rghtwx@verizon.net](mailto:rghtwx@verizon.net)



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** wendi borten <gbmom727@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 11:37 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** keystone exams

**I believe the government should stay out of the schools. Get rid of Common Core and Keystone Tests!!!**



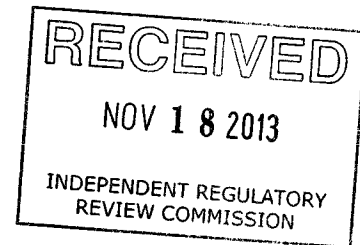
**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Athena Fernandes <athenadaniel@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 16, 2013 5:30 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone

Hello director Sumner,  
Please take action against the Keystones! We do not see any value in yet another testing standard. Money could be utilized to improve instruction instead of remediation.  
Thanks,

Sent from my iPad  
Please excuse my brevity and any typos!



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** John Kesich <kesich@npacc.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 4:23 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone graduation exams

**Commissioners,**

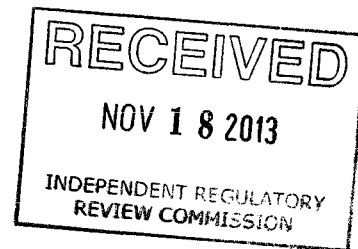
It is not very surprising that the Corbett administration, which has shown zero interest in properly funding education, is pushing for high stakes testing. I suspect this would prove a windfall for some of his corporate cronies. It will not help students and represents a huge unfunded mandate for local school districts who will have to pick up the tab for remedial/supplementary instruction for those who fail.

Educators do not favor high stakes which result in "teaching to the test". Those who favor them are "entrepreneurs" who are looking to turn schools into profit centers.

Please reject this cynical scheme.

Thank you.

John Kesich  
570-549-2286  
628 Bailey Creek Rd  
Millerton, PA 16936



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Karen Walton <karen.walt@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 4:41 PM  
**To:** David Sumner

we don't want the common core in PA schools! It's bad for the students & teachers!



**Cooper, Kathy**

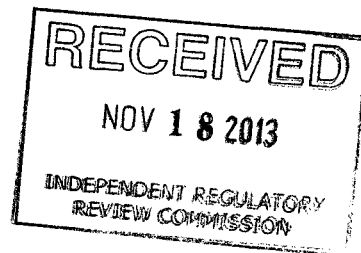
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**From:** stacey west <st.davids@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 4:51 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Chapter 4 Regulations

Dear Mr. Sumner,

I am writing today to request that the IRRC reject in its entirety the proposed Chapter 4 Regulations which seek to promote high stakes testing as a requirement for high school graduation. I find it puzzling that we have school districts in Pennsylvania which unequivocally produce for society educated, skilled students who have been nurtured individually throughout their educational experience and yet we do not look to this for a solution (one which is to be found in our backyard) but rather we are deferring to a huge, bureaucratic entity which couldn't possibly manage education effectively for all of our children.

Additionally, our educational woes are due to factors which cannot be corrected by high stakes testing and endless regulation on our educational system. First, these measures handicap our teachers rendering them incapable of spending meaningful class time on content and second, the emphasis on high stakes testing is teaching our children to hate school. This is a serious matter which deserves much deeper consideration. Stacey West





## Cooper, Kathy

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**From:** Paulette LoMarro <lomarro@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 4:25 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Please do not pass the Keystone Exams From Paulette LoMarro

Hello David,

I am writing as a very concerned parent to a child who has MULTIPLE learning disabilities but has the potential to do amazing things in this world. If judged alone by a set of standardized test he will not be given the chance to progress to college much less do the amazing things that he is capable of!

Learning takes place in many different ways and to place such importance on just one way to benchmark learning is harsh and undermines the very thing we are trying to do for our kids and their future. Teach them to think outside the box, learn to creatively problem solve, and apply the knowledge they have in the real world. Where are the gauges for these skills?

My son will likely if this pass's be a child who fails each test given to him the first time around, suffer the emotional pain and embarrassment of repeating content, and costing our school district and my family even more money to "attempt to remediate" the situation. There is NO WAY to remediate a child with low self esteem, no magic "district provided class" which will explain to my son that he is smart and can do great things in this world and that not everything can be measured by academic success as it is measured today.

Many of todays finest and most creative minds I am told would likely not have passed these tests had them been given them. People like Bill Gates and many others who despite having learning differences continued to be successful.

I am writing so that my voice can be heard. If you would like to chat and get the perspective from one parent who lives in Chester County , PA...than call me I am available to chat!

Thank you for reading.

Regards,

**Paulette LoMarro**  
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