

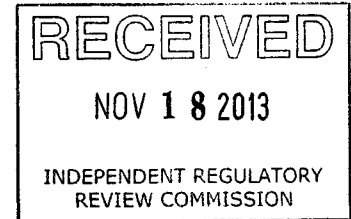
Cooper, Kathy

From: Lisa Mattioni <mattionifam@msn.com>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 10:20 AM
To: IRRC
Subject: FW: Keystone Graduation Exams Don't Make the Grade

TO: IRRG

2976

FROM : Lisa Mattioni



To Whom it May Concern,

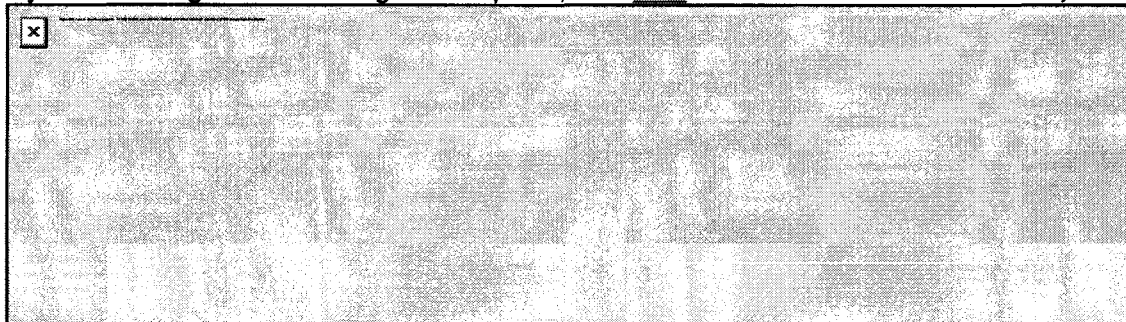
After reading the article below in our local paper, then doing my homework further on the subject of the Keystone testing, and along with my son recently being informed he did not test proficient in Algebra 1 in the Keystone exam (FYI: he is an honor student) I am opposed to the Keystone Graduation Exam. The reasons I am opposed to the Keystone Exams are the same as the reasons and explanations of its effect on the students, school system, and taxpayers as listed below in Andy Dinniman's letter. No need for me to repeat the reasons, but do feel it necessary to inform you of my OPPOSITION with the Keystone Exams.

Please give this issue further careful consideration and analysis before voting.

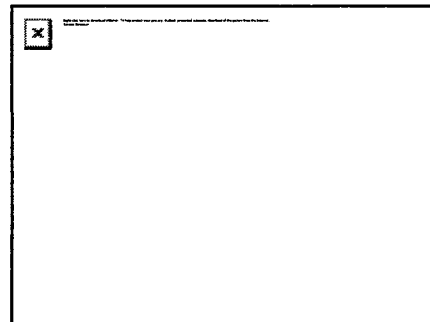
Lisa Mattioni
From: DinnimanSenate@gmail.com
To: mattionifam@msn.com
Date: Fri, 15 Nov 2013 10:58:50 -0500
Subject: Keystone Graduation Exams Don't Make the Grade

If you are having trouble viewing this E-Update, click [here](#).

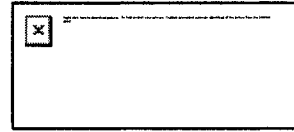
November 15, 2013



Dear Friend,
Please take a look at the recent newspaper column I wrote titled, "[Keystone Graduation Exams Don't Make the Grade](#)." It is included at the end of this e-mail. If you are concerned about rising property taxes, financially distressed schools, increased standardized testing and the future of education in Pennsylvania, I ask that you join me in opposing the Keystone Graduation Exams.
The Keystone's proposal is before the Pennsylvania Independent Regulatory Review Commission (IRRC), which is set to vote on it on Nov. 21. **Please let the**



IRRC and its members know why you are opposed to the Keystone Graduation Exams by 10 a.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 19. by e-mailing irrc@irrc.state.pa.us.



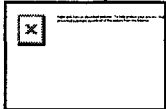
Already, almost all (58 of the 61) of the superintendents and all four intermediate unit directors serving students and taxpayers in Chester, Montgomery, Delaware, and Bucks counties have expressed their opposition to the Keystone Graduation Exams.

If approved, high school students starting with current freshmen (Class of 2017) will face the possibility of passing all their classes with straight A's yet failing one of the Keystones and not getting a diploma.

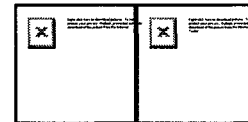
If approved, it is conservatively estimated that the exams will result in an unfunded mandate of more than \$300 million a year. There is no doubt that that will translate to soaring school property taxes.

Together, we can stop the Keystone Graduation Exams before they fail Pennsylvania, but I need your help. Please contact the IRRC today!

Sincerely,



Andy Dinniman
State Senator - 19th District



Keystone Graduation Exams Don't Make the Grade

**by State Senator Andy Dinniman, Ed.D.
Minority Chairman, Senate Education Committee**

In the name of raising academic standards, the Corbett administration is attempting to implement the Keystone Graduation Exams – high-stakes graduation exams that will result in higher property taxes, less classroom instruction, more “teaching to the test,” and the potential for a generation of students to be branded as failures.

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

I encourage you to join me in opposing the Keystone Graduation Exams. Here's why:

It is fundamentally wrong for three standardized tests to determine a student's high school graduation, especially when those tests were developed with no input whatsoever from a course teacher or local district. If the Keystone Graduation Exams are approved, high school students starting with current freshmen (Class of 2017) will face the possibility of passing all their classes but failing a Keystone Exam and not getting a diploma.

It is downright irresponsible to implement a program of graduation exams that will result in the largest unfunded mandate in the past 50 years. The proposed Keystone Exams require school districts to provide remediation and supplementary instruction for students who do not pass. However, the Pennsylvania Department of Education provides no funding whatsoever for remediation costs. In fact, the department has the gall to claim that the exams will have no cost to local school districts, even as test results from the summer indicate failure rates as high as 60 percent in Algebra I and Biology and 45 percent in Literature. It is conservatively estimated that the exams will result in an unfunded mandate of more than \$300 million a year. It's no stretch of the imagination to realize that the buck will be passed onto taxpayers in the form of massive school property tax increases.

Meanwhile, financially distressed school districts throughout the state are teetering on the verge of bankruptcy. 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. How can we, in good conscience, spend millions to implement a new testing program – a program that will likely bankrupt our poorest schools?

It just doesn't make sense for the Pennsylvania Department of Education to continue to expand standardized testing at a time when increasing evidence challenges the notion that it is the best way to gauge student achievement and learning. Already, anywhere from 10 to 20

days (out of a 180-day school year) of instruction time is lost to testing and test preparation. If the Keystone Graduation 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 classroom instruction time to standardization.

It is simply 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?

There has been no shortage of problems with the proposed Keystone Graduation Exams. The fact that almost all of the superintendents and Intermediate Unit Directors in the Philadelphia suburbs have signed onto a position paper opposing them is a clear indication that something is wrong.

Still, the Corbett administration continues to seek to quickly and quietly push them through. In fact, the Department of Education has repeatedly withheld data that is necessary for weighing the costs to local 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.

I ask that you stand with me in opposing the keystones. I urge you to write or e-mail the IRRC and ask its members to reject the Keystone Graduation Exams (part of the proposed Chapter 4 Final-Form Regulations). Public comment must be received at least 48 hours prior to the IRRC's Thursday, Nov. 21 meeting – in other words, by 10 a.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 19. Your comments will become part of the public record and will be reviewed by the five IRRC commissioners. To submit your comments by e-mail, send to IRRC Executive Director David Sumner at dsumner@irrc.state.pa.us. To submit by mail, send to:

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

You also have a right to testify at the IRRC's Nov. 21 meeting, which will begin at 10 a.m. and take place in Room NOB 1 in the Main Capitol's North Office Building. It is recommended that those planning to testify contact the IRRC by e-mail, letter or phone (717-783-5506) ahead of time. For more information, visit my website, www.senatordinniman.com.

The Keystone Graduation Exams don't cut it. They don't make the grade. In fact, they flat-out fail – they fail students, they fail teachers, they fail schools and they fail local taxpayers. Let's stop them before they fail Pennsylvania.

Offices of State Senator Andy Dinniman

www.senatordinniman.com

District Office

One North Church Street
West Chester, PA 19380
Phone: 610.692.2112
Fax: 610.436.1721

Monday-Friday: 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

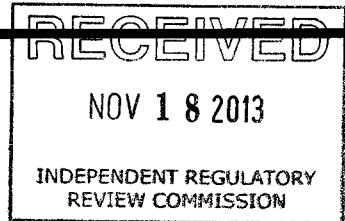
Harrisburg Office

Senate Box 203019
183 Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3019
Phone: 717.787.5709
Fax: 717.787.4384

This message was sent to mattionifam@msn.com from:

Senator Andrew Dinniman, Senate of PA | One North Church Street | West Chester, PA 19380

Cooper, Kathy



From: sandiekev@verizon.net
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 1:46 PM
To: IRRC
Subject: VOTE NO for Keystone Exams!!!!

As a parent of three Tredyffrin-Easttown school students, I strongly encourage the state to **NOT** implement Keystone exams as a graduation requirement. I completely agree with all the below comments.

Sincerely,
Sandie Nicholson
602 Muirfield Court
Berwyn, PA 19312

1. Impact of the Keystone Exams

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

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

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

2. Financial Impact of Keystone Exams

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

3. Cost of Project--Based Assessments

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

4. Lack of Communication and Clarity

The delayed release of information related to Pennsylvania's accountability system has greatly compromised educators' ability to properly plan for the tests' administration and to share information with stakeholders, while preventing adequate time for curricular content and sequence adjustments.

Changes to the uses of the Keystone Exams have been confusing to students and their families. As late as June 2013, districts still did not know how data from the Keystone Exams would be used for accountability measures for public schools in the 2012---13 school year. Schools did not know if the historical Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) measure would be in place or if the new School Performance Profile would be used. Each contains different factors and different criteria. This situation resulted in all testing being completed in the 2012---13 school year without districts knowing how the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) would hold the schools and their students accountable for the results.

Timely release of information has hampered school districts' ability to plan. As an example, with less than two weeks before the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) was scheduled to release the newly developed School Performance Profiles (SPP), numerous school districts across the state, many of which are high---performing, received a letter from PDE stating that due to students in their district incorrectly coding the purpose of the Keystone Exam, their district's performance profile would be calculated without the data. Further, the SPP's would be released on September 30 as planned with no opportunity to correct the data. Through an email received on Monday, September 23 (one week before the reports are made public) school districts were informed that they will have an opportunity to correct their data but only after the SPP's are released. Districts have until September 25 to decide whether to keep the data as is or correct the data and have their performance profiles recalculated in January 2014. Whichever option the district chooses, they will not be able to reverse their decision. In essence, districts are being given two days to decide how to proceed when it is unclear of the ramifications of their decision.

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

5. The Fallacy of Failing Public Schools

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

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

The extreme focus on testing did not take a hold of the American school system until 2001 under the George W. Bush presidency and with the No Child Left Behind legislation. This high--- stake testing frenzy was reinforced under the Obama presidency with the Race to the Top grants. It is time for Pennsylvania Legislators to stand up to the politics at both the state and national levels and re---examine the long---lasting consequences of high---stake testing on our students, our teachers, our schools and our society.

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

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

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

additional resources in the classroom to enable them to succeed.

4

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

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

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

Call to Action

In conclusion, Pennsylvania school districts welcome rigor, high expectations, and accountability and have willingly and regularly invested time and resources to equip students with the skills they need to be college and career ready. However, the costs associated with the implementation of the Keystone Exams and delayed communication about Pennsylvania's changing accountability system has negatively impacted districts, students, and their families. School districts are concerned that the financial and student impact will become even more pronounced in the future as districts implement supplemental instruction and Keystone project-based assessments.

As a result, we urge the Commission, the Administration, the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the General Assembly to seek additional information and suggested solutions from intermediate units and school districts who see first-hand the unintended consequences of high-stake testing on resources, teachers and students. **We urge the Independent Regulatory Review Commission and the General Assembly not to require Keystone Exams as graduation requirements.** Pennsylvania's educational leaders welcome the opportunity to provide additional measures of the impact of increased testing and changing accountability systems on our schools.

Cooper, Kathy

From: Weedon, Jacques <JWeedon@wssd.k12.pa.us>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 10:43 AM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Comments regarding the Keystone Exams
Attachments: EightReasonsAgainstKeystones.pdf

Good morning Mr. Sumner,

My name is Jacques W. Weedon, Jr. and I am a teacher in the West Shore School District.

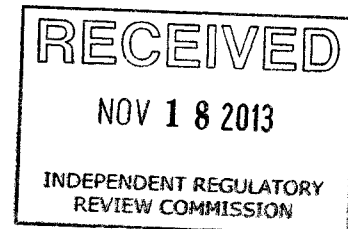
I am attaching State Senator Andrew Dinniman's "8 reasons for Opposing Keystone Graduation Exams."

I recently read his editorial and fully agree with him.

I strongly encourage you and the rest of the IRRC to REJECT the Keystone Graduation Exams at Thursday's meeting.

Thank you.

Jacques W. Weedon, Jr.
Teacher
Keeping it real since 1970





Senate of Pennsylvania

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 freshmen (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:

<u>Exam</u>	<u>Summer</u>	<u>Fall</u>
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 evidence challenges the notion that it is the best way to gauge student achievement and learning. Already, anywhere from 10 to 20 days (out of a 180-day school year) of instruction time is lost to testing and test preparation. 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.**

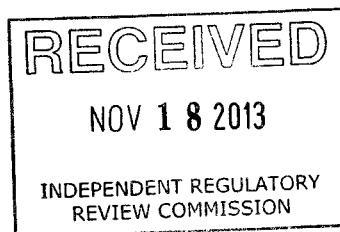
8. **It is clear that the Pennsylvania Department of Education is not ready for prime time and neither are the Keystone Exams.** The department is now under its third secretary in less than a year and in my view, lacks the ability to provide the leadership necessary to initiate and supervise the implementation 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.

Cooper, Kathy

From: ContactForm@state.pa.us
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 3:36 PM
To: Help
Subject: IRRC Website - New Message



A new message has arrived from the IRRC Website



First Name: Colleen

Last Name: Kemp

City/State: Hughesville, PA

Email: colleenkemp@windstream.net

Subject: Regulation #6-326 Common Core

Message:

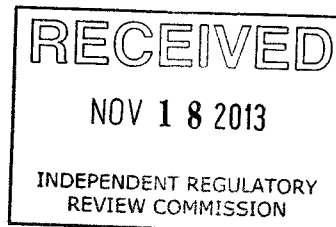
I am against implementation of the Common Core curriculum. I am against everything about it. I don't want the federal government involved with my grandchildren's education. I have two grandsons. One is extremely bright the other is special needs and does not talk. They have completely different personalities and needs. I do not want them lumped in together. They each have their strengths and weaknesses and each needs to be taught accordingly. Common Core has no consideration for children with special needs. I also do not want "data" collected on each of them. They are in school to learn, not to be documented by the government. I do not want them to be taught that the government is "their family". There are many talented teachers who are capable of teaching children to bring out the best in their students but if we have Common Core they will be limited to standardized testing. Common Core is just wrong! It is true, it will dumb down our children. I have the same concerns that many have concerning costs and also that it is government overreach. I respectfully ask that you will not implement Common Core.

Cooper, Kathy

From: ContactForm@state.pa.us
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 12:50 PM
To: Help
Subject: IRRC Website - New Message



A new message has arrived from the IRRC Website



First Name: Dina

Last Name: Perreault

City/State: Downingtown, Pennsylvania

Email: dinamperreault@gmail.com

Subject: Keystone Exams as graduation requirement

Message:

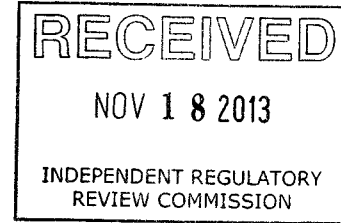
To Whom it May Concern: I strongly oppose the implementation of Keystone Exams as a requirement for graduation. While I do believe that SOME testing is important to gauge our children's understanding of subject matter material, I believe that all of the testing already in place provides that information. Our children are tested using DIBELS and Common Core requirements beginning in 1st grade. From 3rd grade through 12th grade, our children take the PSSAs, Keystone exams in several subjects, PSATs and SATs. I believe this almost annual testing of our children, while already excessive, certainly gives us all the information we need as they progress through each grade, in addition to their earned class grades and feedback from their teachers. Let's trust our teachers to teach the necessary material for high school graduation and allow our children the time to learn something in class other than "test taking mastery". As we all know, our successes as adults are not measured by multiple choice, common tests, so teaching to take a test doesn't provide any useful skills outside the classroom, where actual teaching, critical thinking, and subject mastery does. In closing, I believe the burden of testing as a route to high school graduation is unnecessary, adds a level of stress our children don't need, provides no additional value to the educational system, and, because it is un-funded, will result in a financial burden our school districts can't afford. Please DO NOT VOTE for the use of Keystone Exams as a requirement for graduation. Thank you, Dina Perreault

Cooper, Kathy

From: ContactForm@state.pa.us
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 2:39 PM
To: Help
Subject: IRRC Website - New Message



A new message has arrived from the IRRC Website



First Name: Jamie

Last Name: Cox

City/State: Landenberg, PA

Email: JamieCCox1@gmail.com

Subject: Common Core

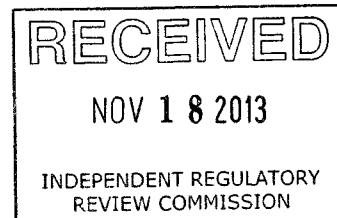
Message:

I am writing to give my concerns against Common Core. Everything I have read, takes the control away from local government and away from the local school boards. Isn't this unconstitutional? The second issue is it does not have a track record anywhere. To not provide adequate learning for even 1 year is 1/12th of what many students will have, is unacceptable. For it to change the whole process of education is unbelievable. Especially because it doesn't have a track record. The last issue is the cost of testing. Not just the test but the loss of teaching days. How much will the implementation of all this new testing cost (in an education program that is unproven)? What is the cost in loss of teaching days to the students? That this is being considered state wide is breathtaking. Sincerely, Jamie Cox

Cooper, Kathy

From: Kathy Annis <Kathy003@verizon.net>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 3:14 PM
To: IRRC
Subject: Re: Thank You

The regulation to which I referred was #6-326 Academic Standards & Assessments Keystone exams



----- Original Message -----

From: "IRRC" <IRRC@IRRC.STATE.PA.US>
To: "Kathy Annis" <Kathy003@verizon.net>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 2:18 PM
Subject: Thank You

Thank you for contacting Pennsylvania's Independent Regulatory Review Commission ("IRRC"). If you have submitted comments on a regulation please note that, under Pennsylvania's Regulatory Review Act, IRRC is required to provide unrestricted public access to all comments that we receive on pending regulations. Therefore, your comments will be shared with the agency responsible for that regulation and posted on our website along with other public comments on the regulation.

If you are contacting us on another matter, we will respond to your inquiry as soon as possible.

Thank you.

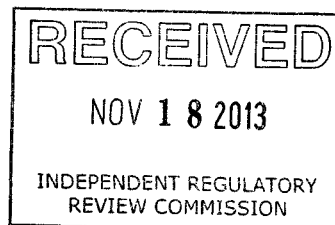
Cooper, Kathy

From: daniel hladio <daniel_hladio@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 3:02 PM
To: IRRC
Subject: Keystone Graduation Exams - Opposed

Hello,

My name is Daniel Hladio and I live in Perkiomenville PA. I graduated from South Western Senior High School, located in Hanover PA, in the year 1999. I am opposed to the Keystone Graduation Exams because standardized tests are not always a viable method of measuring a student's knowledge. Many high school students score poorly on other standardized tests (SATs) and still go onto college and earn a diploma. In my opinion, this test will be a road block, wasting everyone's time/money and delaying a kid's thirst for knowledge. Plus, its only a matter of time before colleges start to use this test in student evaluation, as if the SAT's are not pressure enough. A student's commitment and willingness to learn is measured by years of schooling and their proven track record of grades. The teachers and administrative staff are capable of assessing whether or not a student should graduate. The Keystone Graduation Exams will not improve student performance, it will just create kids that are better at taking standardized tests. Parents will hire tutors who only teach how to take the test. There will be high school classes on how to pass the test. This is all time wasted, the kid should be learning about science, math, and history... Not stressing out over the Keystone Graduation Exams. The SATs are for that.

Sincerely,
Dan



Cooper, Kathy

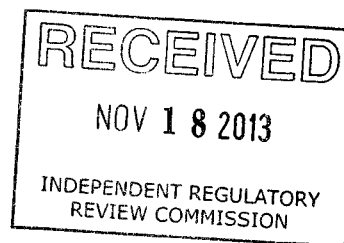
From: Victor Mello <vicmello1@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 3:01 PM
To: IRRC
Subject: Keystone Graduation Exams

Sirs:

As a taxpayer, I am concerned about the proposed exams as described in an newspaper article by Sen. Andy Dinniman. The primary reason is the estimated \$300 million unfunded mandate which would result from remedial teaching of those failing the test. Other troubling aspects are, first, that a superintendent would be allowed to exempt any student from the graduation-test requirement. a flagrant flaw in the whole idea of testing; and second, do we really need another layer of government-mandated tests, do we really need to further the culture of "teaching to the test"?

Sen. Dinniman has shown himself to be a dedicated and unbiased public servant, and I appreciate his publicizing the details of these proposed regulations, another example of the wrongheaded direction of the Corbett administration.

Victor E. Mello
904 Copeland School Rd.
West Chester, PA 193.80



Cooper, Kathy

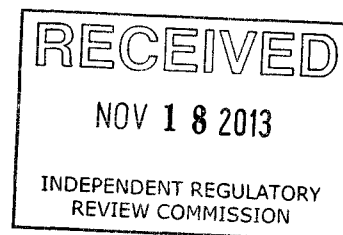
From: April.odonnell2@verizon.net
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 2:57 PM
To: IRRC
Subject: Keystone Exams

My husband and I do not support the Keystone exams. We feel that our students take too many assessments. This results in loss of instructional time. Valuable class time is spent on test preparation, remediation and retesting. Please reconsider the Keystone Exams for our state.

Sincerely,

Drew and April ODonnell

Parents in the Tredyffrin-Easttown School District Sent from my iPhone



Cooper, Kathy

From: handileigh@comcast.net
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 11:23 AM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Keystone Graduation Exams

Dear Director Sumner:

After reading State Senator Dinniman's op-ed in the West Chester Daily Local, we agree with him that the KGE proposal represents another futile "teaching to the test" standard that is not needed, will be an unfunded mandate, and will result in raising already onerous local school taxes to comply with its requirements. We therefore urge you and your colleagues to vote "no" on this proposal at your Thursday IRRC meeting.

Sincerely, Ivan E. and Hilde E. Leigh



Cooper, Kathy

From: Paul McClafferty <pmccla@verizon.net>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 11:48 AM
To: David Sumner
Subject: reference IRRC No 2976

Dear Mr. David Sumner:

As a concerned citizen of Pennsylvania I write to urge you to reject this initiative now before your committee. This untried program will adversely affect the public school districts in the state. Of main concern is the cost that will be placed upon the districts which cost will result in higher taxes.

With most school districts now being faced with financial difficulty in meeting budgets, the introduction of an untried program of this nature would only add to the problems without benefit to the students of the Commonwealth.

Secondly, there is no evidence that this initiative would improve student learning outcomes. After all the most important matter is the performance of our students. Common Core is a costly mostly untried program which, in fact, is being abandoned by certain states after being tested for a period of time.

To place on a student the burden of passing a single battery of tests to determine graduation after devoting four years of class work is not fair. Therefore, I strongly urge you and your committee to reject this program. Thank you for your anticipated cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,
Paul McClafferty



Cooper, Kathy

From: John Wubbel <jwubbel@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 12:38 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: PA Common Core Standards

Dear Mr. Sumner,

I am writing today to express my concern for the implementation of so called Common Core Standard upon our local school system. Investigating and becoming knowledgeable about these standards that the Federal Government want to impose are really well below standard. Consequently, I would oppose the State of Pennsylvania imposing this and further removing local control of our kids schools.

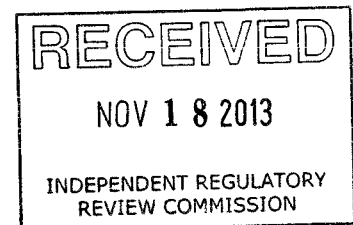
In comparing these standards against to how my teenager has performed over the last 3 1/2 years in high school, I think we are doing a great disservice to our children in the future.

One does not have to attend a school board meeting to know that our schools are under great financial pressure already. Evidence includes something as simple as noticing that the bus services have suffered. As a tax payer, I am not really interested in paying more taxes to find out that the standards have not been tested and such a mandate is telling tax payers how it is to be funded. Don't approve this as an unfunded mandate.

Honestly, where are the metrics and statistics that describes how much this is going to cost? Where is the business intelligence to convince me this is good for our kids. Having talked with friends with kids in the school system and teachers, we think it is best that the Federal Government should get out of the education business and let the local communities. There is no way Common Core is going to make the United States more competitive in the global marketplace. I urge as a regulatory commissioner to reject this government over reach.

Sincerely,

John Wubbel
208 Applewood Drive
Swiftwater, PA 18370
570-262-1897



Cooper, Kathy

From: bess combs <besscombs@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 12:39 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Opposition to Keystone Exam

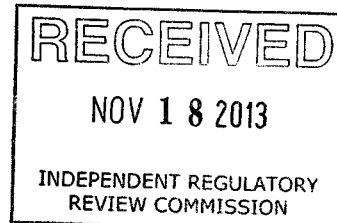
Dear IRRC member,

I would like to go on record opposing the Keystone Exam. I believe that our schools are strong enough to produce educated, responsible young adults that are prepared to enter higher education or the work force. The implementation of the Keystone Exam would take time away from learning in the classroom and waist taxpayer money that could be better used to purchase library books or other educational equipment. Our students succumb to enough testing in their elementary and secondary education. If they are going on to attend college, the SAT or ACT or other such entrance exam will be the judge of their knowledge. Another required test is absolutely unnecessary.

Thank you, Bess Combs-Chmielewski

Parent of a 2nd and 4th Grader
in Lower Merion School District

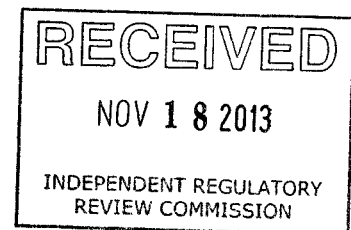
Bess L. Combs-Chmielewski, PhD
244 Meeting House Lane
Merion, PA 19066
phone 484-270-8528



Cooper, Kathy

From: Parry Fernandes <parryfernandes@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 12:57 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Keystone exams

Hello director,
Please vote against the Keystones,
My grand kids have a lot on their hands between homework, PSSAs, regular tests, we do not need more standardized testing to belabor the point. We have enough educational and economic hardships. More kids may dropout or consider themselves failures, having to repeat until the pass!!!!
Sincerely,
Parry Fernandes



Cooper, Kathy

From: irshmom32@gmail.com
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 1:13 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: CCS in Pa

In reference to IRRC No. 2976

Mr. Sumner,

I am writing you today to express my opposition regarding PA Core Standards. I oppose the standards for the following reasons:

*loss of local control over educational standards and curriculum

*cost, so far there has not been a complete fiscal analysis presented to the State Legislators from the PA department of Education

-How will these standards be funded? This will most likely end up leading to tax increases in local districts!

Please don't approve of unfunded mandates!

*Why is this initiative being forced on every school district in PA, when it is untested and there is not any empirical evidence that it will improve learning outcomes?

Schools are already financially strapped, please don't add to their problems!

In my own experience from talking with teachers and helping my children, I have seen how these standards are affecting our future generation.

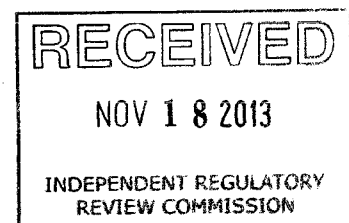
The pressure put on my own children from testing and the standard has caused them much stress!

One of my daughters suffers, on the verge of a stomach ulcer!

Sincerely,

Heather Jeffery

Sent from my HTC One SV



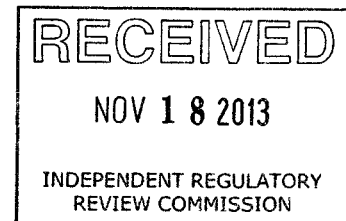
Cooper, Kathy

From: Gran2chickenlegs Yahoo <gran2chickenlegs@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 12:58 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Keystone exams must go!!!

Director Sumner

Kindly get rid of yet another social injustice. It is disheartening to see our children suffer under yet another testing measure - we have quite a bit of measuring going on and our students will have yet another confidence challenge!! Take it away! Keystone exams must go!!!

Gran



Cooper, Kathy

From: Emily Reiner <etreiner@verizon.net>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 1:28 PM
To: David Sumner
Cc: dleach@pasenate.com; repbriggs@pahouse.net; repmaryjodaley@pahouse.net; mfolmer@pasen.gov; BONEill@pahousegop.com; repdelissio@pahouse.net
Subject: Voting No on Chapter 4 Regulations

Dear Mr. Sumner,

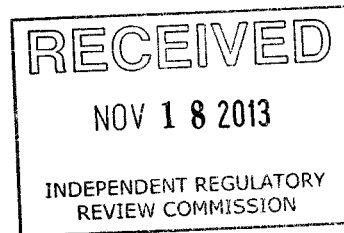
My name is Emily Reiner. I live in Gladwyne, PA. I am writing to say I adamantly oppose the Keystone Exams being tied to a student's high school graduation. I am asking you to REJECT the proposed Chapter 4 regulations that at least 58 Pennsylvania Superintendents and Intermediary Unit Heads are totally against.

I urge you to VOTE NO on November 21st.

Thank you for your time and consideration with this most urgent matter.

Respectfully,

Emily Reiner



Cooper, Kathy

From: Meredith Barber <meredith.barber@verizon.net>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 12:51 PM
To: David Sumner
Cc: dleach@pasenate.com; repbriggs@pahouse.net; repmaryjodaley@pahouse.net; mfolmer@pasen.gov; BONEill@pahousegop.com; repdelissio@pahouse.net
Subject: proposed Chapter 4 regulations--please REJECT

My name is Meredith Barber. 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. More and more testing is not going to solve our education problems in PA, there is already too much.

Respectfully,

Meredith Barber

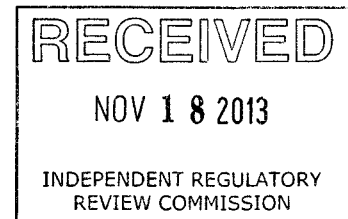


Cooper, Kathy

From: Carrie <carriesutor@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 1:05 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Keystone Exams

I have three children in Lower Merion School District and am opposed to the Keystone testing. The volume of time spent on preparing for and taking standardized tests is overwhelming and is preventing teachers from offering true learning experiences to the students. I have no doubt that my children of normal to advanced learning and testing ability would pass the tests, I just think that it is not a good use of valuable time.

Carolyn Sutor, VMD
900 Great Springs Rd.
Bryn Mawr, PA 19010

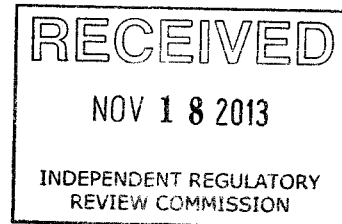


Cooper, Kathy

From: Patrick & Leslie Wright-Riley <plwricht Riley@verizon.net>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 10:34 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 Leslie Wright-Riley.
I live in Villanova, PA with my husband and two daughters.
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,
Leslie Wright-Riley



Cooper, Kathy

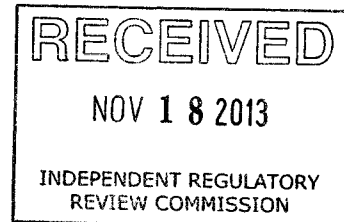
From: Christopher Fromme <rebelsailor@msn.com>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 10:47 AM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Common Core

Mr Summer, As a taxpayer my concern is that Common Core will increase the cost of education and not provide a better student at graduation. I believe that this young man speaks from first hand knowledge. Policy makers need to really listen to what he is saying and create some real change otherwise children will continue to go through a broken education system.

A friend's fifth grade son's math book is a Common Core approved book

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r3halGJqc1Y>

Christopher Fromme
113 Pittview Rd Pittsburgh PA 15237



Cooper, Kathy

From: Scott Sneddon <sneddons@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 10:14 AM
To: David Sumner
Subject: reject the Keystone Exams

Dear Mr. Sumner,

I urge you to reject the Keystone Exams. These tests are unnecessary, time consuming and costly.

My son, a freshman in high school, is above grade level in math, received an A in Algebra I as a seventh grader, and tested Advanced on his PSSAs. Last year he had Geometry but also had to review Algebra I because of the Keystone Exam; failure to pass the first time would potentially mean retaking it every year in order to graduate.

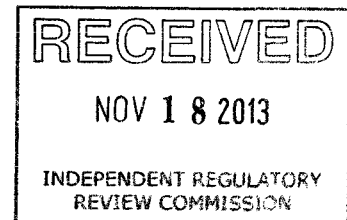
My daughter is a senior in high school. She spent many hours getting prepared for the SAT, and ACT requirements for college entrance. She has a 3.9 GPA in school, three AP classes, and completed a district mandated graduation project. She is involved in community service projects, sports and school activities. She has a job. She has already been accepted to 3 colleges so I think we can state that she is prepared to advance and we do not need another test to verify that.

Our teachers understand our students and push them to always do their very best. Because education funding has been reduced our district has been cutting back on teachers, and programs in order to stay on budget. By implementing the Keystone Exams you would be asking my district to spend money that we cannot afford and asking our remaining teachers to spend time teaching to a new test, again.

Stop the testing. Let the teachers teach. Let the students learn.

Thank you,

Deb Sneddon



Cooper, Kathy

From: Patrick Wright-Riley <wrightrileypatrick@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 10:34 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 Patrick Wright-Riley.

I live in Villanova, PA with my wife and two daughters.

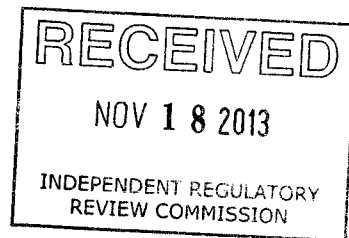
I am writing to say I adamantly oppose the Keystone Exams being tied to a student's high school graduation.

As a successful professional with an Executive MBA, achieved in spite of having difficulty taking tests, this possible legislation troubles me greatly.

I am asking you to REJECT the proposed Chapter 4 regulations.

I urge you to VOTE NO on November 21st.

Respectfully,
Patrick Wright-Riley



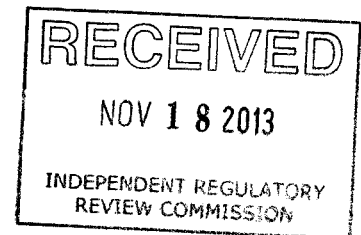
Cooper, Kathy

From: Judy Diehl <jbdiehl@verizon.net>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 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 Judith Diehl. I live in Ardmore, PA and have a Freshman and a Senior at Harriton High School. I also have a Junior in College. 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.

My daughter, the Freshman, took the Keystone Math exam last year, they LOST her answers and she is incredibly stressed about taking it again. She also recently told me that she no longer enjoys Biology/Science because her teacher tells them every day that he can only teach to the keystones because they MUST PASS THEM! Her father is a Cancer Biologist at Penn and her brother is a biochemistry major, planning an Md/PhD future. We like Science, so this is very sad.

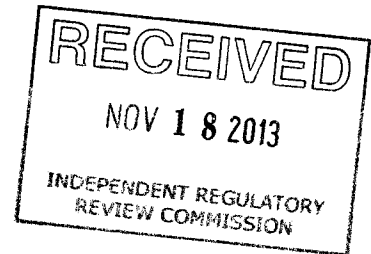
Respectfully,
Judith Diehl



Cooper, Kathy

From: Cathy Hinzy <fireweed270@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 11:06 AM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Stop common core'

Sent from my iPhone



Cooper, Kathy

From: Lucy Klain <lucy.klain@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 11:36 AM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Vote No on Chapter 4 regulations

Dear Mr. Sumner,

As a Pennsylvania taxpayer and a mother of three school aged children, 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.

Keystone Exams are a waste of taxpayer dollars. It is estimated that PA will spend close to \$300 million annually on the implementation of Keystone Exams. This money would be better spent on helping teachers and students in districts that are struggling. I live in the suburbs of Philadelphia and every day I read articles about the lack of financial resources available to them. Instead of forcing all school districts to take a one-size-fits-all exam, use those dollars to help the struggling school districts, such as Philadelphia.

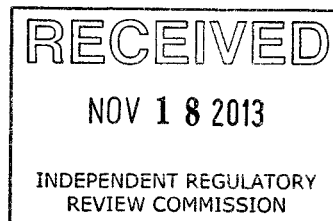
Keystone exams are a waste of student and teacher time. Teachers should be allowed to teach material according to their school districts curriculum. Each school should be empowered to give an exam or final project that they create. It makes no sense that a child that has completed all necessary coursework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

Too much time and money is already spent on standardized testing in our public schools. I want my children to enjoy school, have an inherent sense of curiosity and a love of learning. I do not want my children to spend their days preparing for state mandated exams. Next year, my 7th grade son will have to take the Alegbra 1 Keystone exam as well as the PSSA exams. My elementary school children run the risk of decreased recess, PE, art, music and foreign language due to test preparation. This is too much. The testing madness needs to stop!

I urge you to VOTE NO on the Chapter 4 regulations. It is time to slow down and develop a new plan to measure student progress and achievement. Let the teachers educate, and let the students learn. Do not waste our money and time on high stakes tests.

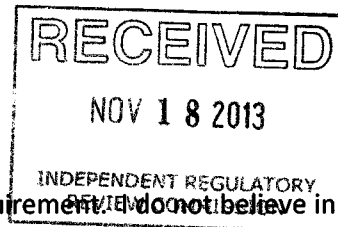
Respectfully,

Lucy Klain



Cooper, Kathy

From: Joann Graziano <joann.graziano.bups@statefarm.com>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 12:26 PM
To: David Sumner
Subject: keystone exams bad news!



I would like to voice my thoughts on the Keystone exams as a high school graduation requirement. I do not believe in this requirement, even though it doesn't affect my children.

I believe that it is the school system's responsibility to teach my children and assess their performance to determine if they should graduate, rather than a state mandated test.

It is absolutely ridiculous to put all the onus on 1 test. There are so many factors that go into how well a child will perform on 1 test on 1 given day (even if retakes are available).

It is my understanding that the curriculum today is so much based on standardized instruction anyhow, so if the child meets the class requirements and receives a favorable grade, Then they should graduate without additional testing required.

And add to this an unfunded mandate with property taxes increasing! It is fiscally irresponsible.

I never believed in the standardized tests, I believe in rating a student by their actual performance as it takes so much more into consideration. (work ethic, effort, pride in workmanship, and these are the Traits that will make a successful adult and a successful employee.) Are we just trying to find the folks with the highest IQ and give them all of the perks in life, despite the fact that they may be the laziest With the worst work ethic?? I, myself, am a successful businesswoman with my own business for 23 years. I was mostly an A student. I scored slightly above average on my SAT's. I never much cared for the Fact that I had to be "accepted" into college when I was willing to work hard, pay the cost, and pursue my dreams. Had there been a "test" in high school that could have stopped my graduation and the pursuit Of everything I knew I could do (and in hindsight, have done), my life may have turned out quite differently. Why knock down our youth on the basis of 1 test WHEN THEY MET ALL THE REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION!?? Who is coming up with this stuff???

When I was in college, I was required to go see the play "1984" (Big Brother) and I thought how bizarre this is. And here we are with Big Brother running the world taking away creativity, self assurance, and autonomy.

The testing and testing and testing in our society today is just getting out of control. Can we go back to "teaching". And with all the "testing", what do we end up with?? A generation of helpless Folks that don't even understand the basics of sensible financial living (ie: balancing checking accounts, savings and investing for retirement, living within their means...)

Requiring Keystone exams as a graduation requirement is NOT the answer.

JOANN GRAZIANO
905 Greystone Dr.
West Chester, Pa
Grazfamily@comcast.net

Cooper, Kathy

From: Karen Rosen <Karen.Rosen@iajvs.org>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 11:10 AM
To: David Sumner
Cc: karenrosen@comcast.net
Subject: Keystone Exams should NOT be required for graduation

I am *opposed* to the Keystone exams being used as a graduation requirement.

Karen Rosen



Cooper, Kathy

From: bpupi@comcast.net
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 11:42 AM
To: David Sumner
Subject: common core

November 18, 2013

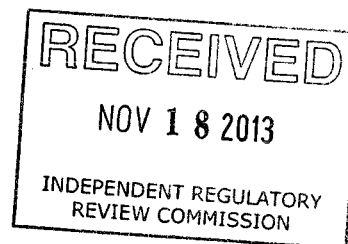
Independent Regulatory Review Commission
333 Market Street
14th Floor
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17101

Dear Sir:

Invoking Common Core as the standard curriculum in the Pennsylvania Public Schools is very grievous to me as a former school teacher. It's implementation would reduce current educational standards and eliminate local involvement and control by parents and teachers. The collection of personal data on students and families is unconstitutional and the amount of people needed to enforce the program would add a financial strain to the people of our state.

Please reconsider advancing this Common Core curriculum by taking in account its long term affect on all Americans.

Sincerely,
Barbara L. Pupi



Cooper, Kathy

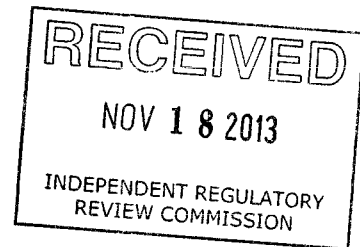
From: Paul Costa <costa_paul@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 10:00 AM
To: David Sumner; Mia Carpiello; dleach@pasenate.com; repmaryjpdaley@pahouse.net; mfolmer@pasen.gov; BONEill@pahousegop.com
Subject: Parents oppose the Keystone Exams

TO: Independent Regulatory Review Commission and David Sumner, Executive Director

Dear Mr. Sumner,

We write as parents of Lower Merion School District children to oppose the PA Board of Education's proposal to require every student to pass Keystone Exams in order to graduate from high school. Our children already are subject to excessive standardized testing, and those tests already demand too much time and energy of our children's teachers. We believe classroom time is better spent on what the teachers and educators at the local level believe is appropriate for their students. Please do not approve the Keystone Exams.

Paul Costa & Mia Carpiello
543 General Lafayette Road
Merion Station, PA 19066



Cooper, Kathy

From: Maria Heider <theheiders1@verizon.net>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 10:22 AM
To: David Sumner
Subject: PA Common Core

Dear Mr. Sumner,

As a grandparent concerned about the education of my grandchildren, I strongly disapprove of the proposals contained in the PA Common Core Agenda. However, as a taxpayer I am overwhelmingly opposed to the cost of this program that will be foisted once again upon the citizens of Pennsylvania. There is always room to innovate and improve techniques in teaching our children but not without the input of local school boards, teachers and the taxpayers - none of whom had any input into the Common Core Agenda.

Springfield, PA has an excellent school system and I do not want to see it compromised by Federal control of our schools.

I strongly urge you to STOP the implementation of the Common Core Agenda into our local schools.

Thank you,

William A. Heider
Springfield, PA 19064



Cooper, Kathy

From: Carolyn Vachani <cvachani@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 9:59 AM
To: David Sumner
Subject: Keystone Exams

Dear Mr. Sumner

As a Pennsylvania taxpayer and a mother of school aged children in Montgomery County, I am writing to say I adamantly oppose the Keystone exams being tied to a student's high school graduation. I am asking the Independent Regulatory Review Commission to reject the proposed Chapter 4 regulations.

Keystone Exams are a waste of taxpayer dollars. It is estimated that PA will spend close to \$300 million annually on the implementation of Keystone Exams. This money would be better spent on helping teachers and students in districts that are struggling. Instead of forcing all school districts to take a one-size-fits-all exam, use those dollars to help the struggling school districts, such as Philadelphia.

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

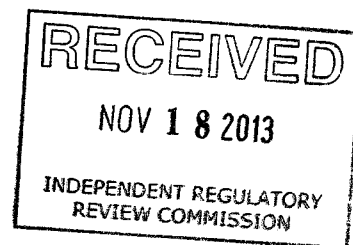
Too much time and money is already spent on standardized testing in our public schools. I want my children to enjoy school, have an inherent sense of curiosity and a love of learning. I do not want my children to spend their days preparing for state mandated exams. Next year, my 7th grade son will have to take the Algebra 1 Keystone exam as well as the PSSA exams. My elementary school children run the risk of decreased recess, PE, art, music and foreign language due to test preparation. This is too much. The testing madness needs to stop!

I urge you to VOTE NO on the Chapter 4 regulations. It is time to slow down and develop a new plan to measure student progress and achievement. Let the teachers educate, and let the students learn. Do not waste our money and time on high stakes tests.

Respectfully,

Carolyn Vachani

Carolyn Vachani
cvachani@gmail.com
610-667-2727



Cooper, Kathy

From: Goddard, Kate <kGoddard@ursinus.edu>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 1:44 PM
To: IRRC
Subject: Keystone exams

Dear sir or madam:

Our public school students take a large number of tests throughout their careers, too many. The disadvantages are:

- Time taken from learning- the number of testing days is considerable!
- Teaching to the test- having little time for spontaneous discussion and student curiosity that leads to real learning
- Costs of the tests
- redundancy of test

Assessment is extremely important- we need to determine what we are doing right, and what we are doing wrong and should change accordingly.

However, there are alternatives to the expensive, time consuming, redundant Keystone exams. Please consider them!

sincerely,

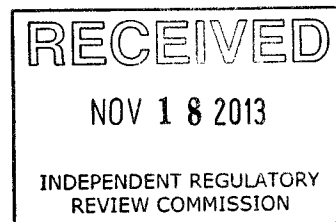
Mrs. Robert Doms
1230 South Leopard Rd.
Berwyn, PA 91312



Cooper, Kathy

From: Mary Kiely <mgkiely@verizon.net>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 2:11 PM
To: IRRC
Subject: keystone exams

The Keystone Exams should be done away with. The high school students have too many tests to take and adding additional tests is counterproductive. It seems especially ridiculous that current year Juniors who took Biology in 9th grade are required to take this test. It is an unnecessary distraction during an exceptionally busy academic year.



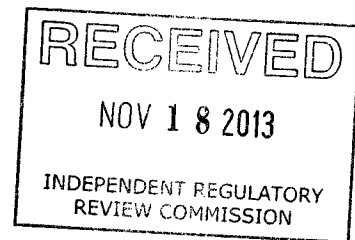
Cooper, Kathy

From: Mark Clough <mclough22@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 1:52 PM
To: IRRC
Subject: Standardized Testing

To whom it may concern,

I am completely against PA enforcing standardized testing as part of the educational process. I believe it is unfair to the students and should not be enforced.

Mark



Cooper, Kathy

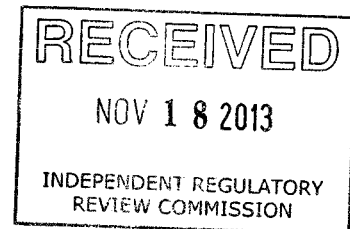
From: Kathy Annis <Kathy003@verizon.net>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 2:18 PM
To: IRRC
Subject: PA Keystone exams

Having spent six years working for a state education agency, I must agree with Mr. Scanlon's decision to oppose the Keystone exams as a graduation requirement.

In the six years of my agency experience, I have seen many proposed and enacted curriculum and assessment changes. These decisions seem to have been made by people in levels of administration either not vested or not aware of the repercussions to students and parents. There seems to have been a basic lack of common sense in these seemingly frequent changes. It has caused a frustrating lack of consistency in assessment data. Before another change is instituted, please have people who will have to deal with the outcomes and who are knowledgeable in a common sense way, weigh in on the decision.

Adding another testing requirement without adequate thought is simply throwing another untested, possible solution at the problem. Students, parents and teachers deserve better from the current administration!

Sincerely,
Kathy Annis
West Chester parent

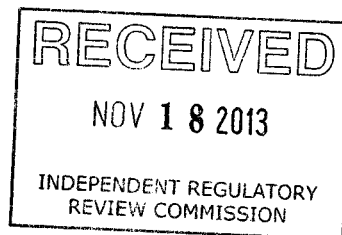


Cooper, Kathy

From: Jeri Kanuch <kicknskate@verizon.net>
Sent: Sunday, November 17, 2013 8:08 AM
To: IRRC
Subject: Keystone exams

I am opposed to the Keystone graduation exams. It is absurd that if the student gets straight As that they will not graduate if the Keystone is not passed. Why make them memorize a bunch of stuff because they need to pass a big test and then forget about it? I would rather my daughter focus on the material being taught in the classroom and remember it especially what she needs for her college major and the rest of her life. Please oppose the Keystone graduation exams. thank you! Jeri Kanuch

I hope to be the person my dog thinks I am.

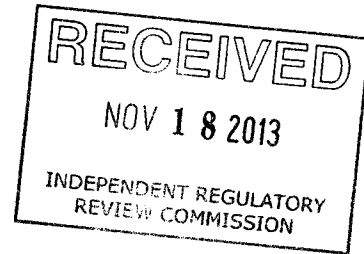


Cooper, Kathy

From: Ellen Doyle <wcurams1@verizon.net>
Sent: Friday, November 15, 2013 6:37 PM
To: IRRC
Subject: Keystone Exams

I oppose the Keystone Exams for PA students. I support Andy Dinniman and his views on this topic.

Ellen Doyle
Retired school teacher (32 years teaching in PA)



Cooper, Kathy

From: Brian McKinney <bmckinney@ridleysd.org>
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 9:59 AM
To: IRRC
Subject: Keystone exams

Keystone exams are a waste of time, money and serve little purpose.
Politicians, you can do more to help education than waste our tax dollars.
Thank you, Brian McKinney.



2976

Cooper, Kathy

From:
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 10:42 AM
To: IRRC
Subject: Keystone Exams Graduation Requirement

I am pleased to see that the state requirement of passing the Keystone exams for graduation is being challenged.

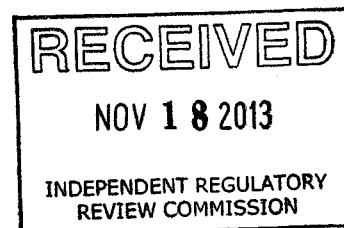
Oddly, my children have scored very well on PSSA benchmarks, however I cannot say the same for the Keystone exams. Clearly the two evaluation tools are testing something very different. Who is to say which is the best "something." In addition, teachers are very uneasy about their understanding of the changed curriculums. That uneasiness is very apparent to the children, who are in turn, also now very uneasy.

There appears to be disconnects in the test results and the children's educational situations. As an example, my daughter was in an honors Algebra class last year, received As and Bs and did not pass the Keystone exam. She is now getting remedial algebra help while she is in honors Geometry. She has lost confidence in herself along the way because she "failed." Further, she and her group were told that they were getting the extra help because they were "struggling" with algebra. Sorry folks, she earned As and Bs the year before. That is not "struggling." Something is really wrong.

We also do not have clear answers to the following dilemma. What happens if children don't graduate on time. The impact on school enrollment and teaching support could be significant. One response, oh, they may be asked to do a project. Well, what does that mean! To me, it means this wasn't thought through.

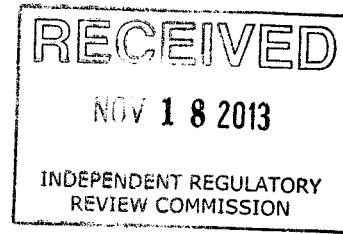
I appreciate the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Cooper, Kathy

From: shar7270@aol.com
Sent: Monday, November 18, 2013 10:43 AM
To: irrc@irrc.state.pa.us.
Subject: keystone exams



To Whom it May Concern,

As a concerned parent of 3 children currently attending schools in the West Chester Area School District, I would like to express my concern that the Keyston Exams are a requirement for children to graduate from high school. The only thing that test will tell you is if my child is a good test taker. Not all children do well at taking formal testing such as the Keystone exam. It is not a direct reflection of what they have learned. It is just another state mandated test that does not truly reflect my child's knowledge. It places undue stress on the children to pass a test of this nature. I would plead with you to reconsider making this a requirement for children in our district to graduate from high school.

Sharon Giunta