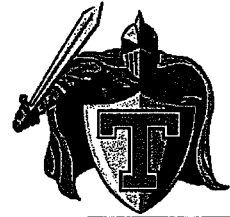


# TOWANDA AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT



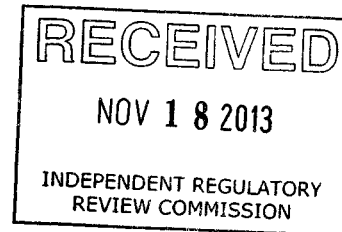
**Steven M. Gobble**, Superintendent  
(570) 265-9894

**Doreen M. Secor**, Business Manager  
(570) 265-9154

November 18, 2013

The Honorable Silvan B. Lutkewitte, III  
Chairman  
Independent Regulatory Review Commission (IRRC)  
333 Market Street, 14<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17101

**Administrative Offices:**  
410 State Street  
Towanda, PA 18848  
FAX: (570) 265-4881



**Re: Final-Form Regulations #6-326 – Academic Standards and Assessments**

Dear Chairman Lutkewitte:

On behalf of the Towanda Area School District, I am writing to express the District's strong support for the final-form regulation 6-326 related to academic standards and assessments. I urge the Independent Regulatory Review Commission's approval.

The regulation adopts the Pennsylvania Core Standards in English and math, along with aligned assessments, including Keystone Exams.

These important educational reforms will create rigorous, internationally benchmarked academic standards to prepare our students to be successful in postsecondary education and 21<sup>st</sup> century careers while providing a strong system of supports for students. The aligned assessments, including Keystone Exams, provide a practical accountability system for measuring student achievement and ensuring students have met the standards by the time they graduate from high school.

This regulation makes some important changes to the commonwealth's current education standards and assessments. If approved, this final-form regulation will replace the national Common Core State Standards with the Pennsylvania-specific PA Core Standards. It will also reduce the number of Keystone Exams from ten to five, thus reducing testing time for students and cutting the number of subjects in which school districts are required to provide remediation and administer project-based assessments. The final-form regulation also eliminates the requirement that every high school senior complete a culminating project, which will free up resources that can be used to administer the project-based assessments or provide supplemental instruction.

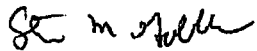
Pennsylvania's students are competing with students from across the country and around the world for college admissions and for jobs. However, too many of our young people are

Chairman Lutkewitte  
Page 2  
November 18, 2013

graduating without the academic foundation and skills they need to succeed. These final-form regulations offer students and school districts a variety of pathways to success and include specific supports for students and schools.

Again, the Towanda Area School District strongly supports the regulations and urges IRRC's approval.

Sincerely,



Steven M. Gobble  
Superintendent