

**Cooper, Kathy**

RECEIVED

NOV 18 2013

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
REVIEW COMMISSION

**From:** mary.m.mccracken@wellsfargo.com  
**Sent:** Friday, November 15, 2013 3:58 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Public Comment: Keystone Exams as a requirement under Chapter 4 High School graduation requirements

Dear IRRC member:

I am very concerned about the proposal to include the successful passing of the Keystone Exams as a graduation requirement under the proposed Chapter 4 High School Graduation requirements. This high stake testing, where implemented in other states, did nothing to increase basic skill proficiency and has only served as a political touch point in the on-going battle on perspectives toward insuring the best way to educate our youth for the rapidly changing future. No Child Left Behind and other non-funded mandates have only served to teach our children how best to succeed at test taking – and not with the basic skills required. Therefore, any child that cannot master test taking – but can understand materials and demonstrate proficiency using other methods such as presentations or oral discussions is at risk for not graduating. We all know that graduation from high school is a basic step toward economic stability for our children and for our community and those that do not graduate carry a life-long stigma of failure.

In February, 2013, as a result of the Graduation Nation report, it was reported that Pennsylvania is one of 23 states not on track to reach the milestone of 90% high school graduation rate by 2020, largely due to lagging progress in graduating Black and Latino students. The report further says that “Pennsylvania is one of 20 states in which the African American graduation rate is below 66 percent, and one of 16 states in which the Latino graduation rate is below 66 percent (both are 65 percent). The gap between White and Black graduation rates and White and Latino graduation rates is, in both cases, 23 percentage points. The White graduation rate in Pennsylvania now stands at 88 percent. Although Pennsylvania has a higher overall graduation rate at 83 percent than the nation as a whole (78.2 percent), it will not attain the goal because much of the overall improvement nationally is due to much better rates for Black and Latino students. Pennsylvania lags too far behind in those groups to catch up in seven years. The average yearly improvement in the graduation rate between 2006 and 2010 is 1.25 percentage points. Pennsylvania's improvement was 0.4 point.” With these grim statistics, it appears that our focus should not be on ANOTHER TEST but on how we can increase graduation rates.

This requirement will just be another test that will serve no purpose in actually EDUCATING our children.

We have too much at stake both financially in the many cash-strapped districts as a result of the Commonwealth legislators' poor handling of the Teacher's pension fund and stalled economic recovery and in the emotional state of our children.

Please do now allow our politically activated proponents of this proposal to sacrifice our children's future for their short term political gain.

Mary M. McCracken, Vice President

Implementations and Delivery Manager  
Treasury Management Corporate and Specialized Industries  
Financial Institutions, Title, Escrow/Technology, Media and Telecom

Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. | One South Broad Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor | Philadelphia, PA 19107  
Tel 267-321-6971 | Cell 610-955-9310

[mary.m.mccracken@wellsfargo.com](mailto:mary.m.mccracken@wellsfargo.com)