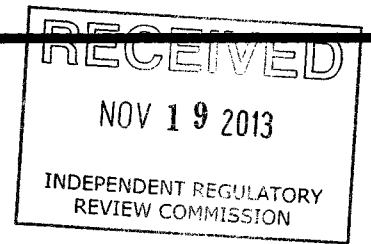


**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** EM Tremoglie <chriskevat@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 3:17 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams (Chapter 4 Regulations)



Dear Chairman Lutkewitte and members of the IRRRC,

As the parent of Pennsylvania public elementary and middle school students, I appeal to this commission to **not** necessitate the Keystone Exams as a requirement for graduation.

Aren't we already aware that these exams are not helping our students in the global economy but simply teaching them how to take tests. So much time and money is spent on preparing and taking these exams that our students are missing out on learning critical thinking skills and instead are taught how to give back rote answers so that they can achieve high test scores for their districts. Teachers spend time "teaching to the test" instead of what they are really there to do--teach children how to think critically and problem solve in an ever-growing global marketplace. The true education of our children is being sacrificed for more standardized tests that ultimately show children how to be good test takers and not much else.

I urge the Independent Regulatory Review Commission and the General Assembly not to require Keystone Exams as graduation requirements.

Thank you for your time and attention.

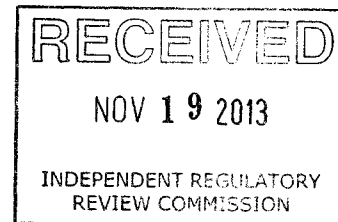
Sincerely,

Eva Tremoglie

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** joe zimmerman <jzatben@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 3:13 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Approve Revised Chapter 4 Regulations



As a School Board member in the Annville-Cleona School District and the chairperson of the Curriculum and Instruction Committee, I urge the Independent Regulatory Review Commission to approve the revised Chapter 4 regulations.

If approval is not granted, thousands of hours of work by professional employees in Pennsylvania's schools will be wasted. Many of us agree this revision is not perfect. However, our schools cannot afford to return to the "mistakes" in the previous Standards.

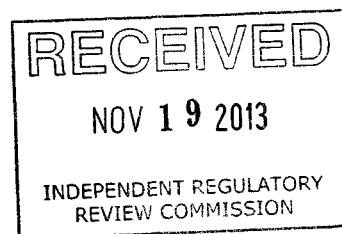
I look forward to attending the meeting, listening to your discussion and eventual vote. Thank you for the opportunity to express my opinion.

Joseph C. Zimmerman

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Tali Perlman <TPerlman@cnlegalsearch.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 3:10 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Regarding the Keystone Exams



Dear Mr. Sumner,

I am the parent of an eighth grader at Bala Cynwyd Middle School in the Lower Merion School District. My son, who receives both learning and autistic support, has flourished in elementary and middle school, thanks to his invested and compassionate teachers. His teachers have expected the best of him, and supported him within and outside the class room to help him achieve. Throughout the years, I have always cringed when I have heard the teachers focus on PSSAs, on devoting all of his supplemental math classes to "teaching to the test," to spending inordinate time on test-taking strategies and tailoring everything "to the test." If the Keystones will now be an added requirement for graduation, I foresee the unacceptable and increased burden it will put on faculty, and also on my son, whose test-anxiety will be piqued. I would much rather have the resources of money, time and human capital be put to far better uses.

Thank you very much for allowing me to express my view.

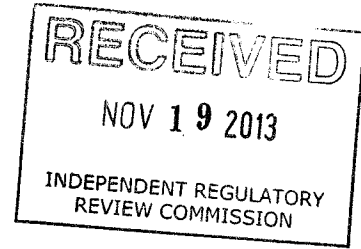
Respectfully,

Tali Perlman  
312 N. Bowman Avenue  
Merion, PA 19066

2974

Donald J. Shatter  
Box 88  
Upper Strasburg, Pa. 17265  
11/16/13

Mr. David Sumner, Executive Director  
I.R.R.C.  
333 Maple St., 14<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Harrisburg, Pa. 17101



Dear Sir, & Members of I.R.R.C.

Concerning Education & Common Core.

For many years from America's founding to relatively recently the USA had the best educated people in the world and set the standard for others to follow. Our Founding Fathers had the right formula for educating our children to the highest standards, preparing them to lead the Nation in a right and healthy direction based on sound doctrine and truth. Ref. David Barton at Wall Builders.

In the past 50 or so years our children's educational level has dwindled to the point where the USA is one of the poorest educated nations among all the industrialized countries. Look at the devastating results in the conditions we are in today.

Examining data on "Common Core" it appears to be another program to further reduce the real educational level of our children.

Our children are the future leaders of the USA and maybe the world. Why enslave them to a system "Common Core" that removes local control by parents, administrators, & teachers, and impedes students' ability to do their best. Please, set "Common Core" and all such systems like it aside once & for all.

Raise the educational bar for all students (K - 12). Return to our Founding Fathers instructions for training our children using all the new, well documented data available today, and prepare them to take the reins of leadership in whatever career they freely choose to follow.

Take the lead, teach our students accurate American history showing the price in lives, blood, & fortunes that have been given for the precious freedom we enjoy today, instruct them with the best data in each subject based on the truth, challenge every student to do their best, and show them you really care.

Future generations will look back on the decisions that are made today. We can stand with our Founding Fathers by taking the courage to do what is right, standing firm on the principles that made America great.  
**we can be the heroes of the day:**

Thank you for your time on this matter.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Don Shatter".

Donald J. Shatter

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Nicole Keller <natkeller@roadrunner.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 9:19 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams Public Comment



Dear Executive Director Sumner,

I teach Biology at a rural school district in NE PA. As you can imagine, I have been directly impacted by the introduction of the Keystone Exams.

Some of the things I have witnessed first hand since my district has begun implementing the exams include:

- The exams are nothing more than an test which pits those who were gifted intellectually, socially, and economically against those who were not. Almost without exception, the students who are deemed unsuccessful on these exams are Learning Support, Emotional Support, and Economically Disadvantaged students. These students already work hard enough to overcome setbacks in life and the Keystone exams only add to their disadvantages.

- Modern educational theory acknowledges that different students develop at different rates and different times. Schools have spent the last few decades developing Individualized Education Plans for students and implementing special programs for gifted students. Implementing standardized end-of-course exams undoes decades of progress, mandating that all students reach the same level of achievement at the same date and time.

- The Keystones will only increase the drop out rate. Already we have students who are being forced to take the Keystone for the third time. Some Learning Support students have no hope of ever passing the exam due to their innate ability level. Forcing them to take and retake and retake a test they have no hope of passing is a moral injustice. Other students have threatened to drop out due to the frustration they feel from the exams.

- Research shows that implementation of standardized testing does nothing to improve education. What it does do is force me to teach to a test. As a result I am losing many days of instruction due to pre-testing, benchmarking, repeatedly going over objectives. I know the quality of the job I am doing my job in my classroom when my students go off to college and return for a visit and tell me that their classes are "easy." I don't need someone in an office hundreds of miles away judging what my students need when they have never met them and certainly don't know them.

- I am quickly phasing out attention to the individual in my classroom.

I am a firm believer in multiple intelligences, and multiple modes of learning are being ignored in favor of old fashioned lecture- the quickest way to disseminate the greatest quantity of information in the shortest amount of time. Cooperative learning is being sacrificed as well. Our students may not be able to work in a group when they graduate, but they sure will know to choose 'C' when they do not know an answer.

- Claiming that these exams will have no cost to the school district is ridiculous. Already we are offering remediation, discussing supplemental courses, and have purchased tutorial software. Rather than offering additional exploratory science courses, teacher days will be consumed by remediation and re-teaching of Keystone material.

I hope our legislators like Senator Dinniman are aware enough to realize the damage that these exams will do and vote to reject the Keystone Graduation Exams before it is too late.

Thank you for considering my comments,  
Nicole Keller, Biology Teacher

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Ethan Boldt <ethanboldt@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 10:31 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** dleach@pasenate.com; repbriggs@pahouse.net; repmaryjodaley@pahouse.net; mfolmer@pasen.gov; BONEill@pahousegop.com; repdelissio@pahouse.net  
**Subject:** Vote NO on Chapter 4 Regulations

My wife and I are both taxpayers in Montgomery County, PA, and the proud parents of two children (7th grade and 3rd grade) in the Lower Merion School District. We are firmly against 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.

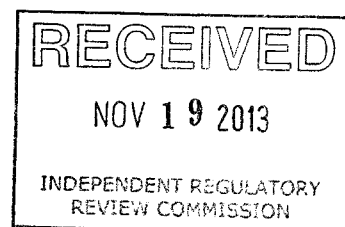
**Keystone exams are a waste of student and teacher time.** Teachers should be allowed to teach material according to their school districts curriculum. Each school should be empowered to give an exam or final project that they create. It makes no sense that a child who has completed all necessary coursework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

**Too much time and money is already spent on standardized testing in our public schools.** We want our children to enjoy school, have an inherent sense of curiosity and a love of learning. We do not want our children to spend their days preparing for state mandated exams. Next year, our 7<sup>th</sup> grade daughter will have to take the Algebra 1 Keystone exam as well as the PSSA exams. Our elementary school child runs 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!

**We 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,

Ethan & S.J.C.J. Boldt



Parents of Two Children in Lower Merion School District

Montgomery County, PA



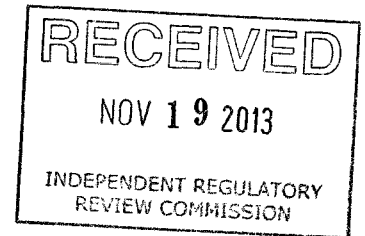
**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Jules Catania <julescatania@me.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 10:11 PM  
**To:** David Sumner; repbriggs@pahouse.net; repmaryjodaley@pahouse.net; mfolmer@pasen.gov; boneill@pahousegop.com  
**Subject:** RE: VOTE NO on Chapter 4 Regulations

**Jules Catania**  
**200 Grays Lane**  
**Haverford, PA 19041**  
**Julescatania@me.com**

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



November 18, 2013

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

Dear Mr. Sumner,

As a Pennsylvania taxpayer and a mother of two school aged children, I am writing to say I 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 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.

**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. **PLEASE TAKE SOME TIME TO GET OUT OF YOUR OFFICE AND INTO THE SCHOOLS IN THE CITIES.** There is a tremendous lack of financial resources available to them. Instead of forcing all school districts to take a one-size-fits-all exam, please 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 to receive funding from the State. Next year, my 7<sup>th</sup> 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!**

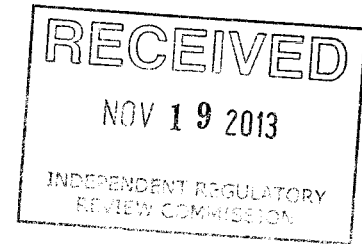
Thank you,

Jules Catania

## Cooper, Kathy

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**From:** Kate Lund <hiddeneye17@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 5:56 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** I oppose approval of the Keystone Tests



Mr. Sumner:

I am writing to say I stand with Andy Dinniman and others in opposing approval of the Keystone Tests by the IRRC for the following reasons:

- It is morally wrong 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, current freshmen (Class of 2017) and students in the classes after them will face the possibility of passing all their classes but failing a Keystone Exam and **not getting a diploma.** Think of the potential rise in number of students who don't graduate on time or not at all and imagine the impact that would have on Pennsylvania's educational statistics, not to mention colleges and universities, who might lose thousands of new students.
  
- Imagine the potential backlash of thousands of angry parents knocking down your door!
  
- It is irresponsible to implement a program of graduation exams that will result in the **largest unfunded mandate in the past 50 years.** The proposed Keystone Exams require school districts to provide remediation and supplementary instruction for students who do not pass. However, the Pennsylvania Department of Education provides **no funding whatsoever for remediation costs.**
  - Despite the department's claim that m that the exams will have no cost to local school districts, test results from over he 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 is likely that the buck will be passed onto taxpayers in the form of massive school property tax increases., especially considering federal government cutbacks in aid to states on education and other social programs.
  
- This is further stress financially distressed school districts throughout the state who are teetering on the verge of bankruptcy. **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.
  
- **The tests cause a substantial loss in the amount of valuable instructional time.** 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.
  - Furthermore - The keystones will only **further promote "teaching to the test,"** while **sacrificing** more valuable classroom instruction time to standardization.
  
- If the education powers that be are going to stamp "failure" on the backs of teachers, schools and communities *that lack the fiscal resources to adequately prepare students to pass these exams*, can you reasonably and/or realistically expect students who are set up for failure to stick with the program?
  
- Likewise, 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.**
  
- It is suspicious and worrisome that the Department of Education has **repeatedly** withheld data that is necessary for weighing the costs to local districts. Why should it require a state representative to have to make seven requests for the test results so the public can have full data and disclosure on the potential outcomes of these tests? How can the public be expected do without this information in order to weigh the costs versus the benefits of these proposed tests and make an informed decision about whether we want them or not?
  - 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.**

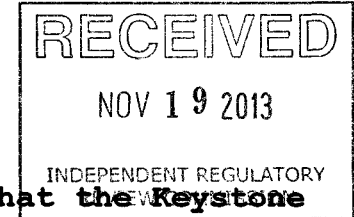
Kind regards,

Kathryn Lund  
[HiddenEye17@yahoo.com](mailto:HiddenEye17@yahoo.com)

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Rocco Mariano <RMariano@connectionseducation.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 7:57 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Rejection of Keystone Exams



Good Morning,

I am writing in support of a motion requesting that the Keystone Graduation Exams be rejected when considered for the upcoming vote. They are educationally unsound, they are cost ineffective, and they incorrectly cause teachers and schools to be labeled as poor.

When our students earn a grade in a class, the grade consists of many different assessments that contribute to that grade. Portfolios, quizzes, tests, participation and other aspects help contribute to a final grade that the student earned. These additional measures are used because it was realized that using just a test to measure knowledge was unfair to students who were very poor test takers and that other forms of assessment can measure student performance just as easily. Requiring students to take a test to earn a graduation credit puts more emphasis on any one test than any test they would take in high school.

Another unfair aspect of the Keystone Graduation Exams is that they make remediation extremely difficult for everyone involved. While it is true that a student may be able to take them more than once in order to pass, the reality is that the student who scores below proficient will require some sort of remediation in order to pass the test. Unlike the PSSA tests where students scoring basic and below basic are provided funded interventions through Title 1, no such funding exists to help districts remediate these students. The state has said that students must be remediated through hours of face-to-face tutoring. School districts already struggling with increased costs have no money left in the budget to execute any remediation and the state has not appropriated any either.

As for the cost of the tests, they really are doing nothing positive except contributing to the economic health of the companies who make them and score them. There are organizations such as Middle States Accreditation Teams that go to schools and analyze everything about them. If a school receives a passing score from the Accreditation team, it is a testimony that the educational environment at that school is a positive one and students are learning. If accountability is the goal here, wouldn't a school passing Middle States Accreditation show it is accountable for the education it is providing its students and families? Why would a standardized test that costs the state millions to administer and score be needed? Why would a state consider spending money on something that is not really proven to be effective when they can put that money into something more worthwhile that would benefit the students? The state of New York has administered graduation tests to its students for

many years. They have not helped make their educational system better as evidenced by the migration of New York residents to the Poconos and other areas of Northeastern PA because of housing costs and better schools.

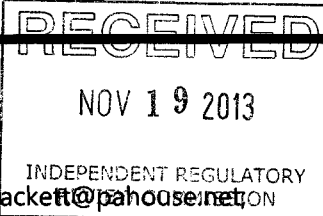
Standardized tests also cause schools and teachers to be improperly labeled. I understand the pursuit of accountability and I agree with improving education. However, much of the focus of these improvements does nothing to address one of the key components of education - the home. You can put the best teachers in the poorest schools that are in the worst communities and the students are going to struggle to score proficient on a state exam. We see that with the PSSA test results. If you were to compare a school district where 65% of the students are FARM eligible with a school district where 20% of the students are FARM eligible, the data shows us the schools in poorer district will perform better. As educated individuals, what inference can you make about the performance of students from poor districts on the Keystone tests? While this is not absolute, poverty is a very good indicator of student performance on state standardized tests.

In closing, I believe the Common Core movement is a good one on merit. I believe that the PA standards may be set too high for many students especially those with an IEP. When you combine the standardized tests with the standards, many students will lose especially those with an IEP. It is unfair to any school district to score them based on performance on standardized tests especially considering nothing is done to address the home-life of students. The home environment is an integral aspect of all students' performance. Because of the reasons mentioned above, I respectfully request that you reject the Keystone Graduation Exams.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Rocco Mariano

**Cooper, Kathy**



**From:** Madden, III, Charles <cmadden@dciu.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 8:32 AM  
**To:** Paul Wright; David Sumner  
**Cc:** RepVitali@pahouse.net; RepAdolph@pahouse.net; RepHackett@pahouse.net; Chuck.Madden@rtsd.org; dleach@pasenate.com  
**Subject:** RE: Comment on Keystones

Mr. Wright- Thank you for stepping up and writing to the IRRC - I hope some one will realize what this will do to education and stop the process - Chuck

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**From:** Paul Wright [pwright179@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 7:59 AM  
**To:** [dsumner@irrc.state.pa.us](mailto:dsumner@irrc.state.pa.us)  
**Cc:** [RepVitali@pahouse.net](mailto:RepVitali@pahouse.net); [RepAdolph@pahouse.net](mailto:RepAdolph@pahouse.net); [RepHackett@pahouse.net](mailto:RepHackett@pahouse.net); [Chuck.Madden@rtsd.org](mailto:Chuck.Madden@rtsd.org); [dleach@pasenate.com](mailto:dleach@pasenate.com)  
**Subject:** Comment on Keystones

11/19/13

Director Sumner and IRRC Commissioners:

My name is Paul Wright. I am a product of Pennsylvania schools, from elementary school through a B.A. at Penn State and an MS.Ed at Penn. I have been teaching for 21 years, was a finalist for the 2011 PA Teacher of the Year, and am also a parent of three public school students.

I am writing to share my thoughts on the pending approval of Keystone exams here in the state. I am afraid that they are being rolled out with little planning, and even less concern for the impact on teaching and learning throughout the state.

The inevitable demand on resources already stretched (even in suburban districts) is evident from:

1) The time these tests already take away from classroom time which we as teachers value so much. This year alone these tests will cost my students and me at least two weeks of time which I would otherwise use for significant units and skill instruction. That seems ironic, that a Department of Education would replace real teaching and learning in the classroom with a set of tests which have yet even to be fully vetted as assessments for kids and teachers alike.

2) Plans for remediation of second and third time retakers, which could alter even further the staffing, time, and logistical issues which have already cropped up with these tests.

In addition, I know from personal experience that the state still cannot articulate how the Keystones will be used in assessing teaching and

learning. I volunteered for a pilot program in Teacher Evaluation in my district last year, and to be blunt, if I rolled out lesson plans as incomplete and unsubstantiated as the plans for these tests and their use in evaluation, my parents would be aghast, and my supervisors irate.

I am not against assessments to measure progress, nor being asked to meet a standard as a teacher and educator. What PA is offering here, though, is half a plan that's bad, and the other half not even finished yet. Given this, and with few projected resources to make it better, we should be ashamed of ourselves as educators if the Keystones become the new normal for Pennsylvania.

I appreciate your consideration, and thank you for taking comments on the Keystone Exams.

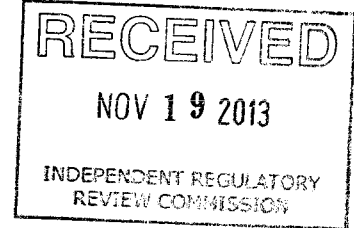
Sincerely,

Paul Wright  
Department of History  
Radnor High School  
Finalist, 2011 PA Teacher of the Year  
Parent in the Haverford, PA School District



**Cooper, Kathy**

**From:** Sheri Fabiani <ohannawriter@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 9:25 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** IRRC No. 2976



Implementation of the Common Core education curriculum will bring with it many negative effects. Firstly, Common Core is a **federal mandate** of standards, though it is marketed as being “state led,” and is tied to the stimulus package such that education funding would only be given to those who accepted the Common Core. Agreement to the Common Core was to be done sight unseen and without knowing what the costs (new curriculum, textbooks, tests, software, etc. will be needed as well) or outcome would be. Common Core weakens state and local control of education, leaving parents out of the equation completely. Common Core cannot be modified or accepted in part. It is copyrighted to be used as a whole, and state and local authority cannot override it. That is totally unacceptable. The time and money being spent on this should go toward a comprehensive education the local school boards and parents should agree on.

Common Core reduces the academic rigor that should be expected in school. Cursive writing has even been dropped from the curriculum, making students unable to read historical documents or even a journal or letter from their grandparents! Common Core’s philosophy of education has not been actually tested and top educators give it poor reviews. In Kentucky, where Common Core was implemented in 2010, math and reading scores actually dropped by one-third! This is hardly providing a better education for our children. Students will be taught to use the “lattice method” to multiply numbers, drawing diagrams and going through a series of steps that further complicates basic multiplication. Common Core claims to be “internationally benchmarked”, but there is no evidence of this, and Common Core Math has been found to be two years behind the benchmark. This is not a good education.

As we have already seen with government standardization in education, teachers are forced to teach “to the test” or “along the Core” rather than allowing teachers to be teachers, using their talents to bring about meaningful discussion, creativity in learning, personal connection, etc. There are no variations for students at varying levels of understanding or with special needs. Common Core treats all students as if they are cookie-cutter formed, with the same abilities, the same culture, etc. This is a one-size-fits-all standard for all of our children. It is bad policy, and it simply will not work.

Lastly, Common Core is set up in such a way for the federal government to collect, store, and reference 400 data points of information in a student’s lifetime. This data is not just grades and discipline; it includes medical records and political and religious affiliations. That is a HUGE loss of privacy and, to our shame, federal privacy statues were re-written to accommodate the data sharing of RTTT. Although the State of Pennsylvania has said they currently will not expand their data collection, the framework will still be there, ready to comply with this requirement at any time. That is simply unacceptable. The federal government has more than enough data on its citizens.

Implementation of the Common Core is a bad idea and wrong for so many reasons. Not only for those listed above, but also because the nation never voted on it. It never went before Congress or before the voters of this great nation. It was made a condition of eligibility for federal stimulus funds and was agreed upon sight unseen by 45 states. In other words, it was essentially forced on the nation without a fair hearing, and without giving the people a choice.

Regards,

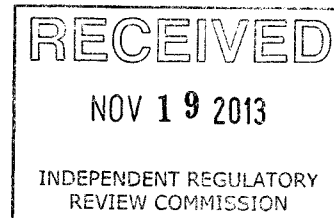


**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Beth Gallis <bgallis@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 9:23 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** I Oppose Keystone Graduation Requirement

David Sumner  
Executive Director  
IRRC



Dear Executive Director Sumner:

I am writing as a concerned resident in the Upper Darby School District to share my discontent with the recent approval of revisions to Chapter 4 (Academic Standards and Assessments) by the State Board of Education. Specifically, I wish to express my opposition to the Keystone Exam graduation requirement.

For students who are already being measured by other meaningful, objective measures such as the PSAT, SAT, ACT and AP exams, the Keystone Exams offer no additional benefit. For taxpayers, the costs of these tests and any required remedial activities far exceed any value to our district.

All of the student groups in the Upper Darby School District meet or exceed the state's graduation requirements. Upper Darby School District is obviously offering a rigorous curriculum. Guided by "local control", Upper Darby School District retains the ability to choose curriculum instruction and assessment tools that benefit all of our students and meet our community's high standards.

I join with the Upper Darby School District School Board in opposing the Chapter 4 revisions and ask that the Keystone Exam graduation requirement be rescinded. A few specific concerns include:

- State-mandated end of-course exams effectively remove local control from the school district.
- The associated requirements for remediation will be costly, but no additional funding is being provided by the state to meet the mandate.
- The move to online testing will require our district to make investments in technology and cabling that would be better spent on direct instruction.
- All students enrolled in special education must take the test, which may violate their right to access a free and appropriate public education.

As a concerned citizen, I respectfully ask that you remove language requiring the unfunded mandate of passing Keystone graduation exams from the Chapter 4 revisions.

Sincerely,

Beth Gallis  
1049 Lindale Ave  
Drexel Hill, PA 19026

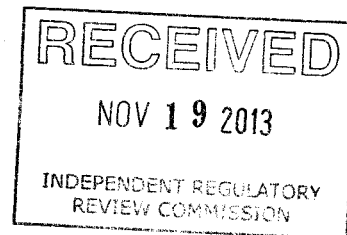
**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Fabiola Gergerich <gergerich@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 9:56 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** IRRC No. 2976

Dear Mr. Sumner,

My email is in regards to the PA Core Standards.



I will do my best to make two brief points.

First, is the lack of empirical evidence showing any positive outcome of Common Core.

As you are aware November is a popular month for hunters. One recognized safety tip is to assume every noise you hear is another hunter. You don't shoot at a moving bush unless you are absolutely positive it is an animal.

So, why would Pennsylvania wish to proceed (shoot) w/ the Core Standards (moving bush) when we are not sure what is behind that bush?

Secondly, how is it that we first generation American were able to succeed in school? There was no such thing as "Core" Standards. The problem, Mr. Sumner, which no one wishes to address, is that an intact family is almost nonexistent. Until we fix the breakdown of families, NO amounts of various versions of standardized tests are going to fix our academic deficit. We've already tried No Child Left Behind, and where did that get us?

Bureaucratic convenience doesn't work for students. Education is unlike every of bureaucratic institute in our govt. The task of teaching is never quantifiable. We teach to free minds, to inspire. NOT to create robots.

Thank you for your time to this important matter.

Sincerely,

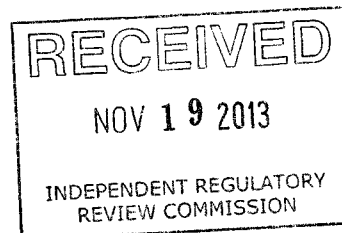
Mrs. Fabiola Gergerich

**Cooper, Kathy**

---

**From:** HGBF@aol.com  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 5:22 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** IRRC Public testimony on Keystone exams

**Testimony, Helen Gym  
Parent, School District of Philadelphia  
November 18, 2013**



Dear Commission members:

I am a Philadelphia public school mother of three children writing to you today following an opening of schools in Philadelphia that most of us would find unimaginable. Writing to you about the Keystone exams is simultaneously emotional, frustrating and necessary. According to our own superintendent, Philadelphia managed to open "functional types of schools" lacking in the resources that "we typically expect in schools." Can you imagine what it means as a parent to hear that about the schools you are sending your children to? Then imagine what it feels like when the state which took over and managed our schools for more than a decade now wants to invest tens of millions of dollars testing my children for the consequences of resources the state has refused to give.

On the first day of my son's high school career, he had 60 students in his ninth grade biology class, 40-plus in his algebra class. Classes throughout his school ranged from the upper-30s to well into the 40s after the layoffs of thousands of teachers and staff. There are 2,400 students in the school, and there's two counselors to serve them all. For the first few months of school, my son's state of the art library and technology center was closed since the District could not afford to purchase librarians. It took a deep-pocketed donor to give over \$100,000 to "buy" a librarian for a year. There are no promises for next year.

In fact, this year all schools across the District opened without sufficient staff and administration. Libraries and technology centers were shuttered. Split grades were reinstated in primary grade classrooms. Kindergarteners are not served at their neighborhood schools. The lack of school nurses has meant extremely risky situations for our children's health and safety; a 12 year old child died of asthma following an asthma attack that appeared to start at her school when no nurse was available. Children in desperate need of emotional support went without seeing a guidance counselor for days, if not weeks. Parents at at least two different school were asked to give \$600+ *per child* to buy – not floodlights for a sports field or new windows – but rather a secretary to answer phones in the office and a guidance counselor. This is not parental involvement or boosterism as it should be defined; this is an example of parents making up for a total abdication of state responsibility in the adequate funding and care of our schools.

So far this year, 900 parents from 82 different schools in the School District of Philadelphia have filed formal complaints with the state department of education about serious deficiencies within our education system due to a lack of funding. The complaints detail a lack of adequate desks and chairs and materials for students in overcrowded classrooms; they reference a lack of staff in the main office, in hallways and lunchrooms and schoolyards; about schools lacking classes in the arts, a high school struggling to get its students to graduate on time after losing a half dozen teachers. The complaints focus on an utter lack of basic materials from papers to working copy machines, about the absence of speech therapists, appropriate wrap-around care, and attendance to special needs issues.

And yet, what's astonishing is that amidst this level of severe deprivation and neglect is the fact that the person the state chooses to hold accountable is my son. As a ninth grader, he will be the first cohort of students statewide to take mandatory Keystone exams even though the District doesn't have the funding to provide sufficient administrative and teaching staff. It's remarkable how much we love to talk about standards while sidestepping the central issue of why the state insists on denying children the resources they need to meet those standards. What exactly is the point of holding students to "college and career standards" if you can't even guarantee them a full-time guidance counselor?

As a parent, I have to confess it is a little hard for me to address this body which has been responsible for the care and keeping of Philadelphia public schools for the last 12 years. What has happened in Philadelphia is not an unfortunate consequence. It has not been inevitable or unpredictable. This is the result of deliberate policies of disinvestment which have not only brought Philadelphia to the breaking point but has also devastated districts all across the Commonwealth.

For the state now to trot out Keystone exams on which it intends to spend tens of millions of dollars and demand that districts to pay for the costs of another unfunded mandate is a perfect example of the misguided priorities and purposeful funding choices which have outraged families across Philadelphia and the state. Equally outrageous are the statements of State Board of Education members like Kirk Hallett who was cited in a Hechinger Report news story dismissing concerns about the Keystone exams as: "That student is damned anyway."<sup>1</sup> Is this really the mentality behind the Keystone exams – damning students?

Mandatory graduation exams are neither new nor novel. The record on them is fairly clear. Drop out rates increase particularly in high poverty districts, more money gets spent on testing rather than teaching, and students pay the price.

As someone who works within a number of immigrant communities, the Keystone exams' inflexibility for non or limited English speakers is also deeply troubling. Language access in Philadelphia has been reduced to levels that are near impossible for basic service, much less to accommodate for such high stakes testing needs. For example at one training in Philadelphia, immigration advocates were told that any immigrant student must take the math and biology Keystones no matter how long they have been in the U.S. It was not made clear to us whether that even meant the student was entitled to take the class.

It is remarkable to me that we can spend so much on testing and accountability for 14 year olds and so little on the legislators and elected officials who have made Pennsylvania's public education system one of the poorest state investments in the nation. Since Gov. Corbett took office, we have seen a loss of 28 percent of our school staff, over 3,000 layoffs in a city struggling with both poverty and unemployment, and we have seen the closure of 30 schools with the movement of children into schools which perform no better and are even worse equipped and staffed than the ones they previously attended. Under Gov. Corbett's leadership, there's been zero conversation about investment in our district schools, whether it's about updating, renovating or building new school facilities in a system where the average age of a school building is over 60 years old. There's been zero conversation about addressing stability and sustainability for a teaching profession, or investing in student learning supports as we institute ever more rigorous standards. As I said in a recent New York Times article on the Philadelphia schools: "Nobody is talking about what it takes to get a child educated. It's just about the lowest number needed to get the bare minimum. That's what we're talking about here: the deliberate starvation of one of the nation's biggest school districts."

As a parent I feel that before you institute a single additional test in our school district, you owe it to us to immediately launch an investigation into whether Philadelphia's current level of resources violates the state's commitment to a "thorough and efficient" education.

We parents have done our part. We are not only paying more taxes and donations than ever, we have been more vigilant in being watchdogs around our schools. We have lobbied our city and state officials for greater local oversight and not only more funding but also responsible use of that funding so it goes towards classrooms and children and toward reforms with track records of success.

We have done our part. We expect you to do yours.

1. Postpone the Keystone exams until the state has thoroughly and responsibly investigated Philadelphia's funding and resource situation and the appropriate and equitable funding needs of school districts across the Commonwealth.
2. Eliminate high stakes testing and reduce state-level testing to the most prioritized assessments. It's unconscionable for the state to mandate so many tests that interfere with local school district teaching. Stop using tests to punish and use tests to assess, reflect, and drive resources and investments.
3. Stop the parent, teacher and student bashing rhetoric around education achievement. Your comments about our children and our schools are insulting and unhelpful. They seek to locate blame and punishment rather than seek understanding, solutions, and investments.
4. Institute real accountability by providing in-depth, broad and comprehensive data on performance disaggregated within populations so we can best serve students' needs.
5. Focus on teaching and learning and instructional time investments rather than obsess over the number of tests our children take. Pennsylvania's education system is not declining for a lack of tests. It's declining for a lack of investment in the real factors which impact education – teaching and learning.

Helen Gym



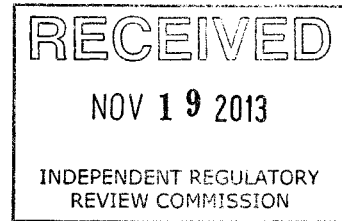
2110 Appletree Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19103  
parentsunitedphila@gmail.com

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<sup>[1]</sup> "Set Up For Failure?" Hechinger Report reprinted in the *Philadelphia Public School Notebook*, Oct. 16, 2013.  
<http://thenotebook.org/blog/136550/are-pennsylvania-students-being-set-failure>

November 18, 2013

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



Re: Keystone Graduation Examinations - Endorsement

Dear Mr. Sumner:

My wife and I do not have any children, yet we both value education of our citizens very highly. Thus, we fully endorse the plan to implement graduation exams for all Pennsylvanians who have completed the requisite courses for primary and secondary education.

I attended Pennsylvania primary & secondary schools, and then Harrisburg Area Community College. Subsequently I attained my BA, MA and PhD in neuroscience at The University of Colorado, Boulder, CO. As CU has 5 Nobel Laureates, 8 MacArthur Fellows, 19 Astronauts, members of the National Academy of Science, and several musicians with multiple Grammys, it was an enriching environment.

Subsequently I was a staff fellow at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, MD, and have worked in the international pharmaceutical industry for the past 25 years. During that time I worked for companies headquartered in the United States, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Japan, Canada and Australia, and met with the U.S. FDA and other governments many times.

During the course of my educational and professional career I have encountered many students who had better grades than I had. Yet students continue to drop-out of US colleges and universities prior to graduation at a rate of 15-40%. Unfortunately, this includes graduate and professional schools where many students enter with "straight A" averages but cannot think outside the proverbial box. In STEM programs, professors discover that many students who have done well on multiple-choice exams, cannot reason logically when presented with research problems. I can attest to the fact that most individuals graduating with professional degrees lack the fundamental ability to express themselves coherently, either in writing or verbally.

How do STEM-based companies and U.S. government agencies (NIH, NSF, NAS, NOAA, NASA, etc.) accommodate such dismal circumstances? They employ hundreds of thousands of foreign nationals, who have both a better education, and often write English better than our own citizens.

Obviously, this is just one manifestation of a broken U.S. educational system.

If the Keystone Graduation Examinations are but one solution of many being contemplated, we may have a chance to reinvigorate our primary and secondary schools. But it will still take several more generations to fully reap the benefits of vigorous reform commenced today.

I have read the objections to this proposal on the internet, newspapers and other forums, but find most to be unfocused, rambling and inadequate. Some have argued that imposition of these examinations will be arbitrary and capricious – well so is life, and too many of our students enter life ill-prepared to function successfully. Others have argued that such a program will increase property taxes. Well, the existing system already wastes too much of the taxpayers' funds.

Before closing, I would only add that we also need more competent teachers to prepare our students. Such individuals should themselves be subject to rigorous entry requirements, routine examinations, remedial training if necessary, and pay for performance. It is woefully insufficient to merely invoke one's dedication and heartfelt aspirations to help students. And for those who perform exceptionally, we need to be creative in rewarding them and not limiting compensation to that of bureaucrats sitting in Harrisburg – their task is far more important so let's attract the best and the brightest.

Respectfully,

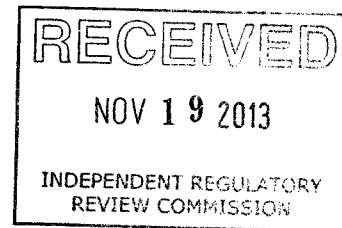
Todd D. McIntyre, PhD  
Chester Springs, PA

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Susan Welfley <qboo60@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 9:19 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Testing and Teacher Evaluations

I have been teaching for 41 years now; and absolutely cannot believe what is happening to elementary education! There is way too much pressure on both students and teachers; and really very little time for creativity and having some fun! It is a total crime in my mind! I hope the politicians in Harrisburg listen to what the teachers are saying. Sincerely, Susan S. Welfley, Grade 3 Teacher, Wallingford-Swarthmore School District, Wallingford, PA 19086



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** dubldocs@comcast.net  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 12:43 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Common Core

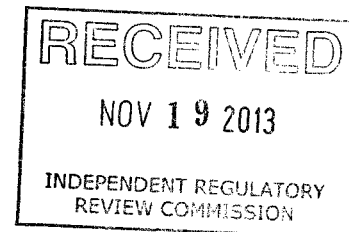
Mr Sumner:

I am opposed to the implementation of the Common Core State Standards in Pennsylvania. These are a set of standards that were written by private trade organizations like the NGA and CCESO, both of whom are heavily funded by the Gate Foundation. These standards have never been successfully tried anywhere. Why are we adopting them sight unseen and without any proof that they will be superior? Both Kentucky and New York adopted the ELA and math standards and saw their student's proficiency in these subjects drastically diminish. The implementation of these standards will be a boon for software and computer companies, and textbook companies like Microsoft and Pearson publishing but it will be a significant drain on the state education budget. The Pioneer Institute estimates that the cost of CCSS will be \$650 million dollars. Where is the state going to get this money?

Please do not allow Common Core standards to be adopted. Our children and our taxpayers deserve better.

Sincerley,

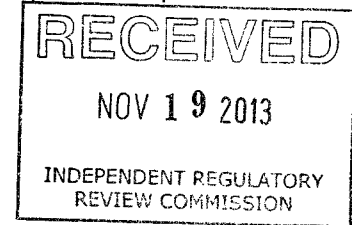
Coleen Carignan  
Pittsburgh Catholics Against Common Core



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Paul Wright <pwright179@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 7:59 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** RepVitali@pahouse.net; RepAdolph@pahouse.net; RepHackett@pahouse.net; Chuck.Madden@rtsd.org; dleach@pasenate.com  
**Subject:** Comment on Keystones



11/19/13

**Director Sumner and IRRC Commissioners:**

My name is Paul Wright. I am a product of Pennsylvania schools, from elementary school through a B.A. at Penn State and an MS.Ed at Penn. I have been teaching for 21 years, was a finalist for the 2011 PA Teacher of the Year, and am also a parent of three public school students.

I am writing to share my thoughts on the pending approval of Keystone exams here in the state. I am afraid that they are being rolled out with little planning, and even less concern for the impact on teaching and learning throughout the state.

The inevitable demand on resources already stretched (even in suburban districts) is evident from:

1) The time these tests already take away from classroom time which we as teachers value so much. This year alone these tests will cost my students and me at least two weeks of time which I would otherwise use for significant units and skill instruction. That seems ironic, that a Department of Education would replace real teaching and learning in the classroom with a set of tests which have yet even to be fully vetted as assessments for kids and teachers alike.

2) Plans for remediation of second and third time retakers, which could alter even further the staffing, time, and logistical issues which have already cropped up with these tests.

In addition, I know from personal experience that the state still cannot articulate how the Keystones will be used in assessing teaching and learning. I volunteered for a pilot program in Teacher Evaluation in my district last year, and to be blunt, if I rolled out lesson plans as incomplete and unsubstantiated as the plans for these tests and their use in evaluation, my parents would be aghast, and my supervisors irate.

I am not against assessments to measure progress, nor being asked to meet a standard as a teacher and educator. What PA is offering here, though, is half a plan that's bad, and the other half not even finished yet. Given this, and with few projected resources to make it better, we should

be ashamed of ourselves as educators if the Keystones become the new normal for Pennsylvania.

I appreciate your consideration, and thank you for taking comments on the Keystone Exams.

Sincerely,

Paul Wright  
Department of History  
Radnor High School  
Finalist, 2011 PA Teacher of the Year  
Parent in the Haverford, PA School District

## Cooper, Kathy

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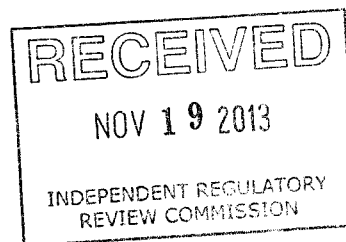
**From:** Dillingham, Timothy <Timothy.Dillingham@uphs.upenn.edu>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 8:19 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** Pezzin, Liliana; Dillingham, Timothy  
**Subject:** Keystone exams

Dear Mr. Sumner:

I am strongly in favor of maintaining the current regulations and requiring the Keystone Exams for graduation to high school. It is time to hold our PA public schools and teachers accountable. Thank you.

Kindest regards,  
Tim

Timothy R. Dillingham, M.D., M.S.  
The William J. Erdman II, Professor and Chair  
Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation  
University of Pennsylvania  
1800 Lombard St. First Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19146  
215-893-2645  
215-893-2685 (fax)



Gabrielle Zitani  
Executive Assistant  
215-893-2645  
215-893-2685 (fax)  
[gabrielle.zitani@uphs.upenn.edu](mailto:gabrielle.zitani@uphs.upenn.edu)

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## Cooper, Kathy

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**From:** Karen Miller <ksm610@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 9:42 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** pclymer@pahousegop.com; Governor@pa.gov; dtruitt@pahousegop.com; andy@pasenate.com  
**Subject:** IRRC No. 2976

Dear Mr. Sumner,

As a school board director of the West Chester Area School District, I am writing to express my concerns regarding the use of the Keystone Exams as a graduation requirement. I agree with my fellow board members that this will be an unfunded mandate placed on the district resulting in a considerable financial burden .

However, what is in my opinion the most dangerous mandate is not of a financial nature at all, it is "Pa Common Core" itself. It does not take a "white suburban mom" or in my case grand mom to realize that there is essentially no difference between "Pa Common Core" and "Common Core". I could go on for pages and pages of the dangers of this initiative, but I have found someone who can express it much better than I could dream of doing. I ask that you take the five minutes required to view this video before making a decision. I believe you will be enlightened to facts that may have a bearing on how we as a sovereign commonwealth proceed.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PprP5TCZBRI>

Sincerely,

Karen Miller  
West Chester Area School Board Director



2976

Cooper, Kathy

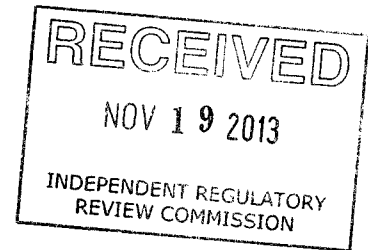
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**From:** Heather Turner <hturner23@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 5:04 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** dleach@pasenate.com; repbriggs@pahouse.net; repmaryjodaley@pahouse.net; mfolmer@pasen.gov; BONEill@pahousegop.com; repdelissio@pahouse.net  
**Subject:** VOTE NO on Chapter 4 Regulations

**My name is Heather Turner. 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,  
Heather Turner, Esq.**

Law Office of Heather Turner, LLC  
For all your Wills, Trusts and Estates Needs  
137 N. Narberth Ave.  
Narberth, PA 19072  
Tel: 610-761-6363  
Fax: 610-664-5420  
[Hturner@heatherturnerlaw.com](mailto:Hturner@heatherturnerlaw.com)



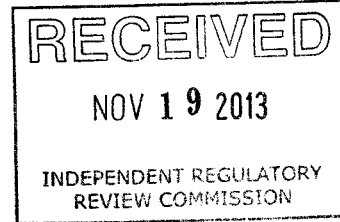
2976

Cooper, Kathy

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**From:** LoveThemBothTV@verizon.net  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 3:21 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** IRRC No. 2976: Reject Common Core Standards. America Can Do Better.

Mr. David Sumner  
Executive Director  
IRRC



**re: IRRC No. 2976 Common Core Standards**

Dear Mr. Sumner:

Consider the following questions and reject the concept of common core. America was made great built by local people and local initiatives. Let's not be fooled by centralized bureaucracy.

How much is Common Core going to cost? Stop it until we know. Stop before costs and mandates become so entwined in our educational system that we cannot extricate ourselves from them.

How will this be funded? This will undoubtedly lead to tax increases in local districts.

Don't approve unfunded mandates. *The cost of remediating and administering project based assessments to students who fail any of the three keystones that will be required for graduation beginning in 2017 will be a huge unfunded mandate for local school districts.*

Why is this initiative being forced on every school district in PA when it is untested and when there is no empirical evidence that it will improve learning outcomes?

School districts are already financially strapped; don't add to their problems.

Sincerely,

William Depner

Statewide PA Pro-life & Conservative Coalition <http://www.palifevote.org>

2976

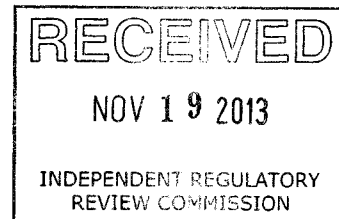
Cooper, Kathy

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**From:** Karen White <kwhite@iu19.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 3:04 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** 'johnblake@pasenate.com'; 'lbaker@pasenate.com'  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams NEIU 19  
**Attachments:** NEIU 19 Keystone Exams.pdf

Letter Regarding Keystone Exams

Karen White  
NEIU Administrative Confidential Secretary



# NEIU 19

1200 Line Street  
Archbald, PA 18403-1918  
(570) 876-9240  
Fax: (570) 876-8660

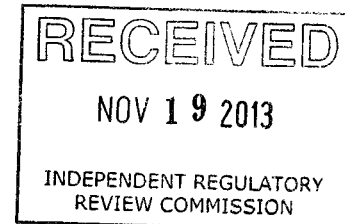
Northeastern Educational Intermediate Unit

Clarence R. Lamanna, Ed.D.  
Executive Director

2976

November 18, 2013

David Sumner, Executive Director  
Independent Regulatory Review Commission  
333 Market Street, 14<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17101



Attention: David Sumner:

Public school districts in Northeast Pennsylvania are deeply committed to student success. The undersigned superintendents believe this success is driven by high expectations and accountability. At a time of rising demands and diminishing resources, we must express our respectful concern over unfunded mandates and the implementation of Keystone Exams.

The adoption of Keystone exams and mandated remediation protocols as graduation requirements impose costly burdens with questionable benefits for students. For example, a project-based assessment is required for students unable to achieve a proficient score. While management of these projects will require time and expense, we are aware of no evidence that the projects will increase student achievement. As educators, we recognize the most effective way to measure student achievement is using multiple measures over time. The Department of Education's testing regimen requires our students to sit hour after hour day after day taking costly standardized tests. Utilizing this measure alone as the gateway to a diploma is problematic. We are particularly concerned with the potential disproportionate impact this regulation will have on at-risk students in resource deprived school districts.

Our school districts are battling to preserve student services while under an assault of fiscal hardships. We have simultaneously experienced a substantial increase in reporting demands often coupled with a lack of clarity. Costly mandates have drained our resources and limited our flexibility to develop local solutions best suited to the unique needs of our local populations.

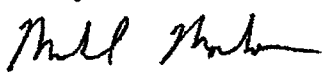
We recommend that the Pennsylvania Department of Education suspend its effort to require Keystone Exams as graduation requirements. We also look forward to working with our legislators and policy makers to develop sustainable accountability measures for our schools and students.

Finally, we thank you for your efforts on behalf of our communities.

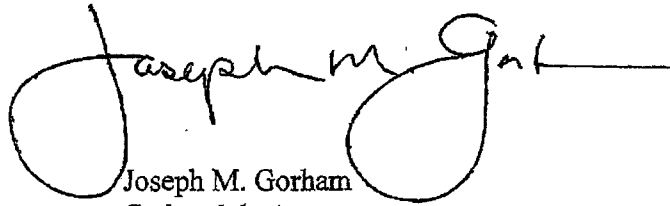
Respectfully submitted by Northeast superintendents including: (see attached signature page)

cc: The Honorable Andrew Dinniman  
cc: The Honorable John Blake  
cc: The Honorable Lisa Baker

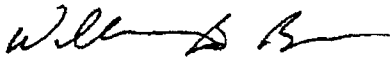
Signatures from the School Districts within NEIU 19:



Dr. Michael Mahon  
Abington Heights



Joseph M. Gorham  
Carbondale Area



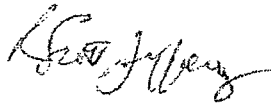
Dr. William B. Bush  
Elk Lake



John J. Kopicki  
Forest City Regional



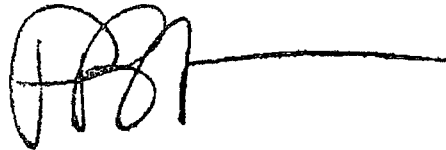
Matthew Rakauskas  
Lackawanna Trail




R. Scott Jeffery  
Lakeland



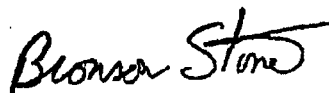
Randy Parry  
Mid Valley



Paul Brennan  
Riverside



William King  
Scranton City



Bronson Stone  
Susquehanna Community



Donald Kanavy  
Valley View

2976

Cooper, Kathy

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**From:** Rosin, Carl <Carl.Rosin@rtsd.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 9:00 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** RepVitali@pahouse.net; RepAdolph@pahouse.net; RepHackett@pahouse.net; Madden, Chuck; dleach@pasenate.com  
**Subject:** Keystone Debate -- comment for the record

Dear Commissioners,

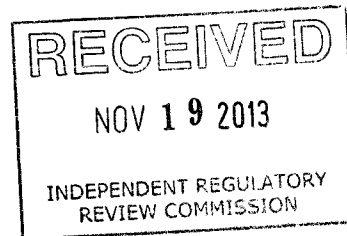
As the IRRC considers the Keystone Exam issue, I (as a veteran teacher here in Radnor Township, former department chairperson, someone who has presented at regional and statewide conferences, member of teacher-leadership organizations, educator of pre-service-teachers at a local college, parent of two public school students, etc.) strongly encourage the participants to separate two very different elements that are often conflated: *having high standards is good, and using this or any other standardized test is not the same thing.*

I support high standards, as should we all. I support accountability, as should we all. Anyone who takes those two premises and concludes that the only way to "do" standards and accountability is THIS way is using unsound logic. To consider an attack on the Keystones as an attack on standards or accountability would be demagoguery; we must remain open to considering the flaws and failures of the current Keystone plan without succumbing to the charge that this is an attack on the idea of standards or the idea of accountability. Just because a standardized test is generally understood to be "an accountability measure" doesn't mean that it is the only way to demonstrate accountability.

The Keystone exam system must not be considered sacrosanct. It needs significant work. Don't rush it. Don't pass up opportunities to pilot instead of blasting it half-cooked into every school at once. Don't let it narrow the curriculum. Don't presume that it has to be a prerequisite for graduation. Don't let it become the end in itself.

Thank you for your consideration,

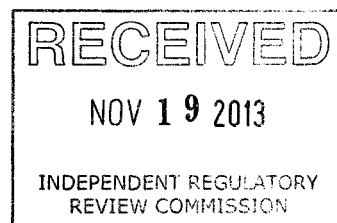
Carl Rosin  
Teacher of English  
Radnor High School



Cooper, Kathy

2976

**From:** Mike Fogel <childfamart@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 2:16 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** lmfogel@verizon.net  
**Subject:** Comment on Keystone Exams



To Whom It May Concern,

I write to voice my strong dissent to the use of Keystone Exams as graduation requirements. I write to you from two positions. First, I am a father of two children in the public school system, one in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and one in 9th grade. I also write as a Pennsylvania Licensed Professional Counselor, having advocated for positive developmental outcomes and treated children's emotional, behavioral and social issues for the last 18 years.

I have observed a few disturbing trends that seem to stem from the public/governmental policy of OVER-evaluating and testing our children.

In the last 12-13 years public schools have been blamed for many things, including failing to properly educate children. There are many statistics that support the fallacy of that accusation, and I am sure that other letter writers have cited them. In this letter I focus on the destructive consequences on childhood – to which over evaluating/testing children is a major contributor.

The consequence of the education policies over the past decade-plus has resulted in an academic environment that places intense, unbearable pressure on American children. Children are now viewed almost solely as information processing organisms, not well-rounded human beings whose tasks are to grow up to contribute to society. The developmental tasks of child hood are to learn how to cope with emotions, form constructive relationships with others, develop creative problem-solving, and to identify and promote a healthy self-identity that contributes to the good of society. Learning is only one important part of the childhood experience.

The common wisdom is, "Children can handle it." - but do they NEED to bear society's burden on their slight shoulders? The overemphasis on testing and evaluation is an adult-driven, top-down initiative that forces schools and teachers to measure children CONSTANTLY. Children are forced to learn MORE material, FASTER, and EARLIER, than necessary. The disease has trickled down even to preschool. Three and four year olds are being labeled learning disabled when they don't recognize letters when recognition wasn't expected until kindergarten a generation ago.

Today's children are under a pressure cooker from society to be GREAT at everything. What if not every child is destined to work in offices or situations that require high level math, science, or reading? What about the people who are mechanically inclined or good with their hands for whom blue color jobs are the future? ALL children are under incredible pressure to achieve ACADEMICALLY, when many people with intellectual, performance, or personality differences are not natural academics. Pressure to achieve makes children bitter when they struggle mightlily.

The testing movement makes teachers teach harder and emphasize rote memorization of details, not integration and implementation of concepts.

The testing movement and budget cuts remove or decrease the arts and physical education in schools. The arts and physical education teach alternate ways of thinking and solving problems. The arts and physical education are physical and emotional outlets that promote more relaxed, mentally healthy children who can better access and master the curriculum.



The testing movement has pushed the stress of college/adult success and failure to younger and younger children who are not psychologically built to cope with real world adult pressures. Have you stopped to consider why there is such a rise in anxiety, bullying, youth suicide, and school shootings in this generation of children?

Children are under more pressure to perform than ever and they have fewer developmentally appropriate outlets for stress.

In conclusion, I have seen children become ever more stressed, tense, and anxious due to the pressures which are trickling down from the adult level demands on performance evaluation. The Keystone Exams are one example of the types of performance evaluation that is hurting education and hurting children in America.

I strongly urge you, on behalf of my own children, and on behalf of all of my current and future clients: please do not make Keystone Exams requirements for graduation. Please strive to minimize the load of testing and evaluation on our students. Return to a child-first approach to education by considering the impact of these policies on children. Return to the days when kids could be kids, and childhood was sanctified.

Thank you very much for your attention to this letter.

Sincerely,

*Michael Fogel, MA, ATR-BC, LPC*



**ChildAndFamilyArtTherapyCenter.com**

**CampPegasus.com**

**T: 610.649.1080 x1**

**F: 610.649.0503**

**Ardmore Address:**

678 Pont Reading Rd.  
Ardmore, PA 19003

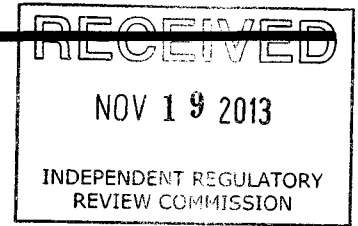
**Paoli Address:**

Station Square 2; Suite 109  
37 North Valley Rd.  
Paoli, PA 19301

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Greco, Christopher <cgreco@penncrest.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 3:19 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Graduation Exams



Please consider rejecting the Keystone Exams for graduating seniors. Thanks so much.

Chris Greco  
Crawford County  
Saegertown PA 16433

**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Mark Keller <pumpingirony@roadrunner.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 6:23 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Please Vote No

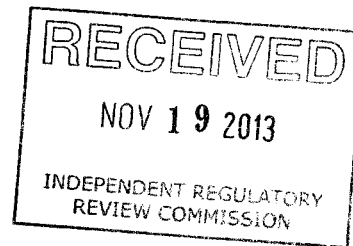
Dear Sir,

I am in opposition to implementation of the Keystone Graduation Exams. I believe that they will be an unnecessary burden to educators, school districts, taxpayers, and the students themselves. Let's not prioritize "teaching the test" in our school districts, but instead permit teachers and administrators to determine what their students need to learn.

Please vote no to Keystone Graduation Exams.

Respectfully,

Mark Keller  
Waterford, PA

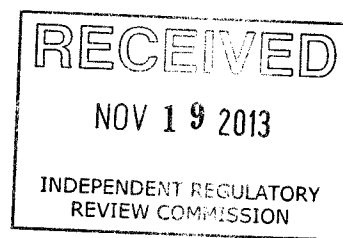


**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Tsmithpar <tsmithpar@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 2:05 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** COMMON CORE

Like all left-wing programs it will add to taxpayers' costs, detract from America's future.



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** tinamariearigo@gmail.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 8:59 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** This Could Be One of the Best Cases Ever Made Against Common Core – No One Expected It to Come From a High School Student | Video | TheBlaze.com

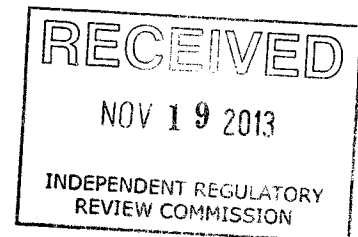
IRRC # 2976

The following is text and video which explains what I could not express so eloquently on why we should stop common core.

Thank you,  
Tina Davis  
[tinamariearigo@gmail.com](mailto:tinamariearigo@gmail.com)

<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/>

Sent from my iPhone



**Cooper, Kathy**

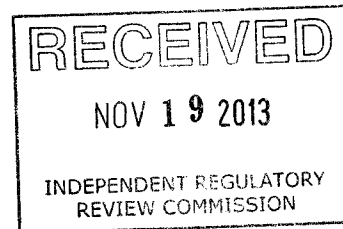
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**From:** Angelasuebreeden <angelasuebreeden@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 2:06 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone testing

Dear Chairman Lutkewitte and members of the IRRC,

As a parent with children in the Lower Merion School District of Pennsylvania, I ask you not to administer keystone testing as a requirement for graduation. I believe the preparation would take away from valuable learning and teaching time during the school year.

Thank you,  
Angela Breeden  
30 Thomas Ave  
Bryn Mawr Pa 19010



**Cooper, Kathy**

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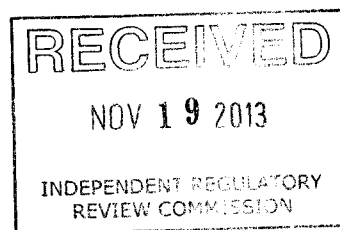
**From:** Vanessa Coke Cohen <vcokecohen@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 2:02 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** dleach@pasenate.com; repbriggs@pahouse.net; repmaryjodaley@pahouse.net; mfolmer@pasen.gov; BONEill@pahousegop.com; repdelissio@pahouse.net  
**Subject:** VOTE NO on Chapter 4 Regulations

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:

My name is Vanessa Coke Cohen. I live in Bala Cynwyd, 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,

Vanessa Coke Cohen



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Theresa & Steve Becker <whoziwatts@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 1:43 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** whoziwatts@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams

Dear Mr. Sumner,

I am emailing you to urge the IRRC members to reject the proposed Chapter 4 regulations at the 11/21/13 meeting. There are many reasons I oppose the Keystone Graduation Exams as a parent and taxpayer. Here are a few:

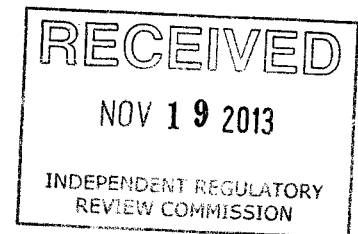
- I believe it is essentially wrong for 3 standardized tests to determine whether a student can graduate from high school. For example, students have different learning styles and this exam certainly won't recognize that.
- Where does the money come from to fund this mandate? So far it appears to be an unfunded mandate. As a result, taxpayers will pick up the burden. My school district (Great Valley in Chester County) has had its share of tax increases and while we appear to be stable for the moment, where does the money come from when Keystone exams require our school district and other school districts to provide remediation and supplementary instruction for those students who do not pass the required exams? Let's not even talk about the Philadelphia school district! They are so financially distressed that they have huge class sizes, no libraries in many schools and lack of textbooks, just to name a few issues. How is this fair to a financially distressed school district or their students? You are setting up students for failure.
- I feel the students are being tested enough as it is and now we want to add even more testing? They spend enough instructional time on test prep/test taking and now we add to that. I am concerned these exams will increase high school dropout rates in districts that don't have the fiscal resources to prepare students to pass these exams (Philadelphia school district just to name one!).

Recently, 58 of 61 superintendents and intermediate unit directors in the Philadelphia suburbs have signed a position paper opposing the Keystone exams - this alone tells me something is seriously wrong.

Please, stop these exams. Do not fail the students, teachers, schools and taxpayers.

Thank you for your time.

Theresa Becker





## Cooper, Kathy

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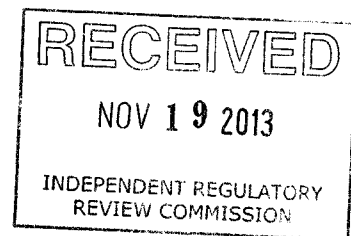
**From:** srsrush@aol.com  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 2:53 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** dleach@pasenate.com; repbriggs@pahouse.net;  
repmarijodaley@pahouse.net;mfolmer@pasen.gov:BO'Neill@pahousegop.com:repdeliss  
io@pahouse.net  
**Subject:** KEYSTONE EXAMS

Good afternoon,

My name is Susan Rush. I live in Merion Station, PA (Lower Merion school district). I am writing 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,

Susan Rush



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Catherine Skeen <clskeen@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 2:54 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** dleach@pasenate.com; repbriggs@pahouse.net; repmaryjodaley@pahouse.net; mfolmer@pasen.gov; BONEill@pahousegop.com; repdelissio@pahouse.net  
**Subject:** Please vote NO on Chap. 4 regulations (Keystones)

Dear Mr. Sumner:

I am a resident of Narberth, PA and the mother of three children enrolled in public school. I care about the quality of K-12 education in this state and I worry that money and time are being spent on expanded testing rather than on the enrichment of curriculum and the provision of basic resources.

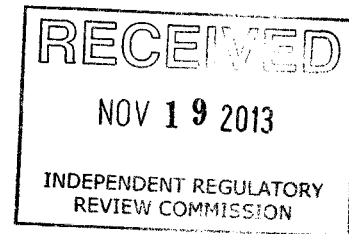
I am writing to say that I adamantly oppose the Keystone Exams being tied to a student's high school graduation.

I am asking you to REJECT the proposed Chapter 4 regulations and VOTE NO on November 21st.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine Skeen  
227 Hampden Ave.  
Narberth, PA 19072



## Cooper, Kathy

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**From:** Steve.Barker33 <steve.barker33@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 5:56 PM  
**To:** David Sumner; Johnson, Leslie A. Lewis; Wilmarth, Fiona E.; Yohn, Cheryl; Cooper, Kathy; Hoffman, Stephen F.; Michelle L. Elliott; Schalles, Scott R.; Smith, James M.  
**Subject:** Common Core

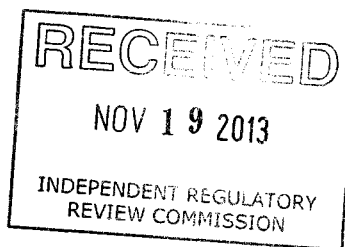
Dear IRRC Member,

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 my hard-earned tax dollars to do it!

The most insidious aspect is the highly personal database that Common Core establishes into the private lives of the students and their families.

Sincerely,

Steve Barker  
1095 Wade Lane  
Oakmont, PA 15139  
T: 412-820-2584  
F: 412-820-0219



**Cooper, Kathy**

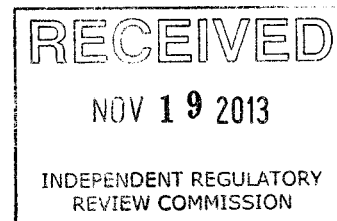
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**From:** kerri holt <kerriholt@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 5:51 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** dleach@pasenate.com, repbriggs@pahouse.net, repmaryjodaley@pahouse.net, mfolmer@pasen.gov, BOneill@pahousegop.com, repdelissio@pahouse.net

My name is Kerri Holt. 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. I believe more testing will increase kids' anxiety and not improve performance. I understand that performance evaluations are necessary but kids are not adults. Some years they will perform well and others they will struggle. Kids are not adults. They are growing. We want to raise confident thinkers, not great test takers. Too much testing requires teachers to focus too much time on these tests and not classroom time learning.

Respectfully,

Kerri Holt



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** aeklmartz@aol.com  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 5:34 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** IRRC No. 2976

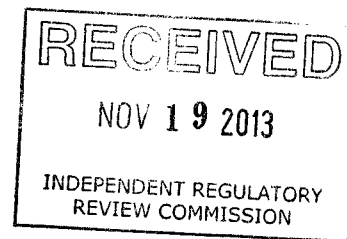
Hello. I am a mother of two daughters. I have great concerns regarding Common Core. How much is the implementation going to cost and what are the fiscal consequences? Why would we do this without proof that it works?

If this will supposedly improve students' education but nobody can point to anywhere it has been done and worked, why not start with the bottom 5% of the failing schools in PA?

It seems to me that this is another "Big Government" idea. The federal government takeover of education. "If we like our local control and curriculum, we can keep our local control and curriculum." Where have I heard that before?

I implore you to keep our education controlled locally not by a one size fits all big government plan known as Common Core.

Sincerely,  
Elaine Martz  
Slippery Rock, PA



**Cooper, Kathy**

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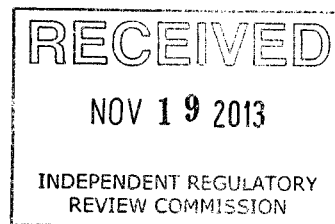
**From:** Gabriela Seiders <gabrielabiber@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 4:56 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Fw: Keystones

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please do not include a graduation requirement that students must pass PA Keystone exams. Students are already subjected to too much testing in and out of school (including, APs, SATs and ACTs). Having an additional set of tests will place more burdens on our children. School districts should be able to set their own graduation requirements which already demand successful completion of credits. Each school district is best able to determine the level of academic achievement required for high school graduation.

Furthermore, testing encourages teachers to focus on making sure the students know the answers to that one test. It diminishes creativity and reduces outside research projects that teach our children more useful skills. Most of students work after graduation does not require rote memory, rather they will work on teams, present and write. Thank you for your consideration.

*Gabriela Seiders*  
520 Spruce Lane  
Villanova, PA 19085

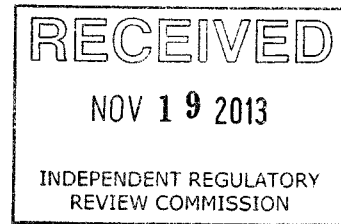


**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Betty Dunkel <dunkelbw@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 4:53 PM  
**To:** IRRC; David Sumner; pclymer@pahousegop.com; Office, PA Governor's  
**Subject:** PA Common Core Standards

**Importance:** High



To Those Copied:

Many, many families and citizens of Pennsylvania are extremely concerned about the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) being forced upon our schools and our students. My comments to the Independent Regulatory Review Commission, David Sumner, to State House Education Committee Chairman, Paul Clymer, and to Governor Corbett are as follows:

I urge you to reject the proposed Chapter 4 regulations proposed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the Pennsylvania State Board of Education. The Keystone Graduation Exams would require students to pass tests in algebra 1, biology, and literature in order to graduate regardless of their grade point average. This testing, along with the remediation it will require, creates a large unfunded mandate on local school districts. The DOE has no plan to pay for the implementation of the Keystone exams that are estimated to cost \$300 million or more. These costs will be passed on to taxpayers and will end up as school property tax hikes. Many of us are on fixed incomes and are struggling to pay our bills and taxes. We are very concerned about these newly anticipated taxes, the pension crisis facing us, and the new transportation taxes. It is too much!

The CCSS initiative is an unproven experimental set of national standards. There is no empirical data to support them. They are unproven. No local school board members, school administrative staff, teachers or parents were involved in the discussion, development, or preparation of CCSS. Further, states were incentivized (bribed) to adopt the standards with "Race to the Top" monies and faced penalties and loss of funds if they did not adopt the standards. The federal government should not impose unfunded mandates on our states.

Under CCSS school districts are bound to an established copyright from which they can't delete, replace, or add over 15% of changes even if all parties agree. This eliminates academic freedom, teacher autonomy, it stifles creativity and innovation and leads to robotic learning environments. Supporting corporations such as Microsoft stand to make billions with the implementation of CCSS.

Most disturbing is the requirement to collect massive amounts of information on our students and their families starting in pre-school through college and until they have a job. Maybe longer. I am very upset at the total loss of privacy and the potential for privacy breach. There are statutes that prohibit collection of data on students without parental approval. We need to protect our students.

More and more, CCSS is becoming the Obamacare of education, another massive government program. Please do not force the federal Common Core program on our Pennsylvania schools.

Respectfully,

Mrs. Betty Dunkel-Hernon  
36 Henredon Drive  
Phoenixville, PA 19460  
(610) 933-2015

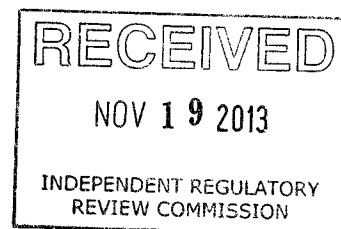
**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Karen Rosen <karenrosen@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 4:09 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**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

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**From:** Deborah Wilt <deborah.wilt@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 3:52 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** IRRRC No. 2976

Dear Mr. Sumner,

I am writing to provide my testimony against Common Core in PA.

-How much is this going to cost? Stop it until we know. (*So far no complete fiscal analysis has been presented to our state legislators by the PA Dept. of Ed.*)

-How will this be funded? This will undoubtedly lead to tax increases in local districts.

-Don't approve unfunded mandates. (*The cost of remediating and administering project based assessments to students who fail any of the three keystones that will be required for graduation beginning in 2017 will be a huge unfunded mandate for local school districts.*)

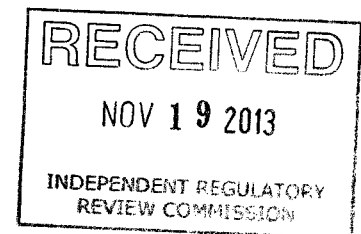
-Why is this initiative being forced on every school district in PA when it is untested and when there is no empirical evidence that it will improve learning outcomes?

-School districts are already financially strapped; don't add to their problems.

Sincerely,  
Deborah Wilt

--

"Be a lamp unto yourself." ~ Buddha



## Cooper, Kathy

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**From:** Cindy Spirit <grace2580@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 3:42 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystones don't cut it!!

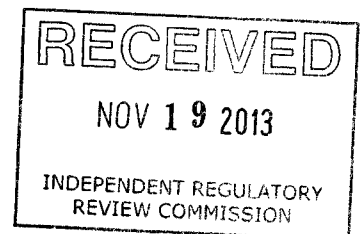
Dear Senator:

I read with relief your editorial in The Meadville Tribune. I am an English as a Second Language teacher who has been wondering why no one seems to think about the real impact of educational mandates. My students stand almost no chance of being able to pass the Keystones. Some of them have only been in this country for a few years. Most of them are tremendously bright as is apparent by their ability to face each school day with success. Not only will we be spending large amounts of money on these tests, but also we will be depriving our economy of the intellectual contribution my students can make when they cannot attend college because of these tests.

I am a part-time teacher due to the low numbers of ELL students in the rural district in which I teach. Since this school year began I have spent almost half of my very limited time preparing my students for what can not help but be a failure. Worst still is that I will have to do it again each year knowing it can not help them and driving them into further confusion. By the time lawmakers figure this out, my students' education will have been severely curtailed.

Please reject the Keystone Graduation Exams. They are breaking our children's back!!

Sincerely,  
Cynthia J. Spirit  
ESL Teacher



## Cooper, Kathy

---

**From:** Taryn Ferst <taryn.ferst@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 6:54 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** dleach@pasenate.com; repbriggs@pahouse.net; repmaryjodaley@pahouse.net; mfolmer@pasenate.gov; BONEill@pahousegop.com; repdelissio@pahouse.net  
**Subject:** VOTE NO on Chapter 4 Regulations

**My name is Taryn Ferst. I live in Radnor Township, 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,

Taryn Ferst



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Haley Lesser <hrlesser@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 7:07 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** dleach@pasenate.com; repbriggs@pahouse.net; repmaryjodaley@pahouse.net; mfolmer@pasen.gov; BONEill@pahousegop.com; repdelissio@pahouse.net  
**Subject:** VOTE NO on Chapter 4 Regulations

My name is Haley Lesser. 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,  
Haley Lesser



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Scott Engle <scttengle@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 7:18 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Grad Exams

**I firmly oppose the Keystone Graduation Exams and I vote!**  
**Scott Engle**



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Michele Nagle <micheleanagle@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 7:13 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** PA Common Core

I am writing as a parent of three elementary students in the PPS system and I am concerned about PA Common Core and what it will mean, not only to the quality of my children's education, but also to the fiscal state of Pa.

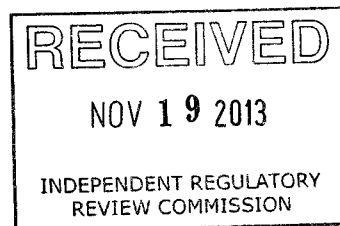
PA Common Core may seem good on the surface, but once one looks deeper into the core, you find that there is much to consider throwing away. First, the cost. I, for one, am concerned about the fact that no cost analysis has been presented to any legislators regarding the cost of implementation which includes the price of repeated testing in the districts for those who fail. Yet PA Common Core is mandated. Why are we supporting an unfunded mandate? How can we afford to do this in the state? Unfunded mandates are a disaster particularly for school districts that are already financially strapped and cannot afford the cost of expensive tests and administration. If the cost will be low, where is the documentation that proves it? We do not have it.

Additionally, this is a program that has not been tested nor proven to have the expected outcomes. Why spend money on any mandate that has not yielded results? These are children not costly science experiments. The answer to the problem of our educational system does not lie in unfunded mandates. The ones who will pay the ultimate cost is our children. You have a responsibility to follow the rule of law. If PA Common Core is to be initiated, then let it be done with our eyes open, not just our pocketbooks. If it is good, requesting an analysis of cost, will not change it from an excellent program to one that is suspect. So far, we have been given little light. And what light we do have reveals fiscal burden and uncertainty on many levels.

Please consider that we do not have a cost analysis of PA Common Core which we should have at this point. Let us not make a mistake here that will cost more than just money. Children's futures are at stake.

Thank you for your consideration

Michele Nagle



## Cooper, Kathy

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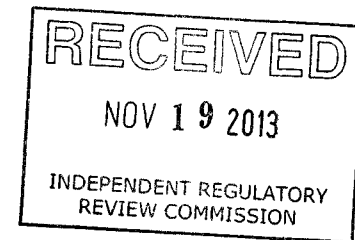
**From:** Jerry Skillings <jskillings@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 7:23 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Chapter 4 regulations & Keystone Exams

Dear Mr. Sumner,

I am the parent of an 11th grader who attends Lower Merion High School. I would like to respectfully request that the IRRC withhold approval of the proposed Chapter 4 regulations regarding the Keystone Exam. The Keystone Exams should not be a graduation requirement.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jerry Skillings  
541 Cynwyd Circle  
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004



**Cooper, Kathy**

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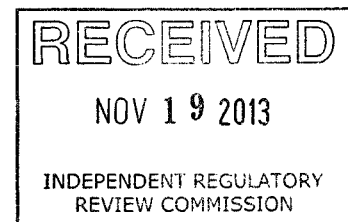
**From:** Suzanne Dickinger <dickingers@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 7:24 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone exams

Dear Sir:

1. The new Chapter 4 regulations continue to assign very high stakes to three end-of-course tests
2. They also include remediation requirements for students who do not pass the tests—which constitute a tremendously costly unfunded mandate for local districts
3. Testing and re-testing students who struggle (and requiring them to remediate in the interim) is not a promising way to encourage them to stay in school.
4. Already, we are seeing a narrowing of the curriculum as a result of the proposed testing requirements.
5. PSEA did manage to get a very important provision included in the newly revised Chapter 4: whereas the prior set of revisions said that any student who did not pass the Keystone Exam or project-based assessment would need to petition the Secretary of Education if they hoped to receive a diploma, the new regulations allow a local superintendent to issue a waiver for any student who otherwise meets local graduation requirements, participates in all assessments, meets attendance requirements, and completes remediation.

Please examine the validity and worthwhile outcome of these exams.

Suzanne Dickinger





**Cooper, Kathy**

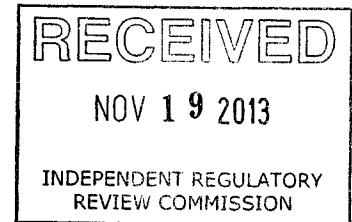
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**From:** Marjorie Roshkoff <mroshkoff@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 7:55 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone exams

Dear Sir -

I am opposed to requiring students passing the Keystone exams in order to graduate high school. I have no doubt that my kids would and will pass them, as they have consistently been in the top percentage of any standardized testing. However, the inordinate amount of time spent on teaching kids specifically for these tests is ridiculous. Testing is fine, but such extreme testing, especially during their junior year when many kids are preparing for the SATs, only takes away valuable time from actual teaching and learning.

Respectfully,  
Marjorie Roshkoff  
[mroshkoff@gmail.com](mailto:mroshkoff@gmail.com)  
610-322-3044 cell



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** jmetz7@verizon.net  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 8:20 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Opposition to Keystone exams as graduation requirement

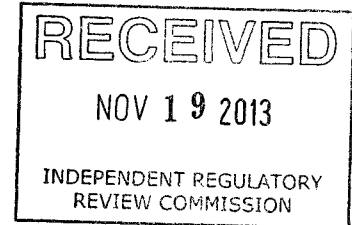
Dear Mr. Sumner,

I am the parent of 3 children in (or who have graduated from) the Lower Merion School District. I am **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), and **urge the IRRC NOT to require Keystone exams as graduation requirements.**

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mitchell J. Metz  
411 Gilpin Road  
Penn Valley, PA 19072



Jeff Metz  
[jmetz7@verizon.net](mailto:jmetz7@verizon.net)  
610-667-4988

**Link to Superintendents'**

**Letter: [http://origin.library.constantcontact.com/download/get/file/1101630330592-851/IRRC+Superintendent+Keystone+Letter 11 04 13+%28%29.pdf](http://origin.library.constantcontact.com/download/get/file/1101630330592-851/IRRC+Superintendent+Keystone+Letter+11+04+13+%28%29.pdf)**

## Cooper, Kathy

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**From:** Jan Colliton <colliton@collitonlaw.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 7:49 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** Andrew Dinniman  
**Subject:** Keystone Exam Requirement for Graduation

Dear Commissioner Sumner:

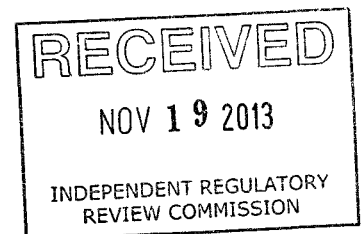
My name is Janet Colliton. I am an attorney and the mother of a student, Alisa Colliton, who is a junior at Rustin High School, West Chester, Pennsylvania. While Alisa would not be directly affected by a Keystone Examination requirement for graduation since she is scheduled to graduate in 2015, she has taken multiple standardized tests including the Keystones throughout her school career.

There are some students who are not natural standardized test takers and my daughter is one of them. She has an IEP and is permitted additional time but she is the kind of student who takes time developing answers and learning. She does better with homework assignments where she can wrestle with the answers. My daughter is very bright but not in a way that is measured through standardized testing. She has already taken the biology, algebra and literature Keystone exams twice and will need to take biology and algebra again. Between this and decisions on standardized tests for college, she can lose out on a real education that would emphasize thought and reasoning or even creativity.

I am a former high school social studies teacher. Because of standardized testing, my daughter was unable to receive classes in Social Studies for her entire middle school. When she needed additional instruction in other areas, I was told that the classes that would be replaced would be social studies classes because there is no standardized test in social studies required. Now that my daughter is in high school, she is receiving detailed American history for the first time as a junior in high school and it starts with the 20th century. She learns about the Civil War from books I have at home and movies. I worry about the future of students who first learn about how our government works as seniors in high school for only one class. We do not require them to know that and it is sometimes obvious today in our society.

There are other ways to measure progress in school than repeated standardized tests. I ask you to vote against requiring passing the Keystone exams as a sole basis for denying graduation. Regards.

Janet M. Colliton  
108 North Wayne Street  
West Chester, PA 19380  
610-436-6674  
[colliton@collitonlaw.com](mailto:colliton@collitonlaw.com)



**Cooper, Kathy**

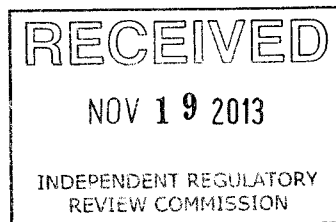
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**From:** blacksbeauties@rcn.com  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 8:26 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** IRRC No. 2976

Dear Mr. Sumner:

I am very concerned about the costs of the implementation of Common Core in Pennsylvania. Where is the money going to come from regarding the mandates of these standards; especially for the poorer districts which are struggling now with the pension issues among other things! And what does all this mean for property taxes across the state. Please put a hold on Common Core until some answers are forthcoming. Thank you.

Carol Black  
Macungie, PA



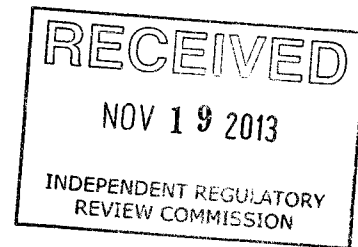
**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** rizzardo@aol.com  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 8:35 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystones

Reject the Keystone Graduation Exams. A student could have straight A's, flunk a test and not graduate - ridiculous.

Laurie Rizzardo  
Jacobus PA



## Cooper, Kathy

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**From:** kathy crocker <katc2@embarqmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 8:38 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** concerns re. common core (PA core standards)

Mr. Summer,

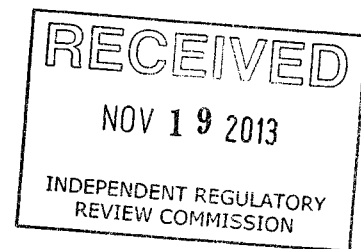
Although I am now retired after thirty years in education in PA and several other states, I believe the impact of common core will be negative on our students, the education process and the state education budget. I saw it happen in California when unfunded mandates for "new math" caused upheaval and frustration. Poorly planned and untested programs to teach "learning disabled" were forced without thought about teacher training. Both "great ideas" fell within a few years, leaving students and teachers frustrated. Surely common core came out of California!!! Although my undergrad degree is from CSU-Sacramento, I distrust anything coming out of CA without thorough evaluation.

As a principal in PA, I heard the repeated complaints of teachers about the "dumbing down" of the curriculum and the push for "rote" instruction as opposed to using their creativity in the classroom. And the math standards seem to be straight out of the CA new math initiative of the late 60's!

But most of all, as a taxpayer, I am extremely concerned about the unfunded mandates that will come from the federal government. There are just too many unknowns about the common core. I hope that you will take the time to thoroughly investigate it and get the assurances there will be NO federal strings attached that will further degrade education in PA. Watch the other hand - while one is offering \$\$\$, the other may be holding a hammer.

Thank you for listening.

Kathleen Crocker: teacher, counselor, principal, and concerned PA native.



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** conwaykath@aol.com  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 8:54 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystones Debate

Hello,

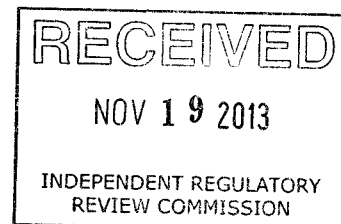
I have been an educator for 27 years. I have watched the unproductively of standardized testing.

The Keystones are an unfunded mandate that will put more financial burden upon our district and others. It is propogating a culture of high stakes testing which narrows the curriculum to focus on meeting these benchmarks.

Please note my list.

1. The new Chapter 4 regulations continue to assign very high stakes to three end-of-course tests
2. They also include remediation requirements for students who do not pass the tests—which constitute a tremendously costly unfunded mandate for local districts
3. Testing and re-testing students who struggle (and requiring them to remediate in the interim) is not a promising way to encourage them to stay in school.
4. Already, we are seeing a narrowing of the curriculum as a result of the proposed testing requirements

Thank you,  
Kathleen Conway  
First Grade Teacher  
Chester County, PA



**Cooper, Kathy**

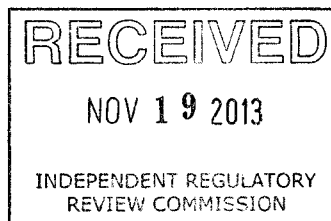
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**From:** Vivian Moy <vivmoy218@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 8:37 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** dleach@pasenate.com; repbriggs@pahouse.net; repmaryjodaley@pahouse.net; mfolmer@pasen.gov; BONEill@pahousegop.com; repdelissio@pahouse.net  
**Subject:** VOTE NO on Chapter 4 Regulations

My name is Vivian Moy. 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,

Vivian Moy





**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** bkjk@access995.com  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 9:08 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Please Reject Common Core

Please decide against Common Core for many reasons. One of the reasons is the cost of Common Core

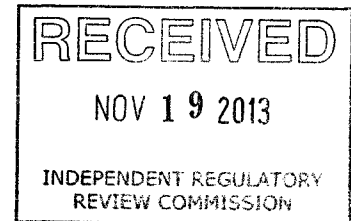
A state by state comprehensive cost analysis was done in a white paper released in February, 2012 by the Pioneer Institute and the American Principles Project. The paper, "National Cost of Aligning States and Localities to the Common Core Standards", shows a financial break down by textbooks and material costs, multi-year technology costs, and professional development costs for teacher/staff trainings. According to their figures the cost to Pennsylvania over the next several years is as follows:

TEXTBOOK AND MATERIAL \$115 million  
TECHNOLOGY \$280 million  
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT \$250 million

**Total projected costs for Pennsylvania to implement Common Core is \$645 million**

Sincerely,

**Barb Kyle**



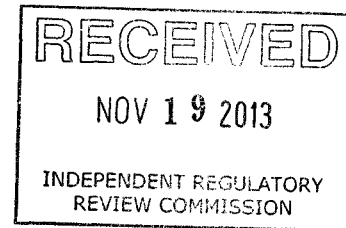
**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Jill Render <jilrender@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 9:06 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** mfolmer@pasen.gov; repmaryjodaley@pahouse.net; repbriggs@pahouse.net; BONEill@pahousegop.com; repdelissio@pahouse.net; dleach@pasenate.com  
**Subject:** Vote NO on Chapter 4 Regulations

My name is Jill Render. 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,  
Jill Render



**Cooper, Kathy**

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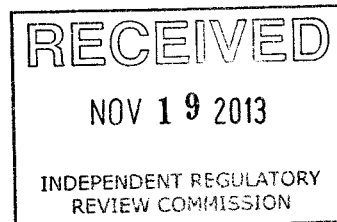
**From:** Margaret Layden <peggydear@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 9:21 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** IRRC No.2976

November 18, 2013

Independent Regulatory Review Commission  
333 Market Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Attention: David Sumner, Executive Director

Re: IRRC No. 2976



As a former teacher, Mother and Grandmother I am disheartened to learn that local control of our children's education may be surrendered to a national set of standards or "assessments".

Common Core foists unfunded standardized tests on our state schools without any legislative deliberation or approval. Federal interference in school curriculum is contrary to the canons of our constitution, the 10th amendment.

Pennsylvania is a diverse state. Each and every school is unique - every teacher has his/her strengths just as each child has different talents and aptitudes. National standards hamper creativity. ONE size does not fit all.

Sincerely yours,

Margaret M. Layden  
361 Coldstream Drive  
Berwyn, PA 19312-1111

**Cooper, Kathy**

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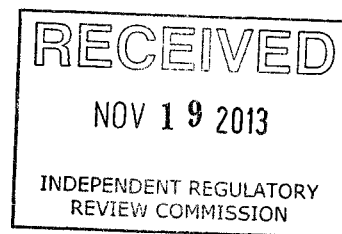
**From:** Ginny Dilts <ginnygrl0611@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 9:07 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Common Core

Please do not vote Common Core into our schools.

How can a program be installed without any idea as to how much this will cost, or if it even works?? It will most likely increase taxes in our local districts, all while not knowing if the education 'system' is truly working to the advantage of our students. Does anyone know if will them the students learn better, or more effectively. I feel all it will do is take away creativity and individuality of the child. Forcing all students to learn in the same manner, to think the same way, to be forced to learn about homosexuality (which is coming, maybe not right away, but will be) is just veiled socialism and communism.

Please listen to the parents and teachers, and get rid of this Common Core.

Sincerely,  
Concerned Mom



## Cooper, Kathy

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**From:** cara <caraandcorey3@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 8:21 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** concerned pennsylvanian against common core and Keystone exams

Hello

I am writing tonight to respectfully ask you to vote against these Keystone exams as graduation requirements.

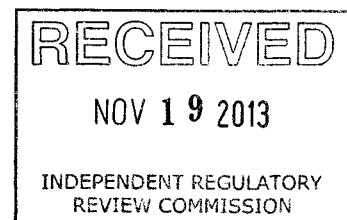
I have been very involved in researching this along with common core for over 6 months now, and have yet to find any value at all in them.

I have three children who will be impacted by this new set of requirements if they are passed. Given that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania recently endured draconian cuts to the education system, to add this mandate will place an undue burden on school districts and in the process punish those students who already face difficulty. With school districts struggling to reapportion resources in the wake of the budget cuts, how is it fiscally responsible to add in a new set of requirements placing further strain on an already overloaded system? The cost to school districts (and taxpayers) is estimated to exceed \$300 million. Where will that money come from? I fear the answer is that districts will be forced to cut more programs that are already stretched too thin, further negatively impacting our students.

In Southeastern PA, 58 of 61 school superintendents and IU executive directors signed a position paper (attached) opposing the Keystone Exams, including the superintendent from my school district, Downingtown. They cite a number of reasons, chief among them the costs of the exams in addition to the lack of communication from the PA Department of Education regarding implementation and outcomes, and the negative impact it will have on PA students first and foremost, in addition to teachers and school districts.

I urge you not to require the Keystone Exams as a graduation requirement. Accountability and rigorous standards are a vital part of the education system; poorly implemented, costly and needless exams are not.

Thank you so much for your time  
Cara Phalen



**Cooper, Kathy**

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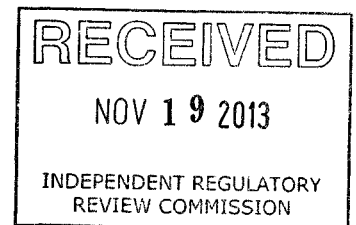
**From:** Mary Dugan <hawaii4544@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 9:22 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone

To Whom It May Concern:

The new Chapter 4 regulations continue to assign very high stakes to three end-of-course tests. They also include remediation requirements for students who do not pass the tests—which constitute a tremendously costly unfunded mandate for local districts. Testing and re-testing students who struggle (and requiring them to remediate in the interim) is not a promising way to encourage them to stay in school. Already, we are seeing a narrowing of the curriculum as a result of the proposed testing requirements.

Please do not pass this mandate onto our students and taxpayers.

Thank you.  
Mary Dugan



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** bkjk@access995.com  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 9:42 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Please reject Common Core

Please reject Common Core for many reasons, one of which is the cost.

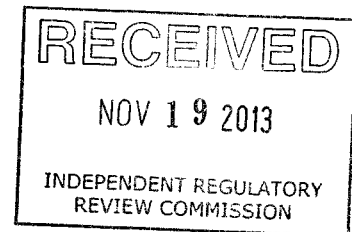
A state by state comprehensive cost analysis was done in a white paper released in February, 2012 by the Pioneer Institute and the American Principles Project. The paper, "National Cost of Aligning States and Localities to the Common Core Standards", shows a financial break down by textbooks and material costs, multi-year technology costs, and professional development costs for teacher/staff trainings. According to their figures the cost to Pennsylvania over the next several years is as follows:

TEXTBOOK AND MATERIAL \$115 million  
TECHNOLOGY \$280 million  
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT \$250 million

Total projected costs for Pennsylvania to implement Common Core is \$645 million

Sincerely,

Barb Kyle



## Cooper, Kathy

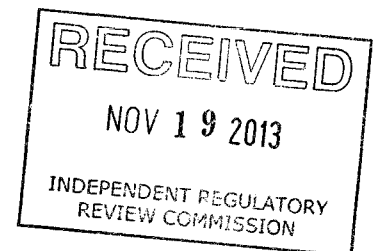
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**From:** Alice Liu-Brown <aliubrown@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 10:08 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** dleach@pasenate.com; repbriggs@pahouse.net; repmaryjodaley@pahouse.net; mfolmer@pasen.gov; BONEill@pahousegop.com; repdelissio@pahouse.net  
**Subject:** Vote No on Chapter 4 Regulations

Good Morning Mr. David Sumner,

My name is Alice Liu-Brown. I live in Penn Valley, PA. I have three children in the Lower Merion School District. I am writing to say I adamantly oppose the Keystone Exams being tied to a student's high school graduation. I am asking you to REJECT the proposed Chapter 4 regulations. I urge you to VOTE NO on November 21st.

Respectfully,  
Alice Liu-Brown





**Cooper, Kathy**

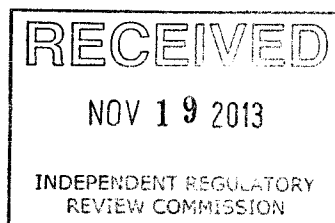
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**From:** Ernie Meade <meadeern@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 10:04 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** pclymer@pahousegop.com; Governor@pa.gov; Dan@dantruit.com  
**Subject:** Common Core and Education

My name is Ernest Meade, I am a retired teacher with 36 years of experience in the field of Education. I have experience with Special Education, Regular Education and have also worked with Advanced Students. I am certified to teach all subject from K thru 12. Recently I was asked to work with a team that was reviewing a curriculum produced to correlate with the mandate for Common Core. This gave me the opportunity to review two of the products and also the teacher guidelines. After going over the guidelines and all the lesson plans and passages involved in the program, I weighted them against my background experiences and I came up with the conclusion that Common Core did not correspond with the Educational Philosophies that I was taught in West Chester University, both undergraduate and graduate or Penn State, graduate. Common Core leaves very little room for teacher input or modifications and literally provides daily lesson plans that are to be followed on a strict timeline in order to meet the stated goals and timeline. This does not take into consideration that there is really not a Common Core in responsible education as all children are not the same and do not learn at the same pace!

The second underlying problem I found was the lack of moral structure in the passages presented in the middle school Language Arts curriculum. The first passage I read inferred that deception and greed were important attributes, This coupled with Socialistic undertones makes me feel that Common core is more of a deterrent to education than an asset, and this does not address the monumental cost to the School Districts. Therefore I am strongly adversed to the implementation of Common Core.

Sincerely. Ernest B. Meade

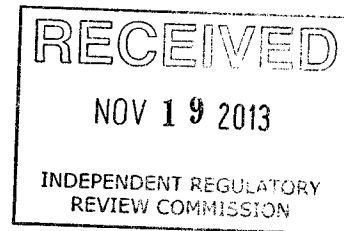


**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Allyson Alimansky <aalimansky@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 10:36 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Exam opposition

We are writing to communicate our opposition to the current proposal to require Keystone Exams. Thank you - Allyson and Ben Alimansky (parents in Lower Merion School District, Montgomery County)



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Andrea Koban Payne <akobanpayne@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 10:57 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone testing

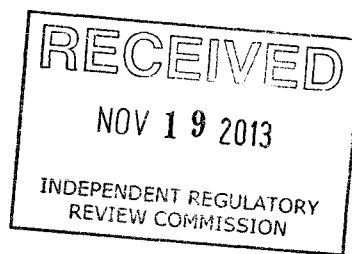
Dear Mr. Sumner,

I am writing to express my concern about the Keystone exams being used in our state as graduation requirements. 55 of the 62 superintendents in our southeastern Pennsylvania region are opposed to these exams as graduation requirements and have sent a letter to the Pennsylvania State Legislature detailing their reasons. I also believe that the Keystone exams should **not** be used as graduation requirements. I urge the IRRC and PA State Legislature to remove this requirement. I believe that there is too much standardized testing overall, including the increasing use of the PSSA in additional grade levels and for more subject areas. Students' quality instruction time and deep learning are in danger due to the time spent preparing for these very numerous and time-consuming exams.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Andrea Koban Payne  
Lower Merion School District parent



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Ellen Raguckas <eraguckas@npsd.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 11:00 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Reject proposed chapter 4 regulations

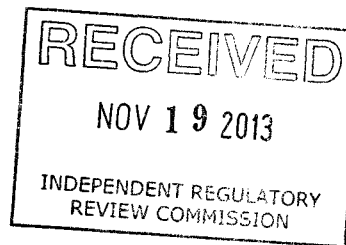
Mr. Sumner,

As a middle school teacher, I urge you to reject chapter 4 regulations. Most of our public schools are doing very well. High stakes tests are a waste of funds. I can predict quite accurately the students who will not test well based on my own teacher assessments. With the funding crisis our schools face, this money can be better spent on programs to help all students instead of these high stakes tests.

Feel free to contact me regarding any educational matter. I love teaching math and wish I could focus on that without the pressures these tests put on us.

Sincerely,  
Ellen Raguckas  
North Pocono Middle School  
[Eraguckas@npsd.org](mailto:Eraguckas@npsd.org)

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Ellen Raguckas  
North Pocono Middle School  
[eraguckas@npsd.org](mailto:eraguckas@npsd.org)  
(570)842-4588



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Jeanette Kaplan <jlioukaplan@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 11:35 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Vote no to Keystone Exams

Dear Mr. Sumner,

I am writing to express my opposition to the culture of high stakes testing that has pervaded Pennsylvania schools in the last several years. Please vote against the approval the Keystone exams as an end-of-course/graduation exam. Please recognize that these exams will bring upon Pennsylvania schools yet another round of unfunded mandates, and that these unfunded mandates are draining our schools of precious resources and are undermining great public education in this state.

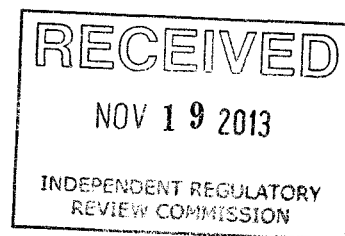
As a public school teacher and as a parent whose children attend public schools, I am all for raising the standards and quality of public education. But I have seen firsthand how high stakes testing has had a profoundly negative effect on our schools. It has caused a noticeable narrowing of the curriculum in favor of an overemphasis on test preparation. It has produced an insatiable demand for data which itself is consuming valuable amounts of time and money.

In the district where I teach, I find larger and larger amounts of instructional time and money given over to the use of test prep materials that my district has purchased in the hopes of better preparing students for statewide testing. I have found my gifted students unchallenged by the material, my special education students frustrated by the constant stream of assessments, and my regular education students uninspired with the presentation of learning as merely test preparation. In addition, in my own children's school district, they have experienced the decimation of programs in art, music, library, physical education, and social studies that are not among the subjects that the state deems worthy enough to test.

Please vote no on this measure. Please turn the tide of education in this state. Please take into account the voices of teachers and students who are living with the reality of all these mandates and are objecting to its effect on their schools. By all means, let's continue to have conversations about improving the quality of public education, but let's have it in conjunction with conversations that talk about adequate school funding and investing in the types of innovative programs and initiatives that will keep all students in engaged in school and prepare them to be leaders that Pennsylvania will need in the future.

Sincerely,

Jeanette Liou Kaplan  
241 Highland Ave.  
Upper Darby, PA 19082



## Cooper, Kathy

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**From:** Smart Family <smartboys@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 10:59 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Vote Against Keystone Exams

Dear Mr. Sumner,

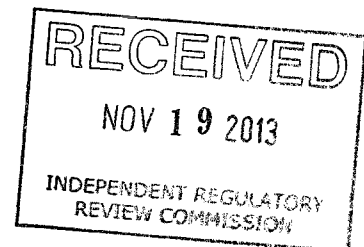
It has come to my attention as a parent and an educator that there will be a review and a vote on the Keystone exams. First and most important, as a parent of a child with a learning disability, I am deeply concerned about the message these Keystone exams will be sending to all students especially students who work extra hard to meet the high expectations of an already rigorous curriculum. Students who need support will be defeated if they are required to pass the Keystone exam and require remediation over and over again before moving on in their education journey. Students will be more inclined to give up and even drop-out of school if they are required to continue with remediation in order to pass a class. Did you have to take such an exam before moving on in your education? Why torture and discourage the next generation of young teens trying so hard to complete an already challenging curriculum? What is the goal of these exams? If you want students to be discouraged from taking the courses that require the passing of the Keystone Exam or even quitting school, then that is what you will accomplish by implementing these tests!

From an educator's point of view, why would the Department of Education want to put more restraints on a curriculum that needs to be taught in a limited number of instructional days? How are educators expected to effectively teach a rigorous curriculum while trying to remediate students who have not been able to pass an exam? This is entirely too much of an additional strain on the American education for teachers and students.

Please vote "no" for the implementation of the Keystone exams requirements.

Thank you,

Tina and Bo Smart



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** gayleldavis@comcast.net  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 11:12 PM  
**To:** David Sumner; pclymer@pahousegop.com  
**Subject:** IRRC No. 2976

Mr. Sumner and Mr. Clymer,

I am writing to you to share my concerns for IRRC No. 2976 or Common Core not being the right fit for Pennsylvania.

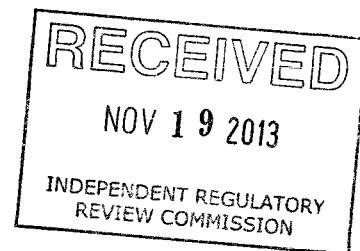
Pennsylvania should not be implementing Common Core without fully understanding the financial cost to the state and the school districts. Has the Federal Government outlined what they will contribute and how much is the state's responsibility? We have to understand the financial repercussions before we even think of implementing IRRC No. 2976.

Pennsylvania has comprehensive standards in every subject. The PSSA addresses the testing needs of the concepts taught with these standards. We do not need another test that may be good or bad (but no one knows) or how expensive it will be or if it will really address the standards we already have in place.

Another very great concern of mine is the potential of incorrect information to be disseminated to our students that are anti our Constitution and project ideology that is socialist or Marxist. These concepts are already in a lesson plan on possessive nouns that asks students to simplify the sentences where 3 of the 6 sentences give incorrect information and project ideas that are against the Constitution and American values.

I am a retired educator and am well aware of what is happening in our educational system. It is alarming to me that states are going blindly along with the Federal Government imposed educational system that has not been thought out from a financial and impartial educational viewpoint. Please reject this intrusion into our educational system for Pennsylvania until further study and clarification have been made.

Sincerely,  
Gayle Davis  
Haverford, PA



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Hawkins, Barbara <BHawkins@wssd.k12.pa.us>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 11:49 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams

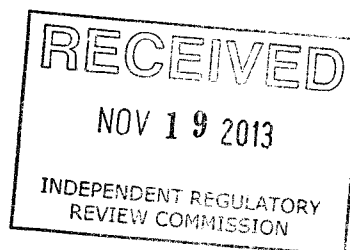
**Mr. Sumner:**

As a taxpayer and (high school) public educator, I cannot urge you strongly enough to reconsider tying high school graduations requirements to the Keystone Exams. This punitive approach to education is antithetical to our mission of providing a nurturing environment that encourages the development of the total child: emotional, academic and civic.

Since we have adopted these high stakes tests I witness daily the demoralization of many of my students to master material for which they are not yet ready. We are telling our kids that they are failures and that they have nothing of worth to offer society. By tying graduation to these exams, we largely ignore the varied talents and interests that our kids do have.

While high stakes testing may mollify the voting public and enrich those that seek to profit from public education funding, it does little to serve the students who rely on us to give them an education that prepares them to become contributing members to society. Until we as a society are able to address those issues (namely poverty) that adversely affect a student's performance, high stakes testing will only serve to further marginalize these children. This is deeply wrong and immoral.

Thank you for your time,  
Barbara Hawkins





## Cooper, Kathy

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**From:** zandra@ixpoz.com  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 11:58 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Common Core comments

Mr Sumner,

Our kids deserve better than to be treated like a hunk of iron passively waiting to be mined, melted, and molded into finely tuned cogs- by the corporate-state, for the corporate-state. The corporate wing of this beast wants to grind our kids into plug and play parts to install in their widget companies. The state wing of this beast wants to use our kids as the currency in what amounts to a giant corporate welfare bonanza. Together, they treat our kids like a commodity to be bought, sold, and harnessed for their benefit.

Common Core is an industrial model that grooms students into compliant servants who won't have the audacity to question, experiment, innovate, and compete against their generous benefactors who cling to their buggy whips, bureaucratic temples, and smoke-filled back rooms. We can no longer allow our kids to be treated like some form of property to be exploited by this beast. No one is the property of another to be treated this way and to think otherwise is to accept slavery.

I am commenting for the purpose of stopping the final adoption of Common Core Standards but more than that I am commenting to offer alternative ideas for improving education. Effective education does not require massive amounts of money and there is certainly evidence to back this up. (Please see link 1.) America was built on the efforts of individuals with eight grade, one room schoolhouse educations. Often less! (Please see link 2.) And those individuals were empowered by being taught HOW to learn, instead of just being fed WHAT to learn because it's on "the test". (Please see link 3.)

I realize it's pretty late in the game since this is the final vote but I truly hope our kids, and our teachers, will be spared this corporate-state conscription. Our kids are not robots, our teachers are not robots, and none of them deserve to be treated like they are.

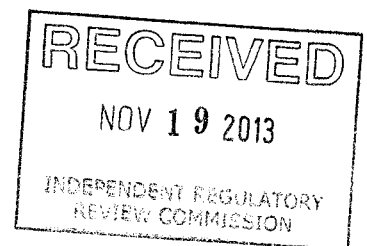
Our kids are creative, innovative, bundles of potential. Teach them how to learn then get out of their way while they create their futures.

Thank you for your time and consideration,  
Zandra Bishop  
Newberry Twp

Link 1-  
<http://www.wired.com/business/2013/10/free-thinkers/all/>

Link 2-  
<http://www.abacus-es.com/journal/education-theory/advantages-of-the-one-room-schoolhouse-approach-to-teaching/>

Link 3-  
<https://www.tragedyandhope.com/trivium/5-page-summary/>



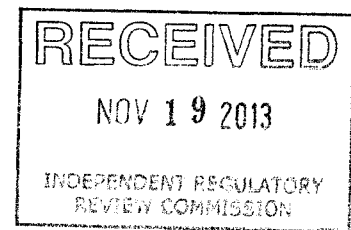
**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Susan <susankerchner@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 12:23 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams

Please reject the Keystone Graduation Exams when you vote on Thursday. Passing this education initiative will destroy our schools and raise taxes. As a parent, and a teacher with over 35 years of experience, I am thankful that my children were not required to take these exams. I am thankful that I was not required to take these exams and I know that you and others on the IRRC, are also thankful that you were not required to take these exams. Take a moment to use the common sense that you were born with and admit that many schools that are failing, are doing so because of the breakdown in the family and because many people with children, are just not parenting. Children from these families are not prepared for kindergarten and in three years, 50 percent of a teacher's evaluation will be based on the test scores of their students. Please stop insisting that if children do not learn that it must be because of a bad teacher. The students in my middle school have demonstrated that they are capable young people and they should be given the same opportunities to grow as a learner that you and I were given so many years ago. I would not be the confident and successful professional that I am today, if my ability had only been measured by a standardized exam that did not measure all the ways that I am capable. Please give our children the opportunity to grow and shine in their own way and in their own time. Please reject the Keystone Graduation Exams on Thursday.

Sent from my iPhone



## Cooper, Kathy

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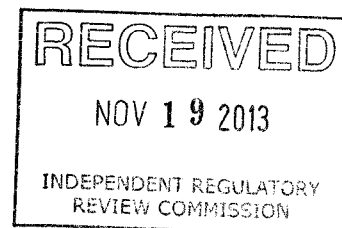
**From:** Raymond Andries <randries@mac.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 12:42 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** pclymer@pahousegop.com; governor@pa.gov  
**Subject:** IRRC No. 2976

We would like to go on record as **opposing acceptance of the "Common Core" Curriculum** for the students of PA because of the following reasons:

1. How would this mandate be funded? School districts are already financially strapped. Implementation could run into the 100's of millions of dollars for the state, yet no complete fiscal analysis of the cost of this unfunded mandate has been presented to the PA state legislators by the Department of Education. The resulting continuing costs could be prohibitive for the taxpayer at a time when we are already facing serious budgetary problems.
2. Why is this initiative being forced onto **every** school district in PA when it is untested and there is no empirical evidence that it will improve learning outcomes?
3. Such rigid standards leave no room for excellent teaching, nor for excellence in learning. They **excessively** limit freedom in the classroom limiting meaningful discussions, creativity of teacher and student, and limit personal connection as well.
4. There is no curriculum for special needs children---- absolutely no variations for children with differing needs.
5. Questionable content with regard to age appropriateness, clarity, political indoctrination and social morality.
6. Trend toward federal government overreach and intrusion into curriculum. Parents and local school boards would be superseded. It is at a local level that we know best what we need.
7. The detailed data collection on each student intrudes upon privacy and can be misused.
8. Common Core's philosophy of education is untested and has been given poor reviews by top educators.
9. Cursive writing has been dropped from the curriculum! Common Core will take money and time away from the arts and other programs that should be part of a comprehensive education.

We would like to see this curriculum subjected to further scrutiny and also to a vote. It has never been voted upon!

Thank you for your time,  
Ruta and Raymond Andries

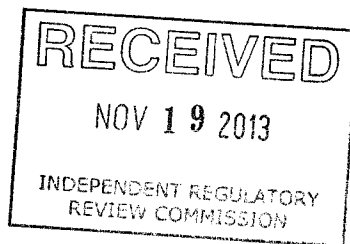


**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** dawn preston <dawn966@ptd.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 2:21 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Common Core

I am against Common Core. I am a retired educator and do not believe CC should not be implemented in Public Schools.



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Weedon, Jacques <JWeedon@wssd.k12.pa.us>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 11:05 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** "Regulation #6 – 326: Academic Standards and Assessment and IRRC # 2976."

Good morning Mr. Sumner,

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

I strongly encourage you and the rest of the IRRC to REJECT the Keystone Graduation Exams at Thursday's meeting, specifically Regulation #6 – 326: Academic Standards and Assessment and IRRC # 2976" and Chapter 4 Final-Form Regulations.

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



## Cooper, Kathy

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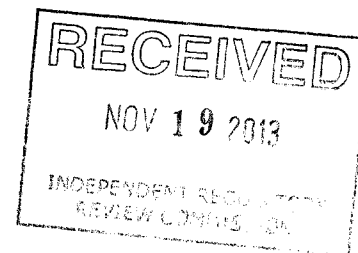
**From:** Missy Wood <penllyn@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 18, 2013 2:56 PM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Graduation Exams

We strongly oppose the Keystones and ask that you vote against the proposal.

Thank you.

Mrs. Richard Gilpin Wood 111

Margaretta D. Wood



## Cooper, Kathy

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**From:** Michele Woodward <mwoodwardvf@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 6:33 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams

Mr. Sumner,

I, as a special education teacher have a great concern with "passing" the Keystone Exams being a graduation requirement. My students are successful in regular education courses with specially designed instruction and adapted test. With the Keystone Exams there is none of this.

My students are working on IEP goals so that they can be successful adults. Spending time testing and re-testing my students who struggle is not a positive thing for them. I want my students to stay in school and be successful. My students will never have an opportunity to become a better person by taking electives. Please do not make scoring proficient mandatory for students to graduate from high school.

Thank you,

Michele Woodward  
1730 Cold Spring Rd  
Newtown Square, Pa. 19073



**Cooper, Kathy**

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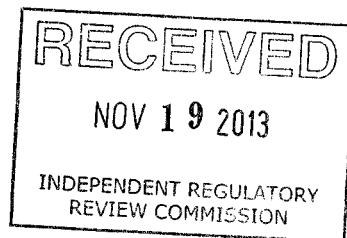
**From:** William Sgrillo <keithsgrillo@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 6:52 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** State Tests

I believe these state tests to be a violation of our educational system. This is a movement towards privatized education in a public setting and punishes students for years of hard work who simply do not test well, do not value the tests, and quite frankly have the right to an education without high stakes testing. The corporate model of education is failing and this is just another nail in the proverbial education coffin. It is shameful, stressful, unfunded and wrong. I, as a parent, will file a law suit against the state if my child was not allowed to graduate due to a single test after fulfilling his high school requirements. This is poor legislating by people who are not in the educational system.

W. Keith Sgrillo [dsumner@irrc.state.pa.us](mailto:dsumner@irrc.state.pa.us)

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

(610) 247 2700





## Cooper, Kathy

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**From:** Chrissy132003@aol.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 7:59 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** (no subject)

Dear Executive Director Mr Sumner:

I am writing as a concerned resident in the Upper Darby School District to share my discontent with the recent approval of revisions to Chapter 4 (Academic Standards and Assessments) by the State Board of Education. Specifically, I wish to express my opposition to the Keystone Exam graduation requirement.

For students who are already being measured by other meaningful, objective measures such as the PSAT, SAT, ACT and AP exams, the Keystone Exams offer no additional benefit. For taxpayers, the costs of these tests and any required remedial activities far exceed any value to our district.

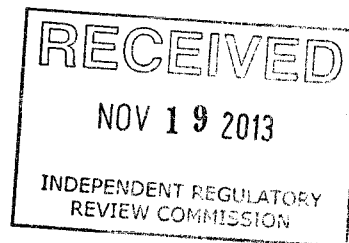
All of the student groups in the Upper Darby School District meet or exceed the state's graduation requirements. Upper Darby School District is obviously offering a rigorous curriculum. Guided by "local control", Upper Darby School District retains the ability to choose curriculum instruction and assessment tools that benefit all of our students and meet our community's high standards.

I join with the Upper Darby School District School Board in opposing the Chapter 4 revisions and ask that the Keystone Exam graduation requirement be rescinded. A few specific concerns include:

- State-mandated end-of-course exams effectively remove local control from the school district.
- The associated requirements for remediation will be costly, but no additional funding is being provided by the state to meet the mandate.
- The move to online testing will require our district to make investments in technology and cabling that would be better spent on direct instruction.
- All students enrolled in special education must take the test, which may violate their right to access a free and appropriate public education.

As a concerned citizen, I respectfully ask that you remove language requiring the unfunded mandate of passing Keystone graduation exams from the Chapter 4 revisions.

Sincerely,  
Chrissy Ervin



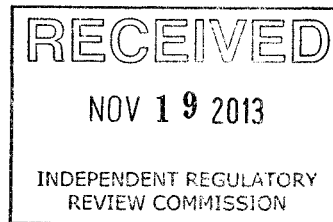
**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Joan Beveridge <jtbeveridge@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 8:02 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Reject Keystone Exams

Please reject the keystone exams - three exams should not determine if our students graduate. Time should not be taken away from our students learning in order to prepare for these exams. The school districts should not be burdened with any expenses resulting from these exams or teaching the students to pass these exams. I am a parent of students who can easily pass these exams but I do not want my students wasting their active learning time to prepare for these. I do not want the funds of our school to pay for teaching kids how to pass these exams. All subjects are important, and we should focus on increasing technology and resources in all subjects in order for the teachers to teach and our children to learn.

Joan Beveridge



## Cooper, Kathy

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**From:** katessmith@aol.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 8:13 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** katessmith@aol.com  
**Subject:** Public Comment -- Keystone exams

Dear Executive Director Sumner:

I am writing as a concerned resident in the Upper Darby School District, on behalf of the Upper Darby Parent Coalition, to share my discontent with the recent approval of revisions to Chapter 4 (Academic Standards and Assessments) by the State Board of Education. Specifically, I wish to express my opposition to the Keystone Exam graduation requirement. For students who are already being measured by other meaningful, objective measures such as the PSAT, SAT, ACT and AP exams, the Keystone Exams offer no additional benefit. For taxpayers, the costs of these tests and any required remedial activities far exceed any value to our district.

All of the student groups in the Upper Darby School District meet or exceed the state's graduation requirements. Upper Darby School District is obviously offering a rigorous curriculum. Guided by "local control", Upper Darby School District retains the ability to choose curriculum instruction and assessment tools that benefit all of our students and meet our community's high standards.

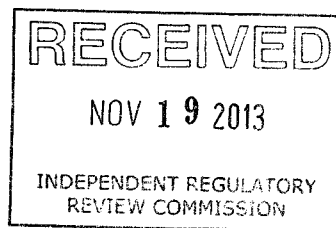
The Upper Darby Parent Coalition, a non-partisan advocacy group for the more than 12,000 students and families of the Upper Darby School District, joins with the Upper Darby School District School Board in opposing the Chapter 4 revisions and ask that the Keystone Exam graduation requirement be rescinded. A few specific concerns include:

- State-mandated end-of-course exams effectively remove local control from the school district.
- The associated requirements for remediation will be costly, but no additional funding is being provided by the state to meet the mandate.
- The move to online testing will require our district to make investments in technology and cabling that would be better spent on direct instruction.
- All students enrolled in special education must take the test, which may violate their right to access a free and appropriate public education.

With the Upper Darby Parent Coalition, comprised of residents from neighborhoods feeding the district's 14 schools, I respectfully ask that you remove language requiring the unfunded mandate of passing Keystone graduation exams from the Chapter 4 revisions.

Sincerely,

Katherine S. Smith  
4716 Cedar Lane  
Drexel Hill, PA 19026  
[katessmith@aol.com](mailto:katessmith@aol.com)  
610-924-0679



**Cooper, Kathy**

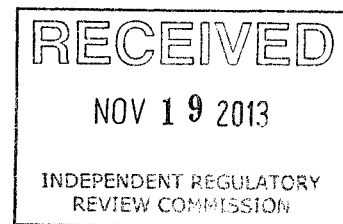
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**From:** Ellen Keefe <keefe22@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 8:23 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams

**Please do not make Keystone Exams a graduation requirement in PA.**

James Keefe

Lower Merion Township, Montgomery County Resident

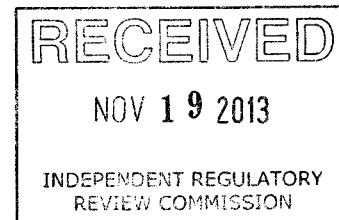


**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Ellen Keefe <keefe22@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 8:21 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone exams

Hello - I ask that Keystone Exams **not be made a graduation requirement** in PA.  
Ellen Keefe  
Low Merion Township - Montgomery County resident



## Cooper, Kathy

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**From:** Kate Kadash-Edmondson <katie.edmondson@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 8:27 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Opposition to the Keystone Exam graduation requirement

Dear Executive Director Sumner:

I am writing as a concerned resident in the Upper Darby School District to share my discontent with the recent approval of revisions to Chapter 4 (Academic Standards and Assessments) by the State Board of Education. Specifically, I wish to express my opposition to the Keystone Exam graduation requirement.

For students who are already being measured by other meaningful, objective measures such as the PSAT, SAT, ACT and AP exams, the Keystone Exams offer no additional benefit. For taxpayers, the costs of these tests and any required remedial activities far exceed any value to our district.

All of the student groups in the Upper Darby School District meet or exceed the state's graduation requirements. Upper Darby School District is obviously offering a rigorous curriculum. Guided by "local control", Upper Darby School District retains the ability to choose curriculum instruction and assessment tools that benefit all of our students and meet our community's high standards.

I join with the Upper Darby School District School Board in opposing the Chapter 4 revisions and ask that the Keystone Exam graduation requirement be rescinded. A few specific concerns include:

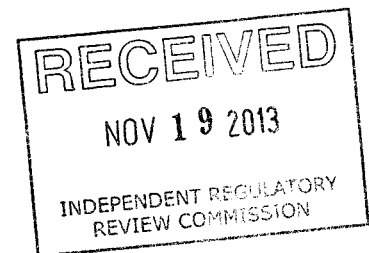
- State-mandated end of-course exams effectively remove local control from the school district.
- The associated requirements for remediation will be costly, but no additional funding is being provided by the state to meet the mandate.
- The move to online testing will require our district to make investments in technology and cabling that would be better spent on direct instruction.
- All students enrolled in special education must take the test, which may violate their right to access a free and appropriate public education.

As a concerned citizen, I respectfully ask that you remove language requiring the unfunded mandate of passing Keystone graduation exams from the Chapter 4 revisions.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Edmondson

Parent of a child in Upper Darby School District



## Cooper, Kathy

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**From:** Tina Martino Newman <tncnbn@rcn.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 8:31 AM  
**To:** David Sumner

Dear Executive Director Sumner:

I am writing as a concerned resident in the Upper Darby School District to share my discontent with the recent approval of revisions to Chapter 4 (Academic Standards and Assessments) by the State Board of Education. Specifically, I wish to express my opposition to the Keystone Exam graduation requirement.

For students who are already being measured by other meaningful, objective measures such as the PSAT, SAT, ACT and AP exams, the Keystone Exams offer no additional benefit. For taxpayers, the costs of these tests and any required remedial activities far exceed any value to our district.

All of the student groups in the Upper Darby School District meet or exceed the state's graduation requirements. Upper Darby School District is obviously offering a rigorous curriculum. Guided by "local control", Upper Darby School District retains the ability to choose curriculum instruction and assessment tools that benefit all of our students and meet our community's high standards.

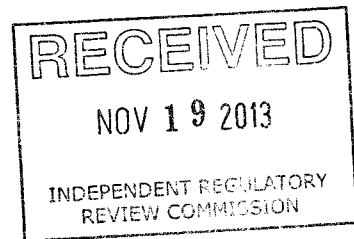
I join with the Upper Darby School District School Board in opposing the Chapter 4 revisions and ask that the Keystone Exam graduation requirement be rescinded. A few specific concerns include:

- State-mandated end-of-course exams effectively remove local control from the school district.
- The associated requirements for remediation will be costly, but no additional funding is being provided by the state to meet the mandate.
- The move to online testing will require our district to make investments in technology and cabling that would be better spent on direct instruction.
- All students enrolled in special education must take the test, which may violate their right to access a free and appropriate public education.

As a concerned citizen, I respectfully ask that you remove language requiring the unfunded mandate of passing Keystone graduation exams from the Chapter 4 revisions.

Sincerely,

Tina Newman



**Cooper, Kathy**

---

**From:** Barb Dumm <barbdumm@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 8:34 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Testimony Against Common Core, IRRC No 2976

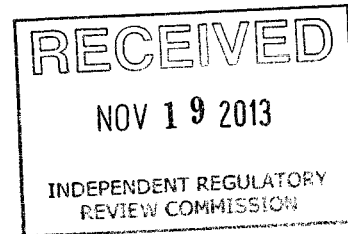
Mr Sumner,

I am against the implementation of The Common Core Standards. I am alarmed that this untested initiative is being forced on every school district in PA.

It seems to me to be very irresponsible to force unfunded mandates on school districts that are already financially strapped. I can tell you that as a single mother of two that higher school taxes would not be appreciated especially for a program that people do not want for a whole host of reasons.

Thank you for hearing my concerns.

Barbara A Dumm





## Cooper, Kathy

---

**From:** Andrea A. Gallo <andrea@wemindthegap.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 8:54 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** No Keystone Exams

Dear Executive Director Sumner:

I am writing as a concerned resident in the Upper Darby School District to share my extreme discontent with the recent approval of revisions to Chapter 4 (Academic Standards and Assessments) by the State Board of Education. Specifically, I wish to express my opposition to the Keystone Exam graduation requirement.

For students who are already being measured by other meaningful, objective measures such as the PSAT, SAT, ACT and AP exams, the Keystone Exams offer no additional benefit. For taxpayers, the costs of these tests and any required remedial activities far exceed any value to our district.

All of the student groups in the Upper Darby School District meet or exceed the state's graduation requirements. Upper Darby School District is obviously offering a rigorous curriculum. Guided by "local control", Upper Darby School District retains the ability to choose curriculum instruction and assessment tools that benefit all of our students and meet our community's high standards.

I join with the Upper Darby School District School Board in opposing the Chapter 4 revisions and ask that the Keystone Exam graduation requirement be rescinded. A few specific concerns include:

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- The associated requirements for remediation will be costly, but no additional funding is being provided by the state to meet the mandate.
- The move to online testing will require our district to make investments in technology and cabling that would be better spent on direct instruction.
- All students enrolled in special education must take the test, which may violate their right to access a free and appropriate public education.

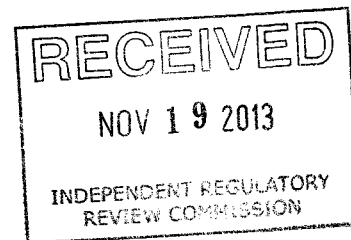
As a concerned citizen I respectfully ask that you remove language requiring the unfunded mandate of passing Keystone graduation exams from the Chapter 4 revisions. We are already on fence about staying in the state to raise our children and this is putting us over to move out completely.

---

Sincerely,

Andrea A. Gallo, Esquire

"Conformity is the last refuge of the unimaginative" – Oscar Wilde



**Cooper, Kathy**

---

**From:** Amy Norr <norrmetz@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 8:55 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Exam requirement

Dear Mr. Sumner,

I am writing as the parent of three public school students, and long-time Lower Merion School District volunteer. I respectfully request that you do not require students to pass the Keystone Exams in order to graduate from high school.

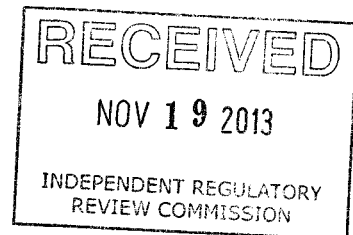
The high costs of the Keystone exams are not justified by any benefit or outcome that might stem from their implementation. I do not believe that Pennsylvania should use a single, high-stake test to measure individual student learning and achievement, particularly when the state requires so many other tests throughout the K-12 years.

Please vote "no" on requiring the Keystones as a graduation requirement.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Amy Norr  
Penn Valley, PA



**Cooper, Kathy**

---

**From:** Ingrid Briner <briner1@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 8:57 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Opposition to Keystone Exams

Good morning Mr. Sumner,

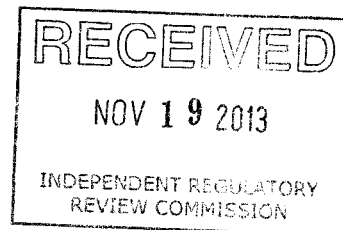
I am writing to express my displeasure with the Keystone Exams. My biggest concern is the fact that a test can dictate my child's ability to graduate high school. This is fundamentally wrong!

My child has a learning disability. He is an honor roll student who works extremely hard everyday to get the grades that he does. Homework that might take the average student an hour to complete takes my child 2 1/2 hours, but he works hard and does what he needs to do. Does the Keystone Exam give an accurate assessment of my child, his abilities and his work ethic, NO!

My son has wonderful teachers who encourage him to be the best student he can be. Please don't take away what my son accomplishes on a daily basis for the sake of a test.

Thank you,  
Ingrid Briner

Sent from my IPAD



**Cooper, Kathy**

---

**From:** Susan Powell <spowell270@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 9:00 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Exams

David Sumner:

As a parent of a child that becomes horribly anxious and stressed due to exams, I hope that you will reconsider the rationality and importance of the Keystone Exams. Is it really that necessary for a school district that earns awards of excellence to impose another set of exams to its students?

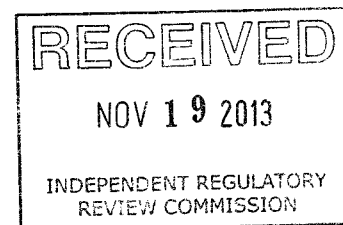
We are residents of the Lower Merion School District and feel strongly that the school system is meeting the grade in teaching our children, challenging them, and teaching them how to think critically . I hate to think that the teachers will have to begin teaching to the exams as they do the other standardized tests. What a lose of valuable time. Additionally, as was the case last year with my older son, he was asked to take the Algebra exam at the end of 9th grade though he was at the time in a Algebra II/Trig class and it had been 3 years since he had taken algebra; what a waste of his time. My younger son, who gets very anxious in taking these types of tests will also finish algebra 1 year prior to the admission of the Keystone algebra test. I am sure this will be a cause for concern for him.

Do we really not trust our teachers in the Pennsylvania School district that they would pass a student that isn't making the grade and understanding the material? Shouldn't this be theirs and the schools job to hold a student that is having trouble with a subject or a whole grade? Why does a whole class of students have to pass an exam to prove their knowledge when that should be evident to a teacher? Our classrooms are jammed full - my younger son is in a class of 31 math students - and yet his teacher knows if a student is falling behind. Why do we need more?

Aren't there other factors that can be considered when funding our schools than a standardized exam that takes away class time and learning from our kids?

Think about it.

Susan Powell  
Lower Merion School District



## Cooper, Kathy

---

**From:** Eileen Shanahan <eileenshanahan@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 9:03 AM  
**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

Hello,

I am writing to ask that you vote no on Chapter 4 Regulations. My husband and I are both taxpayers in Montgomery County, PA, and the proud parents of two children (5th grade and 3rd grade) in the Lower Merion School District. We are firmly against 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 who has completed all necessary coursework and has passed the school's necessary tests/projects could then potentially not graduate from high school due to one high-stakes exam.

**Too much time and money is already spent on standardized testing in our public schools.** We want our children to enjoy school, have an inherent sense of curiosity and a love of learning. We do not want our children to spend their days preparing for state mandated exams. Next year, our 7<sup>th</sup> grade daughter will have to take the Algebra 1 Keystone exam as well as the PSSA exams. Our elementary school child runs 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!

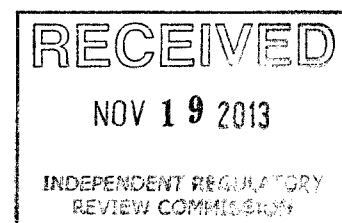
**We urge you to VOTE NO on the Chapter 4 regulations.** It is time to slow down and develop a new plan to measure student progress and achievement. Let the teachers educate, and let the students learn. Do not waste our money and time on high stakes tests.

Respectfully,

Eileen Shanahan and John Mayer

Parents of Two Children in Lower Merion School District

Montgomery County, PA



**Cooper, Kathy**

---

**From:** Cynthia Wilson <cynthia.wilson@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 9:06 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Exam requirement

Dear Executive Director Sumner:

I am writing as a concerned resident in the Upper Darby School District to share my discontent with the recent approval of revisions to Chapter 4 (Academic Standards and Assessments) by the State Board of Education. Specifically, I wish to express my opposition to the Keystone Exam graduation requirement.

For students who are already being measured by other meaningful, objective measures such as the PSAT, SAT, ACT and AP exams, the Keystone Exams offer no additional benefit. For taxpayers, the costs of these tests and any required remedial activities far exceed any value to our district.

All of the student groups in the Upper Darby School District meet or exceed the state's graduation requirements. Upper Darby School District is obviously offering a rigorous curriculum. Guided by "local control", Upper Darby School District retains the ability to choose curriculum instruction and assessment tools that benefit all of our students and meet our community's high standards.

I join with the Upper Darby School District School Board in opposing the Chapter 4 revisions and ask that the Keystone Exam graduation requirement be rescinded. A few specific concerns include:

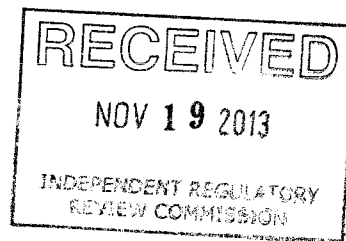
- State-mandated end of-course exams effectively remove local control from the school district.
- The associated requirements for remediation will be costly, but no additional funding is being provided by the state to meet the mandate.
- The move to online testing will require our district to make investments in technology and cabling that would be better spent on direct instruction.
- All students enrolled in special education must take the test, which may violate their right to access a free and appropriate public education.

As a concerned citizen I respectfully ask that you remove language requiring the unfunded mandate of passing Keystone graduation exams from the Chapter 4 revisions.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Wilson  
930 Fairfax Rd. Drexel Hill, PA

Cynthia Wilson  
<http://www.cynthiawilson.net>  
<http://www.iamalibrarian.com>



**Cooper, Kathy**

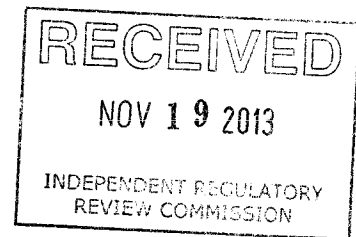
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**From:** Andrea Mooney <japm96@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 9:14 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** repbriggs@pahouse.net; dleach@pasenate.com  
**Subject:** VOTE NO on Chapter 4 Regulations

My name is Andrea Mooney and 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 21<sup>st</sup>.

Respectfully,

Andrea Mooney



## Cooper, Kathy

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**From:** Michele <mtbfam113@embarqmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 9:12 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Graduation Exams

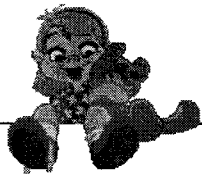
Dear Mr. Sumner,

I am respectfully writing to urge the IRRC members to reject the Keystone Graduation Exams. Having these exams, or any exam for that matter, be a requirement for graduation will put undue pressure on students who have worked hard for 12 years toward their graduation. Additionally, it will, in my opinion, increase the drop out rate dramatically. Students who have put forth a great deal of effort over the past 12 years still would not be assured of graduation until they pass this exam. If they do not pass the exam, they will be required to do a large graduation project. That will cause many students to just give up and think, "What is the use?"

There are plenty of students who do not test well, which does not mean they are not intelligent and does not mean they are not ready to graduate. It just means they do not test well, perhaps due to nerves, perhaps due to the overwhelming amount of stress this test would place upon them. Should one or two exams preclude them from graduation or force them to do a large, time-consuming project? I think it should not. What about the large population of special needs students? Are there any provisions or modifications for them? To my knowledge, the answer to that question is no. That puts special needs students at a huge disadvantage once again.

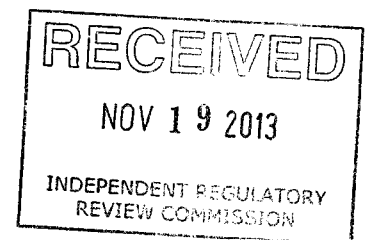
Again, I urge all members of the IRRC to reject these costly and unnecessary Keystone Graduation Exams.

Thank you for your time,  
Michele Butler



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**Cooper, Kathy**

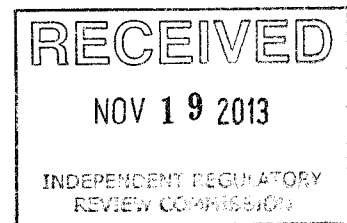
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**From:** Rebecca Mauser <rmauser@connectionseducation.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 9:14 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** reject the Keystone Graduation Exams

**Please reject the Keystone Graduation Exams. 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? These required exams will simply increase high school dropout rates.**

**Thank you,**

**Rebecca Mauser**



**Cooper, Kathy**

---

**From:** William J. Kaplan <williamjosephk@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 9:31 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Opposition to Keystone Exam for Graduation

Dear Executive Director Sumner:

I am writing as a concerned resident in the Upper Darby School District to share my discontent with the recent approval of revisions to Chapter 4 (Academic Standards and Assessments) by the State Board of Education. Specifically, I wish to express my opposition to the Keystone Exam graduation requirement.

For students who are already being measured by other meaningful, objective measures such as the PSAT, SAT, ACT and AP exams, the Keystone Exams offer no additional benefit. For taxpayers, the costs of these tests and any required remedial activities far exceed any value to our district.

All of the student groups in the Upper Darby School District meet or exceed the state's graduation requirements. Upper Darby School District is obviously offering a rigorous curriculum. Guided by "local control", Upper Darby School District retains the ability to choose curriculum instruction and assessment tools that benefit all of our students and meet our community's high standards.

I join with the Upper Darby School District School Board in opposing the Chapter 4 revisions and ask that the Keystone Exam graduation requirement be rescinded. A few specific concerns include:

State-mandated end of-course exams effectively remove local control from the school district.

The associated requirements for remediation will be costly, but no additional funding is being provided by the state to meet the mandate.

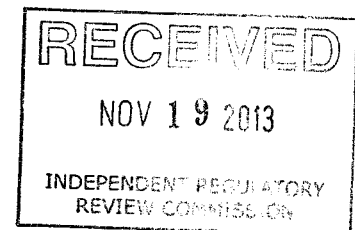
The move to online testing will require our district to make investments in technology and cabling that would be better spent on direct instruction.

All students enrolled in special education must take the test, which may violate their right to access a free and appropriate public education.

As a concerned citizen I respectfully ask that you remove language requiring the unfunded mandate of passing Keystone graduation exams from the Chapter 4 revisions.

Sincerely,

William J. Kaplan  
241 Highland Ave  
Upper Darby, PA 19082



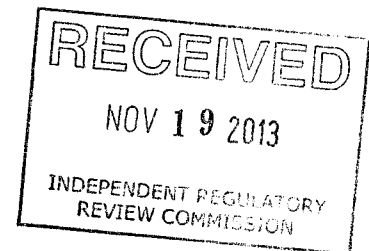
**Cooper, Kathy**

---

**From:** Dafna Cohen <dafnaco@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 9:29 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** The Keystone exam should NOT be a requirement for graduation

Dear Chairman Lutkewitte and members of the IRRC,

As a parent of 3 children in the Lower Merion school district , one currently in high school, I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed Chapter 4 regulations and I urge the IRRC and General Assembly not to require Keystone exams as graduation requirements . To much time is spent on testing which takes away from learning, it is a waste of money that can be used to enhance our schools, and it teaches kids to be test takers not critical thinkers. Additionally is creates undue stress on our children. I am ashamed of educators who think this is the best way to assess our children's ability to be successful adults. The Keystone exam should NOT be a requirement for graduation!  
Sincerely, Dafna Cohen



**Cooper, Kathy**

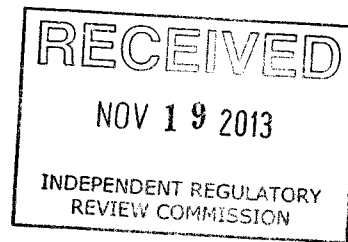
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**From:** Bridget Novitsky <brovitsky@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 9:17 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Keystone Testing

Dear Independent Regulatory Review Commission,

I urge you to reject the proposed chapter 4 regulations. Keystone tests, and standardized tests in general are proven to be more detrimental to the overall knowledge of students. Exams such as these do not measure students on their creativity, work ethic, and understanding of the course. With the new plans set to not allow students graduate without passing, there will be a larger drop out rate, and a larger percentage of students who do not graduate within the set 4 years. Please realize the negative effects of these tests. Schools have become less focused on teaching topics until students understand them, and more of teaching them so they will perform well on these "high stakes" tests. It is not fair to the student nor the teacher to feel the need to rush through topics to make everything known in preparation for the Keystone Exams. This needs to change.

Sincerely,  
Bridget Novitsky



**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** rain194@comcast.net  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 9:59 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Chapter 4

Dear Executive Director Sumner:

I am writing as a concerned resident in the Upper Darby School District to share my discontent with the recent approval of revisions to Chapter 4 (Academic Standards and Assessments) by the State Board of Education. Specifically, I wish to express my opposition to the Keystone Exam graduation requirement.

For students who are already being measured by other meaningful, objective measures such as the PSAT, SAT, ACT and AP exams, the Keystone Exams offer no additional benefit. For taxpayers, the costs of these tests and any required remedial activities far exceed any value to our district.

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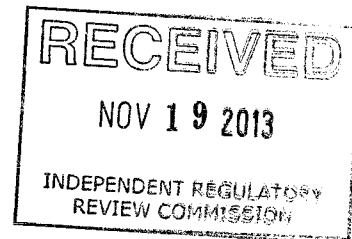
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As a concerned citizen I respectfully ask that you remove language requiring the unfunded mandate of passing Keystone graduation exams from the Chapter 4 revisions.

Sincerely,

Lee Jordan  
90 Pilgrim Lane  
Drexel Hill, PA 19026



Lee Ann Jordan  
(610) 256-0237 (Cell)

**Cooper, Kathy**

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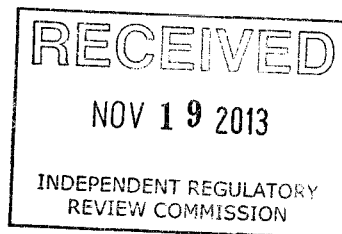
**From:** Kathy Chick <kebchick@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 9:56 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Pennsylvania Core Standards

Dear Mr. Sumner.

I'm contacting you concerning the Pa. Core Standards that will be assessed by the Keystone Exams. The reference is IRRC No. 2976. I am opposed to both the standards and assessments from both a fiscal and educational aspect. There has been no complete fiscal data presented to our state legislators with the remediation requirement mandated with failure to pass Keystone Exams starting 2017. I believe the taxpayers will see property taxes increase prohibitively at a time when the pension crisis is ready to explode, welfare spending and unemployment costs are huge and health care issues are unresolved. These programs have been thrust on the school districts of this state without legislative input from our representatives. These initiatives need to be put on hold in order to allow the time for further dialogue from the people of Pennsylvania through their school boards and legislators. Let's look before leaping. These are our children! Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kathy Bessler



**Cooper, Kathy**

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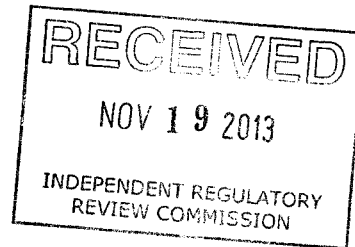
**From:** Margene Biedermann <margenebiedermann@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 9:55 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Cc:** dleach@pasenate.com; repbriggs@pahouse.net; repmaryjodaley@pahouse.net; mfolmer@pasen.gov; BONEill@pahousegop.com; repdelissio@pahouse.net  
**Subject:** VOTE NO on Chapter 4 Regulations

My name is Margene Biedermann. I am heartily opposed to the KeystoneExams being tied to high school graduation. I have an intelligent child who does not test well. Millions of dollars of remediation will be spent on children like this, all focused on teaching to the test. This doesn't include the nearly 3 million annually needed to implement the Keystone Exams. In the meantime, special education has not seen an increase in funding in three years. Why not spend money giving teachers resources and space to find more creative ways to reach kids who learn differently? Also, it seems criminal that there are grossly underfunded school districts like Philadelphia. Why not at least make sure that children there have books, supplies and enough staff to make a safe learning environment?

**I urge you to vote NO on proposed Chapter 4 Regulations on NOV 21st.** Don't jump on the hyper testing bandwagon. Let's thoughtfully consider better options for educating our children.

Respectfully,

Margene Biedermann



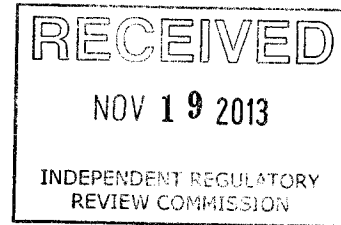
**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** Elisabeth Silverman Hassan <elisabeth.hassan@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 9:52 AM  
**To:** dleach@pasenate.com; David Sumner  
**Cc:** repbriggs@pahouse.net; repmaryjodaley@pahouse.net; mfolmer@pasen.gov; BONeill@pahousegop.com; >  
**Subject:** Re: Keystone Exams

My name is Elisabeth Hassan. I live in Narberth, 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,  
Elisabeth Hassan  
341 Meeting House Lane  
Narberth, PA. 19072





**Cooper, Kathy**

---

**From:** Sharon Patterson <pattersonn824p@pavcs.us>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 9:46 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** IRRC No. 2976

Director Sumner,

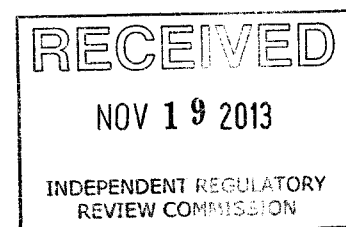
I am writing to express my concern over IRRC No. 2976. From what I have read, adopting this program is a bit like buying a car without looking at it or knowing what the price tag is. We all know that a salesperson's job is to get you to buy their product, but in order to make a wise decision, the product must be thoroughly considered. IRRC No. 2976 has many points that are questionable but I will only touch on a couple.

While the thought of everyone having the same skills/knowledge may be appealing, each of us is an individual with our own strengths and weaknesses. These qualities help us to choose what career path we would like to take, and know which ones we aren't suited for. Much work has been done to help those who struggle with programs for special needs and Title 1 students, now you propose we just sweep them under the rug? As we look at the numbers of special needs people in our population climb, are we to ignore them? What about the gifted student? Shall he/she be held back in order to keep everyone together? A one size fits all education doesn't work any more than every person in the state/country doing the same job.

While I am thankful to hear that Pennsylvania has said that it will not expand its data collection of individuals at the moment, knowing that the framework is set up to allow it is disconcerting. The freedoms we have enjoyed in our great nation are being stripped from us, what rights will remain?

I emphatically oppose the implementation of IRRC No. 2976. The price to pay is far too dear. Please try to look deeper than the convenience of having one curriculum and beyond the stimulus money.

Sincerely,  
Sharon Patterson



## Cooper, Kathy

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**From:** Lynn Abruzzo <l\_abruzzo@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 9:40 AM  
**To:** David Sumner  
**Subject:** Re. Keystone Exams

Dear Executive Director Sumner:

I am writing as a concerned resident in the Upper Darby School District to share my discontent with the recent approval of revisions to Chapter 4 (Academic Standards and Assessments) by the State Board of Education. Specifically, I wish to express my opposition to the Keystone Exam graduation requirement.

For students who are already being measured by other meaningful, objective measures such as the PSAT, SAT, ACT and AP exams, the Keystone Exams offer no additional benefit. For taxpayers, the costs of these tests and any required remedial activities far exceed any value to our district.

All of the student groups in the Upper Darby School District meet or exceed the state's graduation requirements. Upper Darby School District is obviously offering a rigorous curriculum. Guided by "local control", Upper Darby School District retains the ability to choose curriculum instruction and assessment tools that benefit all of our students and meet our community's high standards.

I join with the Upper Darby School District School Board in opposing the Chapter 4 revisions and ask that the Keystone Exam graduation requirement be rescinded. A few specific concerns include:

- State-mandated end of-course exams effectively remove local control from the school district.
- The associated requirements for remediation will be costly, but no additional funding is being provided by the state to meet the mandate.
- The move to online testing will require our district to make investments in technology and cabling that would be better spent on direct instruction.
- All students enrolled in special education must take the test, which may violate their right to access a free and appropriate public education.

As a concerned citizen I respectfully ask that you remove language requiring the unfunded mandate of passing Keystone graduation exams from the Chapter 4 revisions.

Sincerely,  
Lynn Abruzzo

