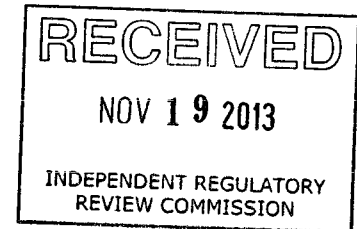


November 19, 2013

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The Honorable Silvan B. Lutkewitte, III
Chairman
Independent Regulatory Review Commission
333 Market Street, 14th floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Email: irrc@irrc.state.pa.us



Dear Chairman Lutkewitte:

As the Executive Director at The Institute for Entrepreneurial Excellence, I support final-form regulation #6-326 (Academic Standards and Assessments) that adopts the Pennsylvania Core Standards in English and math and aligned assessments, including the Keystone Exams. The regulation also includes important safeguards and supports to ensure struggling students have the extra help they need to succeed.

As a Pennsylvania business leader, I care whether high school students graduate prepared for the workforce or higher education. If we want to give our (Pennsylvania) students more or superior opportunities in the global economy, we need to make sure they are well-prepared and hold them to higher standards so they can compete with the students from other states and even international graduates.

Many of our members of the Institute complain that their entry level employees come into the workforce and are underprepared. They don't have the basic reading and math skills that you would expect a productive workforce to have. This is harmful to our members and their businesses as they need to spend more time on training their entry level employees or re-teaching them skills that the employers expected them to already have coming into the workforce with a high school degree. This is also costly and an inefficient use of time.

When our members are looking to make capital investments, they would like to remain in Pennsylvania and support the local economy. However, sometimes they are forced to make decisions to create plants or other offices outside of the state because of the competitive pool of employees in other markets.

If the State of Pennsylvania implements higher standards for high school graduates, many of these problems will be reduced or avoided. Our members would be able to hire competitive employees for their businesses and have an easier time making decisions to keep their capital investments in the Pennsylvania region.

It's quite simple: Business leaders need to have confidence in the quality of Pennsylvania's high school diploma.

Looking to the future, we need a vibrant educational system with rigorous, internationally benchmarked standards (PA Core Standards) and aligned assessments, including the Keystone Exams, which will help produce students with the necessary skills to succeed in life and to help businesses grow.

I support the adoption of strong standards such as the Pennsylvania Core Standards and

aligned assessments, including the Keystone Exams. I encourage the Commission to adopt the final-form regulation, which I believe would add significant value to Pennsylvania's high school diploma and workforce.

Sincerely,



Ann Dugan

Assistant Dean/Executive Director