

Cooper, Kathy

2976

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IRRC

From: KERRY PUIA [kpuia1@verizon.net]
Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2012 2:21 PM
To: IRRC
Subject: Keystone exams

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To Whom It May Concern:

Since the conception of these exams, I have strongly opposed them for these various reasons.

What's at stake:

FINANCIAL COSTS: (follow the money trail...someone is profiting from these tests and it's not the students or the taxpayers!) Why not fix what we have instead of reinventing the wheel!!!!!!!!!! At our expense and our children's!!!!!!!!!!!! I really feel for the district's who are struggling just to get their students on board with a curriculum for the SAT's. This will definitely set many up for failure because they the other basis tools that are already in place are not working.

- * Unfunded mandate
- * curricular revision and textbook costs
- * professional development (more work for over-stressed teachers)
- * test administration costs
- * data-tracking costs (additional admin personnel will be needed to manage - another layer of bureaucracy!)
- * supplemental instruction costs - for those students that don't score proficient - seminar instruction the following year with a re-test in subject. Alternative assessment will only be available after 2 years of seminar instruction.

IMPACT ON STUDENTS:

- * **excessive testing** and remediation
- * **reduced opportunities for students to schedule desired courses**
- * **residual negative impact on graduation and college admissions**
- * could lead to disengagement and negative attitudes toward school
- * **may have a greater impact on students with special needs or students who experience test anxiety**

While I understand the need to have some form of objective assessments, they need to be done in an effective and intelligent way. These tests are a "one-size fits all" for all districts. They stifle creativity by forcing districts to align curriculum and class time to "teaching to the test". Up to 17% of instructional time has been eroded in order to "teach to the test". I fear struggling districts will see an increase in their drop-out rates as students become increasingly frustrated. Strong school districts will begin to cut innovative programming as all school districts fall further into debt. The costs in dollars are also staggering. It's estimated that it will cost 2M to develop one test with an on-going annual cost of 5M to administer. That doesn't take into account the curriculum revision, staff training and administrative costs at the district level. Really, that money can't be invested into existing districts to improve, provide the tools/resources that they need.

I oppose these tests due to the overemphasis of a single test and overall lack of local control for graduation requirements. I oppose additional tests being developed beyond Algebra 1, Biology and Literature. **And I vehemently oppose** these tests factoring into a student's final grade.

Regards, Kerry Puia
484-557-0064

Parent-Tredyffrin/Easttown School District