

Cooper, Kathy

2976

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IRRC

From: Kristen Ressler [kristenressler@yahoo.com]
Sent: Tuesday, November 06, 2012 10:37 PM
To: IRRC; ra-stateboardofed@pa.gov; 00sec@psupen.psu
Subject: keystones - Ugh!!

2012 NOV -7 AM 9:42
Form Letter A 43-44

Dear State Official:

I am a resident of the Radnor Township School District, and I am writing to express my concerns about the proposed changes to Chapter 4 regulations regarding high school graduation requirements. Students in Radnor School District have historically experienced high degrees of success in college and the workplace, and I am concerned that the addition of high-stakes exit exams may have the unintended consequence of hindering students who are proficient but do not always demonstrate the fullest extent of their skills in a traditional testing environment. Beyond my opposition to the concept of graduation exams, I am further concerned by the following components of the proposed regulations:

- In addition to the Algebra 1, Literature and Biology Keystone Exam requirements, the State plans to add an exam in English Composition for the class of 2019 and beyond and a Civics and Government exam for the class of 2020 and beyond. Two separate tests in English Composition are unnecessary and a poor use of taxpayer resources. A Civics and Government exam will require expensive restructuring of high school curricula across the State because many local districts will need to move the related course out of the junior or senior year to an earlier year. The costs to local taxpayers for textbooks alone may exceed \$100,000 to facilitate such a change.
- The requirement of three years of instruction prior to an alternative assessment places an undue burden on students, limits their ability to choose other courses, and could harm the college admissions process. The alternative assessment path should be made available at an earlier point.
- Will this unfunded mandate permit flexibility for high-performing schools with a record of success and also provide additional support for struggling schools? Is this another State remedy that assumes "one size fits all?"
- Our school district is struggling with financial "sustainability" as the State continues to reduce its contributions to local districts, places limitations on district's ability to raise revenue, and then adds another layer of financial cost with no state assistance.

I oppose these Keystone 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. All of this testing is ridiculous!!! Our teachers can no longer teach in creative, meaningful ways. Please stop instituting new tests.

As a result, I urge you to amend the proposed Chapter 4 regulations to reflect these concerns. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Kristen Ressler
Wayne, PA

RECEIVED
IRRC

October 26, 2012

2976 2012 NOV -9 AM 9: 54

Michelle Rossi
220 Lafayette Lane
Chesterbrook, PA 19087

Independent Regulatory Review Commission (IRRC)
333 Market St., 14th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

Dear State Official:

I am a resident of the Tredyffrin/Easttown School District, and I am writing to express my concerns about the proposed changes to Chapter 4 regulations regarding high school graduation requirements. Students in Tredyffrin/Easttown School District have historically experienced high degrees of success in college and the workplace, and I am concerned that the addition of high-stakes exit exams may have the unintended consequence of hindering students who are proficient but do not always demonstrate the fullest extent of their skills in a traditional testing environment. Beyond my opposition to the concept of graduation exams, I am further concerned by the following components of the proposed regulations:

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- The requirement of three years of instruction prior to an alternative assessment places an undue burden on students, limits their ability to choose other courses, and could harm the college admissions process. The alternative assessment path should be made available at an earlier point.
- Will this unfunded mandate permit flexibility for high-performing schools with a record of success and also provide additional support for struggling schools? Is this another State remedy that assumes "one size fits all?"
- Our school district is struggling with financial "sustainability" as the State continues to reduce its contributions to local districts, places limitations on district's ability to raise revenue, and then adds another layer of financial cost with no state assistance.

The excessive testing today has the effect of forcing teachers to “jump around,” particularly in math and science, and students can miss important concepts and or have less time than they need for certain concepts as their teachers struggle to cover all of the material that may be on a standardized test. The choice is either “teach to the test” or risk funding? In addition, it seems absurd to have students as young as 6th and 7th grade taking a high school graduation exam. Education should be left to the educators, not the state bureaucracy. Please consider an “opt out” of graduation exams provision for high performing schools who do not need them.

I urge you to amend the proposed Chapter 4 regulations to reflect these concerns.
Thank you.

Sincerely,


Michelle Rossi