

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 248 Session of 2017

INTRODUCED BY EICHELBERGER AND DINNIMAN, DECEMBER 7, 2017

SENATOR EICHELBERGER, EDUCATION, AS AMENDED, DECEMBER 12, 2017

A RESOLUTION

1 Opposing the use of the Keystone Exams for the purpose of <--
2 Federal accountability without alternatives under the
3 Commonwealth's Every Student Succeeds plan, opposing their
4 use as a sole requirement for graduation and calling on the
5 United States Department of Education and the Department of <--
6 Education of the Commonwealth to authorize alternatives in <--
7 Pennsylvania's Every Student Succeeds plan. ALTERNATIVE <--
8 REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION.

9 WHEREAS, In December 2006, the Governor's Commission on
10 College and Career Success issued a report detailing
11 recommendations designed to "move Pennsylvania towards
12 increasing the educational achievement of all of its students to
13 meet the challenges of the 21st century economy" and proposed
14 that all students be required to demonstrate proficiency in
15 State standards via end of course tests; and

16 WHEREAS, At the time of the commission's report, all students
17 were required to take the 11th grade Pennsylvania System of
18 School Assessment (PSSA) exam, the scores of which were used to
19 evaluate schools under the requirements of No Child Left Behind,
20 not to evaluate individual students for purposes of graduation, <--
21 UNLESS AUTHORIZED BY A SCHOOL DISTRICT; and

1       WHEREAS, In 2012, the Keystone Exams were implemented as ~~both~~  
2 ~~a component of Pennsylvania's system of assessment for Federal~~  
3 ~~accountability and as~~ a high school graduation requirement, with  
4 the exams being end-of-course assessments designed to ultimately  
5 assess proficiency in numerous subjects: algebra I, algebra II,  
6 geometry, literature, English composition, biology, chemistry,  
7 United States history, world history and civics and government;  
8 and

9       WHEREAS, By 2015, the time, resources and energy required for  
10 implementation of supplemental instruction and the administering  
11 and scoring of project-based assessment alternatives and exams  
12 proved to be a substantial and growing burden on students,  
13 schools and educators; and

14       WHEREAS, In February 2016, the Governor signed Act 1 of 2016  
15 into law, which law delayed the Keystone Exam/PBA graduation  
16 requirement for a period of two years to give policymakers an  
17 opportunity to thoughtfully consider options for students to  
18 demonstrate readiness for postsecondary success in addition to  
19 Keystone Exams; and

20       WHEREAS, Act 1 of 2016 also required the Department of  
21 Education of the Commonwealth to investigate alternative options  
22 for a State-level graduation requirement and to provide  
23 recommendations to the General Assembly of the Commonwealth; and

24       WHEREAS, Act 55 of 2017 further delayed the requirement that  
25 Keystone Exams be used as a graduation requirement or as a  
26 benchmark for the need to participate in a project-based  
27 assessment until the 2019-2020 school year, as the  
28 recommendations of the Act 1 of 2016 report have yet to be  
29 implemented; and

30       WHEREAS, It has been widely recognized that multiple valid

1 measures exist for students to demonstrate the knowledge and  
2 skills necessary to be college and career ready, ~~yet alternative~~ <--  
3 ~~measures have not been incorporated into the State plan~~ AND <--  
4 GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL; therefore be it

5 RESOLVED, That the Senate of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
6 oppose the continued use of the Keystone Exams as a single high-  
7 stakes graduation requirement and urge the Department of  
8 Education of the Commonwealth to ~~develop~~ RECOMMEND alternative <--  
9 assessments for ~~Federal accountability~~ purposes which also <--  
10 demonstrate career or college readiness ~~as soon as possible for~~ <--  
11 ~~timely inclusion in Pennsylvania's Every Student Succeeds plan;~~  
12 ~~and be it further~~ AND ADHERE TO THE FOLLOWING PARAMETERS WHICH <--  
13 PARALLEL FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS IN THE INDIVIDUALS WITH  
14 DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA) AND THE EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS  
15 ACT (ESSA):

16 (1) THE ASSESSMENTS ARE DESIGNED TO PROVIDE  
17 ACCOMMODATIONS TO STUDENTS THAT ARE CURRENTLY ALLOWABLE IN  
18 PENNSYLVANIA ON THE PENNSYLVANIA SYSTEM OF SCHOOL ASSESSMENT  
19 AND KEYSTONE EXAMS.

20 (2) THE ASSESSMENTS ARE DEVELOPED TO MEET THE PRINCIPLES  
21 OF UNIVERSAL DESIGN.

22 (3) THE ASSESSMENTS DEMONSTRATE THAT THEY EITHER MEET  
23 THE PENNSYLVANIA CAREER EDUCATION AND WORK STANDARDS OR ARE  
24 VALID AND RELIABLE MEASURES OF THE PENNSYLVANIA CORE ACADEMIC  
25 STANDARDS IN ALGEBRA I, BIOLOGY AND ENGLISH LITERATURE AT  
26 LEVELS COMPARABLE TO THOSE CURRENTLY ASSESSED BY THE KEYSTONE  
27 EXAMS;

28 AND BE IT FURTHER

29 RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be sent to the  
30 ~~United States Department of Education and the~~ Department of <--

1 Education of the Commonwealth.