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House of Representatives
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Harrisburg

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August 28, 2014

The Honorable Tom Corbett
Governor of Pennsylvania

Dear Governor Corbett,

We wish to thank the Administration for holding the meeting on August 28, 2014 to discuss the Pennsylvania Core Academic Standards. We were pleased with the nature of our conversation with Secretary Dumesq and other members of the Administration about the need to inform parents on the truth concerning the commonwealth's academic standards.

The members of the House Republican Caucus share the concern of the Administration relating to the misinformation directed at the new academic standards. In the most recent session, the House unanimously passed House Resolution 338 requesting the Secretary and State Board of Education amend Chapter 4 to craft standards specific to Pennsylvania. In our resolution the House asked the Administration to ensure the standards used in education were not only rigorous, but also provided our local school districts the maximum flexibility to select their own curriculum. We believe the current standards reflect the intent of the House on both of these issues. The changes to Chapter 4 also reflected our desire to avoid a statewide curriculum and imposing crippling costs to school districts. Additionally, Chapter 4 reflected our desire to protect the privacy of families and their children from additional data collection by the federal government. In short, we applaud the hard work done by the Administration in ending the national Common Core adopted by Governor Rendell in 2010.

The decision of the Administration to review the eligible content under the Pennsylvania Core Academic Standards is a wise choice. By reviewing the eligible content, parents will be informed on how Pennsylvania has moved away from Common Core at a state level. This change worked to improve overall education in the commonwealth as Pennsylvania currently ranks 7th in the nation for education. However, we are wary of opening the content of Chapter 4 to change as it would spur quick reactionary movement in both the Senate and the House. In particular, by opening Chapter 4, Pennsylvania could be placed into a situation where there are no tests or standards to assess student performance. The impact of changing the standards at the start of a school year would require pumping billions of dollars into the development of new exams. After a difficult budget cycle where the commonwealth faced a deficit which reached over \$1 billion dollars this is an expense the state cannot afford to fix something which is not broken. The financial impact of opening Chapter 4 is not limited to the state as school districts would be forced to spend millions redesigning their curriculum.

Furthermore, by changing the standards in Chapter 4, Pennsylvania would be positioned to have our waiver from No Child Left Behind taken away as we saw in Oklahoma. The loss of this waiver would be disastrous as school districts would be forced to spend even more complying with different mandates and standards in the middle of a school year. This cost would inevitably fall on the backs of Pennsylvania's property taxpayers. After spending over \$10 billion in commonwealth funds on education, Pennsylvanians deserve accountability on their investment. For this reason as well, we support the decision of the Administration to review eligible content under the PA Core Academic Standards. A review of the content under our new standards will benefit taxpayers demonstrating not only how the standards ended Common Core, but also provide accountability as well.

We again applaud the hard work of your administration following House Resolution 338 in ending Common Core in Pennsylvania. Based on our conversation with Secretary Dumesq, we support the move of the Administration to review eligible content only. Pennsylvania became a national leader in education by ending the state's participation in Common Core through the passage of rigorous standards specifically designed for the commonwealth. We support your decision to review eligible content and encourage you to resist any call or effort to open Chapter 4 for further review and change.

Sincerely,



Seth Grove
State Representative
196th Legislative District



Ryan Aument
State Representative
41st Legislative District

SG:jg

CC: Lieutenant Governor Jim Cawley

Honorable Sam Smith
Speaker of the House of Representatives

Honorable Mike Turzai
Majority Leader of the House of Representatives

Carolyn Dumesq
Secretary of Education

Honorable Katie True
Secretary for Legislative Affairs

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