

PAESSP NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

SCHOOL PRINCIPALS VOICE CONCERN ABOUT KEYSTONE EXAMS

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PRESS RELEASE

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Harrisburg – The Pennsylvania Association of Elementary and Secondary School Principals (PAESSP), the state school principals' association consisting of approximately 3,900 members, has a number of concerns about the Keystone Exams language proposed by State Board of Education Chair Joseph Torsella. The Association was surprised by the announcement to move forward with this proposal because progress was being made by the state education groups and the State Board of Education towards an acceptable solution. To suddenly stop discussions and move forward because the state teachers' association has no objections does create concern regarding how the process will move forward.

PAESSP asks the question: What about the concerns of parents? PAESSP cannot imagine any parent being supportive of an assessment system that could lower a student's grade by a third if he or she does poorly on the exam. In fact, if you score below the cut score you have failed the course and will need to retake parts or the entire exam. Talk about pressure -- telling a child who previously did A-work that "you better pass it this time." While some other education groups find no objection to this language, PAESSP feels that subjecting a 13- or 14-year-old child to the high pressure of taking a one-time exam counting for 33% of his or her grade, does not promote a positive learning environment. *The Pennsylvania school principals feel that an assessment system that could lower a child's grade from an A to a C as a result of a single test is not in the best interest of the child.* **PAESSP recognizes and supports the use of end-of-course exams.** Currently, most of our members' schools use them, but rarely do they count for so much.

While it may not have been politically expedient to have continued discussions on this issue, it would have been the right thing to do for children of Pennsylvania .