

PACTA Opposes Revised Keystone Proposal

The Pennsylvania Association of Career and Technical Administrators (PACTA) has reviewed the revised Keystone Exams proposal which was announced by Joseph Torsella, Chairman of the State Board of Education, last week. PACTA commends the effort by Mr. Torsella to work with concerned parties to produce this new proposal.

However, PACTA has serious concerns with four significant facets of the proposal.

1. The exams will count for 33% of the grade for the course. PACTA believes the percentage is too high and that the exams should count for no more than 20% of a course grade.
2. The proposal awards no points on the exams for students scoring below basic. PACTA believes that this is unfair to students and that students should receive credit for scores that they earn.
3. PACTA believes that the provisions related to the development of alternative assessments will result in a financial burden that will be difficult for many districts to meet.
4. The proposal directs the department and the State Assessment Validation Advisory Committee to investigate the use of a certificate based on industry approved standards and performance on a NOCTI as an alternative pathway to graduation for career and technical students. PACTA believes that such a study is not necessary and that this alternative pathway should be implemented as part of the proposal. The State Board has already recognized the value of industry standards and NOCTI tests by requiring them through regulation.

PACTA does not support the proposal outlined by Mr. Torsella last week and believes that the State Board of Education should continue to work with stakeholders to develop a proposal that meets the needs of all of Pennsylvania's children. PACTA is eager to be part of that effort.

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