**Executive Summary: Keystone Exams Update**

**Summary:**

In the fall of 2010, changes to Chapter Four of the Pennsylvania Code were approved and published. These changes included high school graduation requirements which are slated to be effective in the 2014-2015 school year. One of these changes involved the Keystone Exam which is designed as a course-end exam that students would take as they completed the courses for which Keystones were developed. This testing is also designed to align with the Common Core Standards which are nationally recognized standards that have been adopted by many states including Pennsylvania which will supplement the existing academic standards in place.

Beginning in 2010-2011, the state began field testing the Keystone Exams with Algebra I, Literature and Biology. Other tests to be developed will include English Composition, Algebra II, Geometry, United States History, Chemistry, Civics and Government and World History. In all, eight Keystone examinations are planned for development. According to current Chapter Four regulations, students who graduate in 2015 and 2016 will need to demonstrate proficiency in four of the eight topics and those who graduate in subsequent years will need to demonstrate proficiency on six of the eight exams or meet the locally developed equivalencies.

The Pennsylvania state budget process this year suspended funding for the development of the Keystone Exams to gain time for them to evaluate their priorities. Pennsylvania is still involved in two national consortiums that are working to develop similar end of course tests. At this time, the state department of education anticipates that the PSSA will still be administered to juniors.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education committed to continuing the development of the Standards Aligned System (SAS) and the Classroom Diagnostic Tools (CDT) will be available for use with students in grades 3-12. The CDTs are online exams that have been developed to help teachers assess student learning and gauge students’ potential for success as measured against the Common Core Standards.

There is no financial commitment on the part of the District for the Keystone exams. We will be focusing our curriculum development efforts on math and language arts this year to align our planned courses to the Common Core. Administration will continue to gather information and prepare recommendations according to the timeline set by the state for implementation.