

Questionable Regulations:

The new Chapter 4 education regulations accompanying the new academic standards were unclear and controversial in their interpretation. The newest regulations contained rigorous mandates for schools and students. When schools would question authorities from the Department and/or legislature for clarification and proper interpretation, often times there would be much confusion and little accountability for clear and concise communication from the state level to the local level of school districts. Soon afterwards, school districts statewide began creating, signing, and passing state resolutions against the Chapter 4 education regulations to alert and gain the attention and help of the General Assembly. Over 10% of the Commonwealth's 501 school districts formally declared the Pennsylvania Department of Education had exceeded its authority and was in violation of the Public School Code Act of 1949, which is the law of the Commonwealth.

That same number eventually grew to almost 20%. These were serious charges made by people who had actually read the regulations and in turn were feeling the adverse impact fiscally and academically within their respective school districts by the new Chapter 4 regulations. Interestingly enough, the Department attacked by "spinning" the argument to the public that these school officials were in opposition to the new academic standards, as well as, resisting accountability. I can speak from personal experience that if one were to say they were opposed to Chapter 4, the State, as well as, other entities would interpret that to be the same as being opposed to the academic standards, which simply was untrue at the time. Those resisting were advocating the need for genuine reform in modifying the flaws of the testing system to improve public education for all students. Most school officials could see the bigger picture that lied ahead in relation to the "high stakes" characteristics of how the test would be utilized for schools and more importantly, students.