

2696

**From:** Lawrence A. Feinberg [lfeinberg@thelocalgroup.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 21, 2008 9:09 AM  
**To:** j buckheit@state.pa.us; IRRC  
**Subject:** Written testimony submitted on behalf of the Delco School Boards Legislative Council for January State Board hearing on GCA's  
**Importance:** High

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2008 MAY 21 AM 9:35  
INDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
REVIEW COMMISSION

Hi Jim –

As part of the public comment now underway with the IRRC please include this written testimony and attachments that were submitted on behalf of the Delaware County School Boards Legislative Council for the State Board of Education hearing on GCA's that was conducted in January.

Thanks and Best Regards,  
Larry Feinberg

Lawrence A. Feinberg, Chairman  
Delaware County School Boards Legislative Council  
[LFeinberg@TheLocalGroup.com](mailto:LFeinberg@TheLocalGroup.com)

*The Delaware County School Boards Legislative Council is comprised of board members from each of the 15 school districts in Delaware County and seeks to represent the interests of our 135 elected school board members, over 74,000 public school students and their families, and our taxpayers through a frank, open and ongoing dialogue with our state and federal elected officials.*

5/21/2008



# Legislative Council

*Serving the School Boards of Delaware County*

*The Delaware County School Boards Legislative Council is comprised of board members from each of the 15 school districts in Delaware County and seeks to represent the interests of our 135 elected school board members, over 74,000 public school students and their families, and our taxpayers through a frank, open and ongoing dialogue with our state and federal elected officials.*

Lawrence A. Feinberg  
Chairman  
2023 Olcott Avenue  
Ardmore, PA 19003  
Phone: (610) 896-3880  
Email: LFeinberg@TheLocalGroup.com

Adriene Irving  
DCIU Director of Legislative  
and Community Services  
200 Yale Avenue  
Morton, PA 19070

Mr. Karl Girton, Chairman  
Pennsylvania State Board of Education  
333 Market Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333.  
c/o Jim Buckheit, Executive Director, via email

**Testimony Prepared for the Pennsylvania State Board of Education  
Commenting on Proposed Amendments to Chapter 4 Regulations  
To Implement High Stakes Graduation Competency Assessments  
January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

Chairman Girton and members of the State Board of Education, thank you for this opportunity to provide written comments on the proposed GCA amendments to Chapter 4.

I am a third term school director in the School District of Haverford Township. I also serve as Chairman of the Delaware County School Boards Legislative Council and as Co-chairman of the Southeastern Pennsylvania School Districts Education Coalition, a regional grassroots advocacy organization with representatives from school districts in Delaware, Montgomery, Chester and Lehigh counties.

I am writing on behalf of the 15 school districts in Delaware County and the over 74,000 students we represent, to strongly urge the State Board to reconsider plans to amend Chapter 4 regulations to implement a battery of high stakes Graduation Competency Exams.

I would briefly like to provide you with the "on the ground" perspective and questions of regional administrators and school directors and present some data for your review and consideration.

As you will note on the attached spreadsheets, according to the Philadelphia Inquirer's 2007 Report Card on the Schools, 10 of the 15 school districts in Delaware County, 10 of 13 school districts in Bucks County, 21 of 25 school districts in Montgomery County and 9 of the 12 school districts in Chester County sent more than 80% of their graduating students to college last year. I have combined the college attendance data with data from the recently completed costing out study and listed it by county.

While this does not necessarily guarantee that they are well prepared for college level work or that they will finish college, they are apparently scoring well enough in their college entrance exams and are being accepted by colleges nationwide. Why are we proposing to implement a statewide "fix" to something that does not appear to be broken in many school districts? Why not focus accountability efforts and resources on those districts that need additional attention and support?

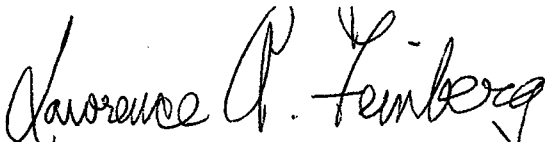
In my district, in addition to the PSSA math, reading, writing and science assessments and our routine local assessments, we are already administering the 4sight exams a few times each year, impacting instructional time on 20 days of our 184 day school year. We provide PSSA re-tests for seniors as needed and selected seniors also sit for the NAEP exam. This scenario and allocation of time is fairly representative of our school districts.

What will our successful school districts accomplish by spending even more time and money on high stakes testing and test preparation? How will it help our students to have them give up instructional time on task for additional testing and test preparation?

We also have concerns regarding the effect of GCA's on students in struggling school districts. According to a study conducted by Boston University's National Board on Educational Testing and Public Policy, results show that in schools with proportionately more students of low socio-economic status that used high stakes minimum competency tests, early dropout rates – between the eighth and tenth grades – were 4 to 6 percentage points higher than in schools that were similar but for the high stakes test requirement.

Thanks again for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me if we might provide any additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lawrence A. Feinberg". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "L".

Lawrence A. Feinberg, Chairman  
Delaware County School Boards Legislative Council



# Legislative Council

*Serving the School Boards of Delaware County*

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Beverly Kapanjie

Rose Tree Media  
Veronica Barbato

Southeast Delco  
Christine Phillips

Springfield  
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DCIU Director of Legislative and  
Community Services  
Adriene Irving

**Delaware County School Districts**  
**Decending by Percentage of Graduating Students Attending College**  
**From Phila. Inquirer 2007 Report Card on the Schools**

School District	Percent Attending 4 yr. College	Percent Attending 2 yr. College	Total Pct. Attending College	Costing Out 2005-2006 per pupil Spending	Costing Out Target per pupil Spending	Costing Out Estimated per pupil Difference
Radnor Twp SD	87	6	93	\$14,475	\$12,716	\$1,759
Rose Tree Media SD	79	14	93	\$12,884	\$12,280	\$604
Garnet Valley SD	78	14	92	\$10,718	\$11,683	(\$965)
Haverford Twp SD	76	16	92	\$10,248	\$12,350	(\$2,102)
Wallingford-Swarthmore SD	78	12	90	\$12,359	\$12,402	(\$43)
Springfield SD	57	31	88	\$11,295	\$11,809	(\$514)
Marple Newtown SD	70	17	87	\$12,536	\$11,749	\$787
Ridley SD	49	37	86	\$10,051	\$11,935	(\$1,884)
Upper Darby SD	47	39	86	\$8,671	\$12,961	(\$4,290)
Penn-Delco SD	54	29	83	\$9,930	\$11,999	(\$2,069)
Chichester SD	40	32	72	\$11,045	\$13,090	(\$2,045)
Southeast Delco SD	30	40	70	\$9,729	\$13,773	(\$4,044)
Interboro SD	38	26	64	\$10,186	\$12,690	(\$2,504)
William Penn SD	43	10	53	\$10,697	\$13,602	(\$2,905)
Chester-Upland SD	18	28	46	\$10,563	\$14,262	(\$3,699)