



MOUNT UNION AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

28 West Market Street
Mount Union, Pennsylvania 17066

Mr. James A. Estep
Superintendent

2696

Telephone
814-542-8631

May 21, 2008

Independent Regulatory Review Commission
333 Market Street, 14th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101

SUBJECT: Graduation Competency Assessments

Enclosed is a copy of the resolution demonstrating the Mount Union Area School District's opposition to the high stakes testing. This resolution was adopted by our Board of Education at its February 25, 2008 meeting. A copy of the resolution following adoption by our Board was previously submitted to your office for consideration and review.

Please give this due consideration during the decision making and legislative processes. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

MOUNT UNION AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT


James A. Estep, Superintendent

JAD/dlw

Enclosure

RECEIVED
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INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

BOARD

Ralph E. Park, President
Deanna Lee Wagner, Secretary
Telephone - 542-8631

DISTRICT-WIDE ADMINISTRATORS

Autumn Fiscus, Dir. Business Affairs
Telephone - 542-8631
Tonya DeVecchis - Kerr, Dir. Spec. Ed.
Telephone - 542-8631

DISTRICT BUILDINGS

Administrative Center - 542-8631
Junior High School - 542-9311
Senior High School - 542-2518
Mapleton Union Elementary - 542-4401
Mount Union-Kistler Elementary - 542-2595
Shirley Township Elementary - 542-9381

"AN EQUAL RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES SCHOOL DISTRICT"



MOUNT UNION AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Mount Union, Pennsylvania 17066

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Superintendent

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RESOLUTION OPPOSING PROPOSED HIGH SCHOOL
GRADUATION COMPETENCY ASSESSMENTS
BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
THE MOUNT UNION AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

WHEREAS, the State Board of Education has approved a proposal to revise the current high school graduation requirements under the Chapter 4 regulations to require students to pass a series of standardized high stakes Graduation Competency Assessments in order to get a diploma; and

WHEREAS, these new requirements and exams will be the same for all students, whether they are taking college prep or vocational courses, are English language learners or participating in individualized programs, and all students effectively will be required to take the same courses in order to pass this new battery of state tests; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 4 currently allows districts to use either the PSSA or rigorous local assessments for their students to demonstrate proficiency of the state academic standards; and it is misleading and incorrect to make the assumption that because students demonstrate their achievements on local assessments rather than the PSSA that there is a disconnect between proficiency and graduation; and

WHEREAS, although the GCA proposal permits schools to use a local assessment option, it establishes numerous limitations, including the elimination of the ability to use various assessment strategies now available to local entities and requires local tests to be closely modeled to the GCAs; and

WHEREAS, decades of research shows many reasons why standardized pencil and paper test scores should never be the determining factor in making major decisions about students, and that a diploma should be granted based on the coursework, tests and quizzes, presentations, projects and papers throughout the student's career; and

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Resolution Opposing Graduation Requirements

February 25, 2008

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WHEREAS, the State Board of Education has not prepared a cost analysis or fiscal note, even though this will create a large financial impact on state and local budgets, and the State Board's own costing-out study did not include the costs for this new system and found that the state already is \$4.4 billion short in helping school districts prepare students to meet the academic standards by 2014; and

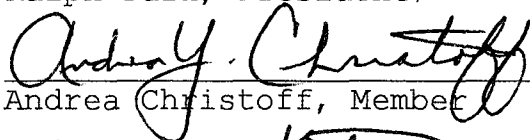
WHEREAS, the proposal requires school districts to absorb many new costs related to revising curriculum, professional development, test development and validation, test preparation and administration, remediation and other costs. Given the state's funding shortfall and the Act 1 limitations on tax increases, school districts have limited ability to fund these potential new costs.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the board of school directors of the Mount Union Area School District opposes the State Board of Education's proposal to enact Graduation Competency Assessments and any other regulation or legislation that usurps the authority of local school districts to determine whether their students have earned a high school diploma. This resolution will be shared with the State Board of Education, state legislators including local legislators and members of the Senate and House Education Committees, and the Independent Regulatory Review Commission.

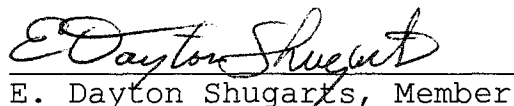
Adopted this 25th day of February, 2008.

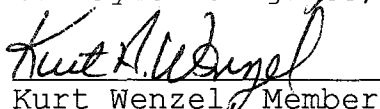
(Not Present At Meeting)

Ralph Park, President.


Andrea Christoff, Member


Andrew Ketner, Member

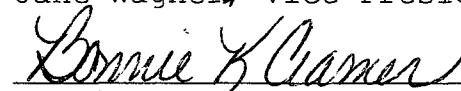

E. Dayton Shugarts, Member


Kurt Wenzel, Member

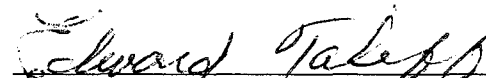
Attest:


Deanna Lee Wagner, Board Secretary (seal)


Jane Wagner, Vice-President


Bonnie Cramer, Member


Rexall Secrest, Member


Edward Taliff, Member