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Sent: Thursday, May 22, 2008 10:33 AM
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Subject: Tredyffrin/Easttown School Board Resolution Opposing Graduation Competency Assessments

This message is sent on behalf of the Tredyffrin/Easttown Board of School Directors.

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 2008 MAY 27 AM 10:45
 INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
 REVIEW COMMISSION

RESOLUTION OPPOSING PROPOSED HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION COMPETENCY ASSESSMENTS

By the Board of School Directors Tredyffrin/Easttown School District

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania 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 high-stakes standardized tests that can include new Graduation Competency Assessments in order to get a diploma; and

WHEREAS, the Tredyffrin/Easttown School District is preparing all students for success in college and the workplace; and

WHEREAS, the proposal does not contain enough flexibility to meet the needs of all diverse learners, as many students have different learning styles and needs that warrant an alternate assessment of their skills and knowledge; and

WHEREAS, in the Tredyffrin/Easttown School District, students who have not scored proficient on the PSSA have shown understanding of state standards through a variety of other assessments including portfolios, oral presentations, hands-on-demonstrations, and the methods included in the proposed Chapter 4 changes do not permit assessment of students in nontraditional ways; and

WHEREAS, the restriction of the proposed local proficiency assessment option is likely to label students basic or below basic who are in fact proficient; however, many of these students may not demonstrate proficiency in the highstakes testing environment; the current proposals maintain a local proficiency assessment in words but not in

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spirit;
and

WHEREAS, students who have passed the local proficiency method and have historically experienced placement and success in college could be denied the opportunity to attend even after offers of admission have been granted; and

WHEREAS, the addition of the GCA battery reduces the number of instructional days; and imposes an unreasonable load of high-stakes testing on students who are already facing a burden of stressful standardized tests; and

WHEREAS, the introduction of GCAs amounts to a state controlled curriculum that reduces the District's ability to provide a curriculum based on community needs and desires for education that focuses on developing in students a passion for learning, personal integrity, the pursuit of excellence and social responsibility; and

WHEREAS, the current proposals could have significant economic impact on districts operating under Act 1 fiscal constraints and the required expenditures have no proof of cost effectiveness.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of School Directors of the Tredyffrin/Easttown School District opposes the State Board of Education's proposals to enact Graduation Competency Assessments and any other regulations or legislation that usurp 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.