

Buckheit, James

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From: GCJaffe@aol.com

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Sent: Tuesday, May 20, 2008 6:53 AM

To: jrbuckheit@state.pa.us; irrc@irrc.state.pa.us; jrholdes@pasen.gov; musto@pasenate.com;
 jstairs@pahousegop.com; jroebuck@pahouse.net; dnlane@pahousegop.com;
 cruble@pahousegop.com; Eerickson@pasen.gov; andydlanahan@pasenate.com

Subject: Please vote AGAINST Graduation Competency Assessment

To the people who represent me--

I have been a parent in the Tredyffrin Easttown School District for over 13 years. I have watched with dismay, sadness and now anger as more and more control has been taken away from our very able school district and put in the hands of the State. I have served on many academic committees on behalf of our district. I have watched the teaching style of many of our teachers change from one of creativity and uniqueness to teaching to a test--specifically the PSSA. With the onset of No Child Left Behind, I witnessed the implementation of additional testing days, increased stress levels in both teachers and children, endless additional hours and money spent on the administration of this program and no change in the already excellent scores we produced.

Now, the State is proposing more control over the school district through the Graduation Competency Assessment. I vehemently oppose this for the following reasons:

- 1) 10 (!) additional tests can do nothing but take precious classroom time away from teaching and add additional STRESS on our children.
- 2) I want teachers to bring their creativity to the classroom not more rote information that can be regurgitated for a test and then forgotten. What do you remember most about your time at school? Information you memorized for an SAT or something unique that occurred in the classroom? There is very little time already for true teaching because of all the tests that are already required.
- 3) There are some children who are not good test takers and shine when presented with additional, more flexible opportunities to show their knowledge. GCA does not allow for this--you MUST pass 5 of these required tests or fail. I cannot imagine how many students would fail to get their HS diploma because of this. Is this truly in the best interest of these students and our Country? I am concerned these students may get so discouraged, just give up, and never receive their diplomas.
- 4) Please let our school district have some control over what we do on a local level. It has proven to be very successful without any outside help from the State. I do not want to see teachers become stifled in their teaching style because of increased State mandates. I'm fearful that this legislation will have an impact that is opposed to its very good intention.

Thank you for listening to my comments and for voting on our behalf AGAINST GCA.

Gerry Jaffe
 795 Avonwood Drive
 Wayne, PA 19087610-989-9899

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