
From: Saldomani@aol.com

Sent: Friday, May 23, 2008 4:21 PM

To: j buckheit@state.pa.us; IRRRC; jrhoades@pasen.gov; musto@pasenate.com; jstair@pahousegop.com; jroebuck@pahouse.net; dmlne@pahousegop.com; cruble@pahousegop.com; eerickson@pasen.gov; andydinniman@pasenate.com

Cc: Saldomani@aol.com; Siciliansallie@aol.com

Subject: Graduation Competency Assessments

RECEIVED

2008 MAY 27 AM 9:40

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

Instead of instituting even more standardized tests with which to confound students, teachers, school administrators, and parents, let us incept programs wherein students will be exposed to life experience, arts and culture.

The ever increasing demands placed upon students to do busy work in academia has become an irksome task. My sons are forever cooped up and working. They work in school all day, then work far into the wee hours at home. They engage in extracurricular activities despite the teachers being unrelenting in work load, making it difficult for the students to rehearse, perform, and learn something outside the realm of a particular academic discipline. That is unfair and places a pressure that is unhealthy and counterproductive. It also narrows the student's experience. And to this existing situation we want to add another worry by piling on yet another test? When does a student live? Maria Montessori said, "Follow the child." We do not. We make the child follow us.

I was an educator for 20 years. I have witnessed first hand the constant increase of burdens placed on our children and our teachers. We do them a terrible disservice and injustice. These students need time to BE. Corraling them into yet another stuffy room to answer endless, meaningless questions for the sake of our feeling we are doing something about educating our young is ludicrous at least and criminal at most.

Turn students loose in museums and galleries, allow them to explore live theatre, dance, music. Give them freedom to create. Put an end to standardized tests. Living a life via experience is what true education is. I learned more when the nuns took us to Manhattan to Broadway plays, concerts, museums, and for general sightseeing. I also recall that the most interesting classes were those where the teacher put the textbook aside and spoke of his own life's experience. What is it we are trying to create with this standardized testing approach to education?

Students are as different as fingerprints or snowflakes. We cannot; indeed we should not, adhere to some created code of intelligence and achievement measurement, but rather view each student as an individual. Standardized tests are supposed to measure the student. They do not. I have seen students bored, anxious, apathetic, angry, and upset while taking standardized tests. Giving them more tests to take will only increase incorrect, false results, because a true measurement is never achieved. The human factor comes into the mix and muddles the true results. More tests will be a waste of effort, time, and money. I vote NO on adding more standardized tests.

Sal Poidomani