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From: TColman@aol.com
Sent: Wednesday, May 28, 2008 1:44 PM
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Subject: Opposition to GCA's

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INDEPENDENT RESEARCH
REVIEW COMMISSION

I am writing to express my vigorous opposition to the proposed Graduation Competency assessments.

Allow me to begin by stating that I am a long-time resident of Tredyffrin Township, and a strong supporter of the public schools. I have also run several corporations, and taught at the college level. I am well aware that there are poorly prepared job applicants and poorly prepared college students. But GCA's are not the answer. I do not believe for one minute that adding more high-stakes testing, and thereby decreasing teaching time, will solve this problem. And I certainly don't think that adding another set of state-mandated reports and requirements will improve the situation at all.

As the founder and Chairman of the Foundation for Learning in Tredyffrin/Easttown, I have come to know, first-hand, that many students have different learning needs and styles, and the one-size-fits-all approach is, by definition, not suited to diverse learners. Numerous Tredyffrin/Easttown School District students have been awarded diplomas based on alternative evaluation methods, and gone on to excel in college.

Stop adding more and more regulations. There are already more than enough ways to evaluate student achievement, without the state adding another. Use the time for teaching. Allow local educators to use PSSA's and other local evaluation methods, and then let the potential employer or college determine whether or not the student is adequately prepared.

By the way, just what will happen when an underperforming school district receives GCA results that reconfirm what they already know--that their students are performing very poorly? Testing is not the answer. Value the educational process, not the testing process.

Please do not implement the GCA's.

Sincerely yours,

Thomas E. Colman

Wayne, Tredyffrin Township, Chester County

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