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From: Nothdurft, Heidi [hnothdurft@lifesworkwpa.org]
Sent: Wednesday, May 28, 2008 10:41 AM
To: jbuckheit@state.pa.us
Subject: Changing Pennsylvania's High School Requirements

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INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

I am a parent of 3 children and I see many flaws in our current educational system. I agree that changes need to take place and I do agree with some of the proposed changes described in the A Ticket to Success newsletter. I do believe that changes need to start before the high school level because the expectation of success beyond graduation needs to be a collaborative effort throughout the school experience. One concern I currently have is the fact that curriculum in our schools seems to be geared toward the PSSA test and the conclusion could be made that our educational institutions are more concerned about the overall results of that testing rather than the overall education of our children. Some schools have even gone so far as to shorten the length of certain subjects in order to extend the time of the subjects that the PSSA focuses on. Who decides what subjects are more important than others and don't all subjects aid in the overall expected outcomes? Our current educational system is failing our children and without a doubt changes need to be made. I do not think that any one test or any one measure should be used as a basis for success or failure because of the probability for error or inaccurate results. There are several factors that need to be examined, such as, the individual child and if that child tests well or any current issues that the child may be facing outside of the classroom or does this test accurately reflect the overall work that the child has done throughout their years in school. When we see that a child is struggling in a subject it should not be the PSSA results that determine whether or not our children receive additional assistance such as tutoring and our children should not be excluded from assistance because they are bussed to school and are not offered activity buses after school hours. I do think the idea of having several tests would be beneficial but I also think that the system as a whole needs to be looked at not just the graduation requirements.

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