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Buckheit, James

2008 MAY 29 AM 9:34

From: Joe Alban [josepha@rcn.com]
Sent: Sunday, May 25, 2008 1:02 PM
To: jbuckheit@state.pa.us
Subject: GCA PROPOSAL

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
 REVIEW COMMISSION

A couple of points for consideration

A giant step in the right direction and just maybe a much better approach than even the PSSA approach by adding this tool to the educational arsenal. Testing core subject matter at the time of completion of a subject course, I believe will benefit the student immensely since the information will be fresh.

Just a couple of points:

1. A lot of negative comments are being made by organizations such as PSBA. With some 160 School Boards signing general petitions against this proposal why are we not stating how many have signed petitions for the proposal.
2. As a school Board Member, I would like to be certain that this program will not in fact be another unfunded mandate. There are a number of school Board Members who feel that although the literature states it will not be, history has a way of suggesting just the opposite.
3. There appears to be nothing in the literature that I have run across to date to indicate what and how accountability will be measured. I think this is a key concern with many educators and Board Members.
4. Timing of results could pose a problem if the student takes any one of these tests in his/her senior year and fails it the first time close to the graduation date. How does the proposal handle this potential issue?
5. Remediation issues and funding may not be expressed in a way that it is understood relating to the fact that funding is already provided for remediation. Perhaps this needs to be more clearly spelled out on how and how much is allocated.
6. Perhaps over time this test should replace some form of testing already in place in school districts. "Another test" may not be the answer but the "right test" such as those covered by this proposal is the right answer.
7. Perhaps a simple publication could be developed explaining in simple precise terms these tests to School District Board Members who may lack the understanding that is needed but perhaps embrace disapproval because educational leadership in the District may be opposed to it.

The very best of luck in moving this proposal along and making the right changes dedicated by the end goal and not arguments that lack specifics.

Joe Alban

5/27/2008