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Buckheit, James

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From: Richard Cohen [rlcohen1235@msn.com]**Sent:** Tuesday, May 27, 2008 12:02 PM**To:** j buckheit@state.pa.us**Subject:** changes in graduation requirementsINDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

Dear Mr. Buckheit,

Having recently retired after 37 years as a public high school English teacher and an A.P. teacher for 30 of those years, I want to express my concern over the proposal for yet another set of tests for students. With PSSA tests already firmly in place, it is redundant to require that students pass another set of tests for graduation. As long as the state requires students to reach proficiency levels in the various subject tests, high standards of achievement will measure the competency of prospective high school graduates. I would also like to list my other concerns about these proposed graduation tests:

1. These additional exams further encroach upon the autonomy of individual school districts, who have already established their criteria for graduation;
2. Preparation for these tests will continue to chip away at the freedom of teachers to prepare creative ways to engage students in learning;
3. The new tests will cost millions to develop, evaluate, and implement and will again exchange teaching time for testing time;
4. The additional tests will make graduation for the ever more diverse populations of public schools in Pennsylvania even more difficult.

I urge the DPE to drop the plan to institute these new tests and to encourage individual districts to continue to maintain high standards for high school graduation.

Sincerely yours,

Richard L. Cohen

5/27/2008