

2696

RECEIVED

228

Buckheit, James

From: wynne_wilking_carr@vanguard.com

2008 MAY 29 AM 9:35

Sent: Friday, May 23, 2008 11:01 AM

To: j buckheit@state.pa.us; irrc@irrc.state.pa.us; j rhoades@pasen.gov; musto@pasenate.com;
jstairs@pahousegop.com; jroebuck@pahouse.net; online@pahousegop.com;
cruble@pahousegop.com; eerickson@pasen.gov; andydinniman@pasenate.com

Subject: No to Grad Competency Assessment for T/E Schools

Dear Legislators,

I am the parent of FOUR children between the ages 6 & 19.

Two of the children have been diagnosed with mild to severe learning differences.

The 19 year old graduated from Conestoga, while keeping a 15-20 hour a week job, & went on to carry a 4.0 GPA her first semester in college. She was diagnosed in 7th grade with an Auditory Processing Disorder...basically, she **understands only 2%** of what she hears.

She learns best thru visual & kinesthetic experiences.

Before she was tested (extensively at our expense), she/we were experiencing frustration & failure from 4th grade thru 6th grade.

This impacted not only her academic performance, but her emotional/social development & self esteem at a crucial time in her development.

She has most recently been offered a substantial scholarship to Bucknell University for her junior & senior years if she can keep her 4.0 GPA.

My 16 year old son has other issues. BiPolar Disorder, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder & ADHD. He is a challenge, but he is also extremely bright. Which means that unless he is meaningfully engaged, he is a handful of trouble on wheels looking for a place to happen.

He is now experiencing academic, social & emotional success in alternative programs that address his special needs.

I shudder to think what the impact of the proposed GCA would have on him. He stresses obsessively over tests & any deviation from his routine. He may not go to college right away, or ever.

But he DOES have many talents that can be trained into marketable skills so that he can become a self sufficient, contributing member of society. Currently, he & many of his friends, struggle with the knowledge that they are "different", & worry & wonder what place they will have in society. To burden them with a test that has no meaning for their lives, but can potentially create such anxiety for kids on anti anxiety meds is too terrible to contemplate.

TE has a WONDERFUL program in place that works with the family & the students strengths & needs to EQUIP him with MEANINGFUL skills for HIS life. Please DO NOT add any more burdens to the system. Do not cause any funding to be diverted from special needs programs.

VOTE NO TO GCA!!

Very sincerely,

Wynne Wilking

5/23/2008