

Buckheit, James

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From: cberkey@state.pa.us
Sent: Friday, May 30, 2008 11:53 AM
To: jbuckheit@state.pa.us
Subject: Support Changes to Graduation Requirements

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INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

Mr. Jim Buckheit
State Board of Education
333 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17126

Dear Mr. Buckheit:

I am writing to express my support of the State Board of Education's proposal to change graduation requirements in Pennsylvania and develop a consistent measurement of student achievement. These regulations clearly will help ensure that all high school graduates demonstrate proficiency on the state's academic standards and possess a uniform knowledge and skill base. The proposal also establishes a set of supports for students and schools to help students reach their fullest potential.

Our students are competing with students from around the corner and around the world for college admissions and for jobs. We know however, that too many young people are graduating without the academic foundation and skills needed to succeed. Pennsylvania needs a strong system of supports for students and schools coupled with a common statewide accountability system so that all our graduates are prepared for the rigors of postsecondary education and 21st century careers.

The State Board's proposed regulations offer students and school districts a variety of options to assess student achievement of the state's academic standards. The proposed regulations also call for specific supports for students and for schools -- including mandatory remediation for struggling students, voluntary model curriculum that is aligned with the standards, and professional development and technical assistance for teachers and schools.

I support the State Board's proposal as a sensible approach to make certain that every student from every school district in the Commonwealth has achieved the state's academic standards and is prepared to transition to postsecondary education, 21st century occupations and productive citizenship.

Sincerely,
Cathi Berkey
74 Suffolk Rd.
Harrisburg, PA 17112