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22 Bayberry Drive
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050
May 31, 2008

Mr. Jim Buckheit
Executive Director
State Board of Education
333 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

Dear Mr. Buckheit:

I am writing to express my support of the State Board of Education's proposed Chapter 4 (Academic Standards and Assessments) regulations to change graduation requirements in Pennsylvania and develop a series of end-of-course exams called Graduation Competency Assessments (GCAs) in English, math, science and social studies.

How frustrating that for so many of Pennsylvania's children and their families moving forward from high school into post secondary education, training and/or jobs that so much time and money must be spent on remediation. A high school diploma should represent competence in the basic skills students need to continue their education or enter the world of work no matter from what school district a student graduated.


Contrary to the challengers of the GCA's, I believe that this proposal does not perpetuate issues around "teaching to the test" and more "high stakes" testing. The State Board's proposed regulations provides a more developmental learning and testing option through the GCAs - the ability to be tested on what you have learned, when you have learned it, and to get the assistance and support you need immediately to meet any gaps in knowledge and learning. Ultimately, education and support a student needs to provide a foundation for success in life and work.

However, the GCA's are not the only option open to school districts to assess student achievement against the state's academic standards. Students can demonstrate proficiency on any one or combination of - the 11th grade PSSAs, Advance Placement or International Baccalaureate exams, local assessments that have been independently validated.

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 agree with James E. Rohr, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, of PNC Financial services who said, "*The day-to-day reality of succeeding in an increasingly competitive marketplace demands skilled and educated workers.*" I wholeheartedly support the State Board's proposed regulations. Upon enactment, they will help insure 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,



Diane P. Barber

From: dpbarber@verizon.net
Sent: Friday, May 30, 2008 3:36 PM
To: jrbuckheit@state.pa.us
Subject: Regulation #6-312 Academic Standards and Assessment

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