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Buckheit, James

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**From:** FRANCIS RYAN [FRYAN@kcsd.org]

2008 JUN -4 PM 1: 50

**Sent:** Monday, June 02, 2008 8:42 AM**To:** jrbuckheit@state.pa.usINDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
REVIEW COMMISSION**Subject:** State Graduation Exams

Dear Mr. Buckheit,

I would like to express my concern about a proposed movement by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to state mandated graduation competency testing. I am sure that you have already received a wealth of complaints about how such a move will hurt students.

I would like to bring an additional concern to your attention. My concern is that adding a huge assessment requirement to local schools without providing adequate resources to administer those assessments will place greater stress on the guidance departments, administrative teams, and teachers.

The guidance department that I work in at Kennett High School in Kennett Square is currently responsible for planning, coordinating, and administering 17 different Advanced Placement exams, the SAT's (twice a year), The PSAT (to the entire school), a part to the PSSA, and the admissions testing of close to 100 of our students applying to our vocational school each year. Such a large commitment to assessment by a staff of only four counselors for a population of nearly 1300 students leaves little time to meet with students for counseling. Adding an additional large testing commitment will make it almost impossible to provide counseling services to our students. I fear that we will simply become the Assessment Department and not the Counseling Department of our school.

I ask that you and your colleagues consider one of the "opportunity costs" of mandating such a program before you assign this responsibility to our schools. That opportunity cost is the loss of counselor time that could be spent counseling students to help them

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to maximize their potential in school.

Do we really need another assessment? Would we be better off maximizing the effectiveness of the limited resources that we have?

Please consider these questions when weighing the benefits of a statewide graduation assessment.

Sincerely,

Francis Ryan, M.Ed.  
Guidance Counselor