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Buckheit, James**From:** Hackett, Sean [s_hackett@conradweiser.org]

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Sent: Monday, June 02, 2008 10:03 AM**To:** j buckheit@state.pa.usINDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION**Subject:** GCA

Hi,

I am writing to oppose the concept of a Graduation Competency Assessment. While I agree in principal with the concept that a student should not merely age out of high school, and be granted a diploma for doing so, high-stakes testing fails to cover some of the best learning that happens in high school, and put too much weight on others.

I teach choral music, as well as music theory and sight singing. These skills may not be directly applicable to many students' chosen career paths, but the more subtle lessons that are learned in the pursuit of music can be more valuable than Algebra II. Most things we teach in school are liberal arts, in that they are to teach students to learn, and to make them more ready to learn in the future.

In addition, music and art study gives students a chance to experience beauty, and learn what it takes to make something beautiful. Even if music didn't have a mathematical, historical, athletic, and social science component it would be worth doing because true aesthetic awareness is much more real when done through experience, instead of theory.

I've seen in 14 years of teaching what the PSSA has done for all disciplines that are not specifically tested on the PSSA. I fear that with more high stakes testing, what I do will be further pushed from the school experience.

Thanks,
Sean Hackett
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