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Buckheit, James

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From: C Sparks [sparkyc23@yahoo.com]
Sent: Wednesday, June 04, 2008 8:50 AM
To: jbuckheit@state.pa.us
Subject: Opposition to the proposed GSA Chapter 4 Regulations

2008 JUN -5 PM 1:33

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

Dear Mr. Buckheit

I am opposed to the proposed GSA regulation that does not allow for local assessment for a high school diploma or state funding. Research has demonstrated time and again that not all students perform well on high stakes tests and yet they are are proficient in the subjects areas being tested. Additionally, local school districts understand the challenges of their students and the obstacles some face in preparing for a high stakes exam. Without allowing for local assessment, these students will disproportionately leave high school without a diploma and these are the very students who need them to improve their lives and the lives of their family. Low proficiency on the GSA or PSSA does not mean a student is a low performer.

The denial of a high school diploma limits job opportunities and thus the income potential of students. Additionally, these students will likely only have low paying jobs that do not provide health insurance or retirement benefits. Consequently, these students will not rise above their obstacles but be encased in them and we the taxpayers will once again foot the bill to support those that should have been able to support themselves. By allowing local assessment for a high school diploma, these same students could earn their diploma and continue on with their choice of higher education, earning jobs that pay well and provide health care and retirement benefits. By doing so we the taxpayers do not have to support them, but rather they are productive members of our society helping all of us to grow and allowing greater resources to be directed to members of our community who truly need our help and support.

Finally, the proposal, as I read it, does prove that adding an additional layer of testing in the form of the GSA will guarantee that students that pass the exam are of any higher caliber than what the current level of testing provides.

Sincerely

Candace Sparks
parent of students in Cumberland Valley School District

6/4/2008