

Buckheit, James

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From: Cathy Vaccaro [cathyv19013@yahoo.com]

2008 JUN -5 PM 1:32

Sent: Sunday, June 01, 2008 10:12 PM

To: j buckheit@state.pa.us

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
REVIEW COMMISSION

Subject: GCAs

I strongly oppose GCAs. Paper-and pencil standardized exams are a very imperfect measures of a student's knowledge. Vocational-Education students often demonstrate their knowledge in different ways and should not be denied a diploma. The proposed regulations allow IEP teams to exempt students from the requirement that they score Proficient on the GCAs or PSSAs in order to graduate, although the regulation does not exempt them from taking the GCAs. Special education students would be harmed as resources are diverted to the task of getting regular education students ready to score Proficient on more standardized tests.

***Today schools target students who perform at the Basic Level on PSSA pretests because it is believed that those students are most likely able to perform at the Proficient Level if given extra services. In the meantime, students who perform on an even lower level are not given the services they so desperately need and are entitled to receive.***

There are many children who become emotionally distraught from taking standardized tests that are far divorced from their instruction, such as a special education students, children who are suited for more commercial subject areas and children who have no need to become proficient in the areas of math or science beyond the Basic Level to contribute to society. Some children suffer emotionally and academically from the pressures placed on them. These tests are not harmless. They will prevent students from getting jobs they are capable of doing because their talents are not aligned with all that will be tested if GCAs are the measure for gaining a high school diploma.