

**Buckheit, James**

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**From:** Walker, Linda [WALL@asd.k12.pa.us]

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**Sent:** Monday, June 02, 2008 3:25 PM**To:** j buckheit@state.pa.usINDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
REVIEW COMMISSION**Subject:** Graduation Competency Assessment

To Whom It May Concern:

I have been teaching English for 34 years in the public school system. While I do believe the students have to be held accountable in some way for their education, I am opposed to anymore mandatory statewide competency tests. They are already tested via the PSSA; the results of this test could be used to isolate those students who are not proficient, and they could be assigned mandatory remediation classes in the fields in which they are deficient during their senior year and also be required to take the PSSA again during their senior year. However, there must be a caveat—we must also take into account that there will be those students—despite the mandates of NCLB—who will not be proficient at their grade level materials because they are challenged or handicapped in some way, like reading and comprehending only on a third grade level even though in a junior or senior year.

It is also true that we are turning our public classrooms into a training ground for test takers. Taking tests takes up a good third of the school year now; so how much more time will be utilized in students' taking even more proficiency tests in even more subject areas? Yes, I know all about the Classrooms of the Future initiative with its emphasis on students becoming self-motivated learners through technology. Yet what we SAY we are proposing to do with students in every day class situations in promoting self-learning via computers is the antithesis of what we expect them to do on tests. We are dooming them to failure in a traditional test setting. Enough is enough; NCLB or no NCLB, we can't expect children to love learning when all they do is take tests.

*Linda Walker*