

2696

RECEIVED

459

Buckheit, James

From: The Arnolds [thearnolds1@verizon.net]**Sent:** Monday, June 02, 2008 9:19 PM**To:** jbuckheit@state.pa.us**Subject:** Graduation Competency Assessments

2008 JUN -5 PM 1: 33

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

Dear Mr. Buckheit,

I am a retired vocational teacher in the Pennsylvania public school system. I am concerned about the proposed Graduation Competency Assessment tests and the negative effects they will have on public education in the state of Pennsylvania.

Learning styles differ from student to student. As a vocational teacher I had to constantly be creative in my method of evaluating my students. My belief is the greatest value received for dollar spent is by reducing class size and providing remediation for students who require such special assistance. My greatest objection to graduation requirement testing is in a society where we have promoted "social promotions" from kindergarten on, it is unfair to place a student's graduation in jeopardy with one written test. If in fact we had competency tests for each grade level, and these were used consistently for promoting students from one grade level to the next there would be some validity to a graduation test.

By having one standardized test you will stifle the creativity of teachers in the education system. As we have seen with the PSSAs, school districts are pressured to teach students how to take tests rather than how to learn. We do not need a society of test takers—we need a society of thinkers and problem solvers.

Mark Arnold

6/4/2008