

Buckheit, James

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From: Ruth Seitz [ruth.seitz@yahoo.com]
Sent: Wednesday, June 04, 2008 5:47 AM
To: j buckheit@state.pa.us
Subject: proposed regulations

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INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

To the PA State Board of Education -

Don't put money into tests that can be a barrier to getting a diploma. Put money into reduced class size and support for subject mastery so that students can be more successful.

As we know, a high school diploma is key to improving one's economic situation, moving out of poverty. I work with foster children, and they struggle with all kinds of personal trauma and loss. Many have IEPs. Getting a high school diploma is one of their main goals. Although the proposed regulations allow IEP teams to exempt special education students from *scoring proficient* to graduate, it does NOT provide for special education students to be exempted from *taking* the tests. Our foster children suffer emotionally and academically (as it often takes days or weeks for students to settle down from the trauma and start to learn again).

Special education students would be harmed as resources are diverted to the unnecessary task of getting regular education students ready to score Proficient on more standardized tests. (If a class has 20 regular education students who will not graduate unless they score Proficient, and five IEP students who will graduate whether or not they score Proficient, the pressure to focus attention on the 20 regular education students will be extreme.) This would very likely cause a flood of students attempting to get into special education as a way to avoid the GCA requirement, taking time and resources from the children who truly need special education services.

There are too many unanswered questions. For example, what if a special education child does not take Algebra I and II? Will he still be required to take those GCAs? There is nothing in the proposed regulations that would exempt him from having to take them. If they do take a GCA and fail it, will they have to take remediation in that subject, even though they don't need to score proficient to graduate? The regulations aren't clear on this.

Please don't go the route of having another standardized test that will prevent more students from getting a diploma.

Thank you, Ruth Seitz M.Ed. Recruiter/Trainer at NHS Human Services-Edgewater

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