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From: Amy Wall [amy.wall@pennmanor.net]
Sent: Wednesday, June 04, 2008 2:21 PM
To: j buckheit@state.pa.us
Subject: High stakes exit exams

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INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

I am writing about my concern regarding the proposed Chapter 4 regulations, also known as the graduation competency assessments.

As a public school teacher, I see first-hand what these high stakes tests are doing to my students. Students who routinely do well on various assessments (research papers, portfolios, etc.) become so stressed out over these exams that they do not do well. These exams are an imperfect measure of a student's knowledge. Some students might opt to drop out rather than not graduate. What would be the costs to the students and community if this were to happen?

The proposed regulations allow IEP teams to exempt students from the requirement that they score proficient on these exams. This would very likely cause a flood of students attempting to get into special education as a way to avoid the proficient requirement, which would take time and resources away from the children who truly need special education services.

The monies earmarked for these requirements could be better used to improve the educational experiences of all students--by having smaller class sizes or offering tutoring and summer school programs. More money should not be spent on more testing when we already have the PSSAs. Enough instructional time is already being taken from the students with the PSSAs.

Please help me eliminate the graduation competency assessments so that our students can better learn.

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