

Sent:
To:
Subject:

Sunday, June 08, 2008 1:33 PM
James Buckheit
Oppose the GCA proposal!

Cynthia Templin BSAE
173 Riders Way
Lebanon, PA 17042-8705

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2008 JUN 12 AM 9:36

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

Dear James Buckheit:

I oppose the State Board of Education's proposed Graduation Competency Assessments. This proposal would mandate high-stakes standardized high school exit exams and would deny students a high school diploma if they do not score "proficient" on these statewide tests. There are numerous reasons I oppose the GCA proposal, but first and foremost I do not believe that standardized tests are the best determination of student achievement.

Denying students a high school diploma has long-term negative effects on their lives, and initiates a situation where creative, enhancing education is scrapped in favor of "teaching to the test" methods. At a time when we know that Pennsylvania's public education system lacks the funding it needs by over \$4 billion in order to help every student meet the state's academic standards, it is irresponsible to impose high-stakes testing on our students. In addition, no analysis has been done on the cost of developing and administering the GCAs, let alone what it would cost to remediate those students who do not score "proficient" on the exam. In terms of remediating students, research shows that children that are below basic by the age of tenth or eleventh grade were also behind others of their age in K to 3rd grade. The idea that any teacher could remediate students in eleventh grade that are only reading at a fourth or fifth grade level, with math skills at third or fourth grade levels, is preposterous. This proposed plan deliberately targets the poor, minorities, English Second Language Learners, and some of the neediest of the student populations. Rather than launch a dubious new "proposal" that is neither warranted, or grounded in the ability to achieve its goal, utilize the research on literacy, language acquisition, and learning that is available to develop aggressive programs for children at the beginning of their school careers rather than the end of their educational experience. Spend the tax payers dollars wisely to remediate at the K through 3rd grade levels when children are still able to achieve

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proficiency rather than wait until there is little chance for them to catch up in eleventh grade. Thank you for your consideration of my views.

Sincerely,

Cynthia L. Templin
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