

Buckheit, James

From: Mary K. Baden [mkbaden@nauticom.net]
Sent: Thursday, June 05, 2008 9:13 PM
To: j buckheit@state.pa.us
Subject: opposed to graduation competency assessments

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INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

Mr. Buckheit -

I believe that the Graduation Competency Assessments (GCA) should not be enacted without further refining. Too many students will be lost in the demand for "stream-lined" testing. As a parent of three students (two graduated and attending colleges, one completing ninth grade at a well-rated high school), I know the diversity of learning first hand. My children have different learning styles, as well as different strengths and weaknesses in those styles.

GCA is an idea that is perhaps necessary, but not as it is proposed. GCA, as proposed, is impractical in application. With further refining, it may be improved, or it may be just be another waste of taxpayer money. If followed through, but with lower standards to be met, what good would it be? If the standards are set too high, how many children will be lost and labelled "learning disabled" by having a standard of learning too high for them? Will this allow only certain students to attend college because they have not performed to the state standards? Who will be the judge of who can and can't be college graduates (aka who has reached the mandated level of learning in high school)? Every child should be afforded the opportunity to attend college, but with a mandated level of learning, many of those students would no longer qualify. How many children will be held back because of an inability to reach standards? How will GCA take into account those students that learn poorly just because they dislike the teacher? How will GCA streamline different teaching styles? Will our students be taught by robots? How can GCA be a standard on how good or bad a child will be as an adult? How can one exam determine whether a child can graduate, when he or she may already be accepted at a college based upon their other academics? How will GCA aid the college entrance process? Will all colleges and universities be required to abide by the GCA as a standard for college entrance? Will private colleges be willing to have the government mandate and change their college acceptance practices? Will they lose their accreditation if they fail to comply?

GCA raises too many questions that can't be answered without students being unfairly impacted. Until these and many other questions are answered, the Graduation Competency Assessments should be tabled for further review.

Please vote "no" to the current proposed GCA.

Thank you.

Mary K. Baden