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INDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
REVIEW COMMISSION

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James Lee, President

June 10, 2008

Mr. Jim Buckheit  
Executive Director  
State Board of Education  
333 Market Street, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

Dear Mr. Buckheit:

I am writing to express my support of the State Board of Education's proposed regulations to change the high school graduation requirements in the state. The proposed regulations will help ensure all of Pennsylvania's graduates have the academic background they need to transition successfully to college and careers.

I'm supportive of the draft regulations because they include important supports for students, teachers and schools to help every student achieve the state's academic standards in reading, writing, mathematics, science and social studies. These supports, specifically identified in the proposed rulemaking, include model curriculum for teachers to use if they wish, mandatory remediation for students who are struggling, professional development and technical assistance for teachers and schools. In addition, these regulations also provide students a variety of assessment tools to demonstrate their proficiency of the state academic standards including the PSSAs, validated local assessments, Advanced Placement exams, International Baccalaureate exams, and end-of-course exams called Graduation Competency Assessments (GCAs).

I'm certain you'll agree that in today's global economy it is critical all students graduate from high school prepared to go onto some kind of postsecondary education -- whether it is technical school, 2- or 4-year college, apprentice programs or workforce training programs. Unfortunately, too many Pennsylvania students receive diplomas without possessing the necessary knowledge and skills to be successful. Moreover, from the perspective of someone who conducts survey research polling for a living, and frequently measures public opinion on a statewide basis, I can tell you that our sense is that Pennsylvania residents are very frustrated with the lack of progress with our education system in the state, and most do not believe the education that children of today are receiving in elementary and secondary schools is adequate. Clearly, bold new proposals that "raise the bar" for both students and teachers need to be adopted, and in our opinion these regulations are a step in the right direction.

591

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important issue.

Sincerely,

*Jim Lee*

President, Susquehanna Polling and Research, Inc  
Director, PA Partnerships for Children

Pc: Joan Benso, PA Partnerships for Children