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Sent: Monday, June 16, 2008 11:11 AM
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Subject: Concerned Parent Opposes GCA's

Dear PA Representatives:

I am writing to express my OPPOSITION of the Pennsylvania Graduation Competency Assessments (GCAs). While I understand the need to ensure that students are graduating with the tools they need to succeed, I feel that another round of testing is not the way to meet that goal.

I OPPOSE the GCAs for many reasons, including:

- 1)I am opposed because GCAs will not be provided in a format that meets the needs of diverse learners. I believe this will set these students up for failure.
- 2)I am opposed because we already test our students in math, reading and science through the state PSSA exams.
- 3)I am opposed to double testing of our students. I am opposed because students in our district are already reaching proficiency in reading, math, and science either through the PSSA exams or through a comprehensive, local assessment.
- 4)I am opposed because GCAs do not test our students on relevant 21st century skills, and valuable class time will have to be diverted to prepare students to take these additional tests.
- 5)Lastly, the money that would be spent on designing, administering, and evaluating the GCAs would be better spent on smaller classroom sizes, early identification and intervention of learning differences, and providing all Pennsylvania students with the tools they need to be more successful in the classroom.

We already do enough teaching to the tests, which consequently means stressing our children out more than teaching them. I believe the time spent in the classroom should focus on diverse instruction that enhances useful knowledge and not just how to fill in a circle with a number 2 pencil.

My children do NOT need any more testing; what they need is more challenges in thier classrooms.

As State representatives, I believe it is your responsibility to listen to the concerns of many parents of chilren in PA schools, and that you should NOT vote for the Pennsylvania Graduation Competency Assessments (GCAs).

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Christine M. McNicholas, parent and PTO President
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