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**Buckheit, James**

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**From:** Kimberly Nussbaum [knussbaum@zoominternet.net]**Sent:** Wednesday, June 11, 2008 11:05 PMINDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
REVIEW COMMISSION**To:** j buckheit@state.pa.us**Subject:** Graduation Requirement

Jim,

Thank you for allowing and receiving public opinion on this issue. I come to you as a parent and educator who substitutes in multiple districts/grades, for both special ed and regular ed.

I'm concerned about a state test to determine graduation. While I support the purpose of the PSSA, as a means of insuring all students have exposure to challenging curriculum and requiring teachers to be accountable for all aspects of curriculum, I have seen the down side to such mandates.

As I substitute in multiple school districts in Western Pennsylvania, I am concerned over the teaching of specific questions of the PSSA. While teachers feel the pressure of student success on these standardized tests, the curriculum gets watered down by focusing on minute details rather than presenting the curriculum in its entirety. Months are spent preparing students for the PSSAs. We are cultivating a culture of test takers and not lifelong learners.

I fear, if a state graduation test becomes a reality, the situation will only grow worse by turning students out into the world who lack the mental flexibility needed to function in today's rapidly changing world.

Respectfully,

Kim Nussbaum, M.Ed.  
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