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Buckheit, James

From: Berntsen, Pam non Unisys [Pam.Berntsen@unisys.com]**Sent:** Thursday, June 12, 2008 2:16 PM

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To: j buckheit@state.pa.us**Subject:** "Changing High School Graduation Requirements"INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

Dear Mr. Buckheit,

I would like to take this opportunity to make my "public comment" about the potential implementation of the Graduation Competency Assessments ("GCAs"). I am opposed to the planned GCAs. As the parent of three children in the Central Bucks School District, I am very pleased with the current curriculum and the standards already in place in our school district and in the State of Pennsylvania.

The Assessments have been represented in the newspaper as tests that would be taken "immediately after completion of a corresponding course and would be "close to the point of instruction". This seems to me as being very similar to something currently called a "final exam?" Although, grades are usually given for final exams (and the GCA would be giving pass/fail results), final exams do test a student's knowledge of a subject and, thus, determine if the student has mastered the subject. As you know, high school students also take the PSATs and SATs, and spend time preparing for those tests. Even though they are not required for graduation, students spend large amounts of time preparing for them.

Seniors are currently required to complete a graduation project, which is an intensive prospect for many students. Requiring additional testing will only add to the already strict requirements in place for graduation, and require additional costs for school districts and probably tax payers. I believe Pennsylvania has some of the best schools in the country, and successful individuals have graduated from those schools without tests like the GCAs.

Thank you for letting me voice my opinion. I hope my comments will be taken into consideration in the decision process.

Pam Berntsen

6/12/2008