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Sent: Friday, June 13, 2008 6:08 PM
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Subject: Comment on Proposed Graduation Competency Assessments

Dear Mr. Buckheit, and State Board of Education Members,

I am writing to express my opposition to the Graduation Competency Assessments (GCAs). I am opposed because GCAs would serve to impose another high-stakes test upon students that already face an unreasonable burden of multiple stressful standardized tests, including the PSAs, the SATs, the ACTs and the various AP tests that are now practically mandatory for college-bound students. In addition, requiring students to take the GCAs will increase the amount valuable class time already diverted from teaching relevant skills to time taken to prepare students to take these (and other) standardized tests. Indeed, the Governor's Commission on College and Career Success in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania recognized in their 2006 report recommending the GCAs that Pennsylvania schools would need time to "transition" their core curriculum as part of the program to implement the GCAs. This "transition" most likely means more time spent "teaching to the test" rather than addressing the individual learning needs of the student. Moreover, it should be noted that the GCAs envisioned by the Commission have not yet been drafted, and thus there is no way to evaluate whether the GCAs would be an accurate predictor of success in college or the work force. In short, the limited resources available to Pennsylvania public schools should not be directed to the administration of another standardized test, but rather towards improving the ability of educational professionals to address the educational needs of students on an individual basis.

Most sincerely,

Todd D. Kantorczyk

Tredyffrin/Easttown resident

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