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From: Roann [roannbrown@comcast.net]
Sent: Monday, June 16, 2008 2:58 PM
To: jbuckheit@state.pa.us; IRRRC; jrhoades@pasen.gov; musto@pasenate.com; jstairs@pahousegop.com; jroebuck@pahouse.net; dmilne@pahousegop.com; crubley@pahousegop.com; eerickson@pasen.gov; andydinniman@pasenate.com
Subject: Opposition to proposed Graduation Competency Assessments (GCAs)

State Board of Education
 333 Market St.
 Harrisburg, PA 17126

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

We are writing to express our opposition to the GCAs.

There are a number of reasons why we are opposed to these additional tests:

1. GCAs will not be provided in a format that meets the needs of diverse learners.
2. We already test our students in math, reading and science through the state PSSA exams.
3. We are opposed to double testing of our students 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. 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.

Our family resides in the Tredyffrin Easttown School District. Our district already places an emphasis on preparing its students for college. Unlike a school district's own local proficiency assessment, GCAs do not offer the flexibility to meet the needs of students who have different learning styles and do not permit assessment of students in nontraditional ways. The addition of the GCS battery would reduce the number of instructional days and would impose an unreasonable load of high-stakes testing on students who are already facing a burden of stressful standardized tests.

Finally, the introduction of GCAs would result in a state-controlled curriculum that reduces a local school district's ability to provide a curriculum based on community needs and desires.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Tom Brown and Roann Pope Brown

471 Woodcrest Road, Strafford, PA 19087

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 REVIEW COMMISSION