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From: Persida Himmele [Persida.Himmele@millersville.edu]
Sent: Friday, June 13, 2008 3:48 PM
To: j buckheit@state.pa.us
Subject: Graduation Competency Assessments

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INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

Dear Chapter 4 Committee Members,

We are so strongly against the high school graduation testing requirements that are being proposed by the State Board because we feel that the students who will suffer the most are students in urban school districts and English language learners (ELLs) across the state. We have so many intelligent, even gifted, ELLs who would not be able to demonstrate their understanding on a standardized test, but who can otherwise do so through project-based assignments that allow for time, editing and research. These same ELLs will not have the same opportunities to provide evidence of their learning on the tests that you propose. As a result, they will not be able to graduate. It's simply not fair. It will lead to a rise in ELL and Latino drop-out rates and a corresponding rise in crime and hopelessness.

Please reconsider your proposal. It will not improve education as is its intent, instead it will only increase the achievement gap between ELLs and their English Only peers, and the success rate of students in suburban, mostly white schools and their diverse urban neighbors. We appreciate the intent with which this proposal was written, but we are highly concerned with what we expect will be its outcomes.

Thank You,

Drs. William & Persida Himmele
Millersville University

6/13/2008