

Form letters - 1

873 Cindy Verguldi	Tredyffrin/Easttown			cindyverg@yahoo.com
867 Jennifer W. Leibowitz	Tredyffrin/Easttown SD 664 Joseph Dr	Wayne	PA 19087	jennifer.leibowitz@gemino.com
891 Karen & Steve Friedm	Tredyffrin/Easttown SD 5 Briar Rd	Wayne	PA 19087	
892 Cecilia & Ignacio Mage	Tredyffrin/Easttown SD			ccimagana@yahoo.com.mx
894 Debbie Bookstaber	Tredyffrin/Easttown SD 307 Irish Rd	Berwyn	PA 19312	debbie@utango.com
895 Sharon J. Lamb	Tredyffrin/Easttown SD			sharon.lamb@comcast.net
896 Elizabeth H. Ward	Tredyffrin/Easttown SD			ehward@verizon.net
897 Shannon Frigerio	Tredyffrin/Easttown SD			frigerio@comcast.net
898 Cheryl Bergsma	Tredyffrin/Easttown SD 271 Irish Road	Berwyn	PA 19312	bumperpa@msn.com
899 Samatha Ballard	Tredyffrin/Easttown SD			snb537@yahoo.com
900 Marybeth Panaro	Tredyffrin/Easttown SD			panaro@fast.net
901 Jennifer & John Conge	Tredyffrin/Easttown SD			jconger5@verizon.net
902 Dottie Stinson	Tredyffrin/Easttown SD 208 Walker Rd	Wayne	PA 19087	Law19087@aol.com
903 Sandi Gorman	Tredyffrin/Easttown SD			sg1566@mac.com
904 Todd Kantorczyk	Tredyffrin/Easttown SD			Tkantorczyk@mgkflaw.com
910 Gretchen A. Guttman	Tredyffrin/Easttown SD 852 Nathan Hale Road	Berwyn	PA 19132	tguttman@comcast.net
917 Natalie Sudall	Tredyffrin/Easttown SD			nsudall@verizon.net
919 Christina Chusid	Tredyffrin/Easttown SD 446 Green Hill Lane	Berwyn	PA 19312	christina.chusid@verizon.net
921 Lee Melchiorre	Tredyffrin/Easttown SD			melchior1@verizon.net
924 Maria Kalilec	Tredyffrin/Easttown SD 1306 Karen Lane	Radnor	PA 19087	mkalilec@hotmail.com
790 Cindy E. Roach	Tredyffrin-Easttown resident			cindyroach99@verizon.net
802 Anita McLean	Tredyffrin-Easttown resident			AnitaMcLean@aol.com
805 Tom Brown & Roann F	Tredyffrin-Easttown res 471 Woodcrest Road	Strafford	PA 19087	roannbrown@comcast.net
832 Julie Fisher	Tredyffrin-Easttown res 510 Green Hill Ln	Berwyn	PA 19312	jfish3@verizon.net
857 Gail T. Grib	Tredyffrin-Easttown resident			gtg2285@yahoo.com

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

2008 JUN 23 AM 10:03

RECEIVED

Buckheit, James

Sample letter

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From: Mindek, Renee [MindekR@TESD.NET]

Sent: Thursday, May 22, 2008 10:22 AM

To: j buckheit@state.pa.us; irrc@irrc.state.pa.us; jrhoades@pasen.gov; musto@pasenate.com; jstairs@pahousegop.com; jroebuck@pahouse.net; dmlne@pahousegop.com; cruble@pahousegop.com; eerickson@pasen.gov; andydinniman@pasenate.com

Subject: GCAs

Dear Representatives, Senators, Educators and Officials,

I am writing to express my opposition to the GCAs.

I am opposed because 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 the diverse community needs and desires.

I am opposed because the addition of the GCS battery reduces 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.

I am opposed because we already test our students in math, reading and science through the state PSSA exams.

I am opposed to double testing of our students.

I am opposed 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.

I am opposed because 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.

As a teacher, I am saddened and offended that legislature such as this has made it this far through the system. Teachers choose to teach because of a love of their students and their subject. Students thrive on this love. When that is replaced with yet another form of standardized testing, what will really be the difference between individualized instruction and students memorizing information for a test?

Most sincerely,

Renée Mindek
Tredyffrin/Easttown Teacher



Tredyffrin/Easttown
SCHOOL DISTRICT
 738 First Ave. | Berwyn, PA | 19312

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Comments on the Proposed Graduation Competency Assessment

The State Board of Education has officially posted the regulation regarding the proposed Graduation Competency Assessments (GCAs) in the Pennsylvania Bulletin. There is a 30 day comment period during which community members may submit written comments, suggestions or objections regarding the proposed regulation to be considered by the Independent Regulatory Review Commission (IRRC). All comments submitted during the 30 day period will be recorded by the State Board of Education and attached to the regulations as they move through the process.

Contact Information

Interested community members are invited to submit comments on the GCA proposal to Jim Buckheit, Executive Director, State Board of Education; the IRRC; and the Republican and Democratic Chairs of the Senate and House Education Committees: Senator James Rhoades, Senator Raphael Musto, Representative Jess Stairs and Representative James Roebuck. In addition, please consider sending a copy of your comments to local legislators: Representative Duane Milne, Representative Carole Rubley, Senator Edwina Erickson, and Senator Andrew Dinniman.

For ease of sending your comments via email, here is the list of contact email addresses to copy and paste into your email:

jbuckheit@state.pa.us; irrc@irrc.state.pa.us; jrhowades@pasen.gov; musto@pasenate.com;
 jstairs@pahousegop.com; jroebuck@pahouse.net; dmilne@pahousegop.com; crubley@pahousegop.com
 eerickson@pasen.gov; andydinniman@pasenate.com

Sample Letter and Talking Points

Sample letter to copy and paste into an email and then customize:

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

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

I am writing to express my opposition to the GCAs.

(Choose reasons that best convey your feelings about the GCAs.)

I am opposed because GCAs will not be provided in a format that meets the needs of diverse learners.
 I am opposed because we already test our students in math, reading and science through the state PSSA exams.

I am opposed to double testing of our students. I am opposed 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.

I am opposed because 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.

Most sincerely,

(name)

Tredyffrin/Easttown resident

If you prefer to compose your own letter, here are some talking points from the T/E School Board's March 24th resolution opposing the GCAs:

- Our local school district is currently preparing all students for success in college and the workplace
- 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 reduces 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.
- 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.
- Students who have received offers of acceptance from colleges may not have the opportunity to attend if they fail to pass a test.
- The current proposal could have significant economic impact on school districts operating under A fiscal restraints and the required expenditures have no proof of effectiveness.

For more information on the GCAs, please visit the [Graduation Competency Assessment web site](#).

This is an important piece of legislation that could affect children in Pennsylvania beginning with the graduating class of 2014. The deadline to submit comments on the GCAs is **June 16, 2008**, so don't let the school year end before sending your comment!



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5/08, ccb