

GREATER JOHNSTOWN HIGH SCHOOL

222 Central Avenue
Johnstown, PA 15902
Office (814) 533-5601
Fax (814) 533-5698



Pride, Tradition and Excellence

Principal/
Vocational Director
DANIEL RESENIC
Assistant Principal
DON CIVIS
Assistant Principal
MICHAEL J. VUCKOVICH

2008 JUN 23 AM 10:11

RECEIVED

2696

Dear Dr. Zahorchak:

I am writing in support of the Governor's Commission on College and Career Success recommendation of a statewide high school graduation requirement for core academic subjects (English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies). By enacting this legislation, I believe Pennsylvania will be one step closer to ensuring that diplomas given to our high school graduates have true, consistent, value and represent universal preparedness for the future.

In my opinion, a strength, and key to the success of the Governor's Commission recommendation is that local school districts will maintain local control and will also remain empowered to make local choices on how students earn a high school diploma. This local control will allow local school districts to choose options such as passing one or more of the following: the new Graduation Competency Assessment, PSSA, Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate tests, or passing a local assessment certified by the State. Maintaining local control for school districts is imperative for buy-in by the State's 501 Districts.

The class of 2014 is only 6 years away, however, the Governor's Commission has proposed multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate proficiency in the four core subject areas: English, Math, Science and Social Studies. Students who do not demonstrate proficiency in this relatively short timeframe will have the opportunity to receive remediation and then have multiple additional opportunities to retake the entire test or the portion of the test in which they did not exhibit proficiency. Providing remedial support and multiple attempts to pass the graduation requirements will also, in my opinion, be crucial for local school district buy-in and success for this legislative action.

Perhaps the most overlooked, but, in my opinion, the most important piece of this proposed legislation is that the State will offer school districts a model curriculum in the four core subject areas. Districts will have the option of using this proposed curriculum to tailor local curriculum or adopt the State's recommendation as a roadmap to proficiency and success. This proposed curriculum will also allow districts to divert resources intended to create and develop curriculum from the bottom up to areas of improving instruction and professional development targeted at teacher training.

In summary, enacting this legislation will bring diplomas from Pennsylvania's high schools a new sense of validity, consistency and prestige. I support this legislation and encourage proper funding to local districts to ensure success.

Sincerely,

William J. Brotz - EdD.

President Elect - GJEA

We are an equal rights and opportunity school district