

GREATER JOHNSTOWN HIGH SCHOOL

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Pride, Tradition and Excellence

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Dr. Zahorchak:

I have always felt that more emphasis should be placed on final exams for courses. Our district always allows students to be exempt from a final. I was never a firm believer of exempting the students because that does not show mastery of the content area. In order for a student to receive credit for a class, I believe that he should have to take and pass the final. Giving school districts the option to select how school students earn a diploma is a step in the right direction. Using the Graduation Competency Assessments as a graduation requirement is the best solution that I have heard in years. It allows the students to demonstrate the skills that they learned in that class when they actually have that class. One of the features about the GCAs is that the student can actually decide when that student would want to take the exam.

These assessments would include all four of the core classes not just Math and English. The GCAs would also be relevant to the class that is being taught not just a broad range of material that covers the entire area. For instance, there is no Trigonometry on the PSSA; however, there are many junior students at our high school taking Trigonometry. When they take the PSSA, most of the material that they are being tested on is material that they have not seen for at least one year and some material they have never seen. With the GCAs, the students can be assessed at the end of Trigonometry on just the material they covered in Trigonometry. There is a need to prove proficiency in the core content areas. The better way to go would be the Graduation Competency Assessments.

Sincerely,

Mr. Jason Corte
Mathematics Department
GJHS