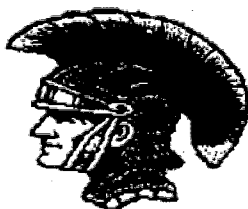


GREATER JOHNSTOWN HIGH SCHOOL

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MICHAEL J. VUCKOVICH

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Dr. Zahorchak:

I am an eleventh and twelfth grade Social Studies teacher at Greater Johnstown High School in Johnstown, PA. I am definitely in favor of the new high school graduation requirements. These requirements not only increase proficiency but are essential in helping our twelfth graders compete in the ever changing global environment. I agree that students need to be proficient not only in Reading, Writing and Mathematics, but also in Science and Social Studies. How do you think an educator feels when he or she is a history or science advocate is told to take a back seat to other aspects of learning? How do students who are interested in science and social studies continue their education in those fields if they are not considered engaged citizens? I believe the State Board of Education is heading in the right direction with a state-wide baseline for graduation requirements. It is a disservice to the students who feel that receiving a diploma makes them qualified to embark on a career path, when in reality receiving a diploma is not equivalent to academic proficiency.

I believe that the state of Pennsylvania has always been on the cutting edge of education. Specific to enacting proficiency requirement, twenty two other states have already passed the requirements and four others are considering doing the same. In order to ensure that children in Pennsylvania continue to receive education that is at least equivalent to if not higher than other states, we must follow the same path. The new requirements "will ensure that a diploma has meaningful, substantive value. They will give graduates the assurance they have what they need to succeed. They will provide school districts with the essential supports to get the job done, and they will do this without taking away local control from the 501 school districts."

Finally, I believe the new requirement gives students opportunity to show that they can perform academically in English, Math, Science and Social Studies which in turn will help them succeed in college and into the future.

Sincerely,

Mr. Thomas Staib
Social Studies Department
GJHS