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Buckheit, James

From: Dawn VandenHeuvel [dawnvh@hotmail.com]
Sent: Monday, June 16, 2008 7:40 PM
To: jrbuckheit@state.pa.us
Subject: High School Graduation Competency Assessments

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INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

My wife, Dawn, and I would like to state our opposition to proposed high school Graduation Competency Assessments. Although, on paper the goals are admirable, in our opinion this is taking yet another step in the wrong direction. Being a Professor at Penn State for 11 years and Purdue for 3 years, I have noticed a great decline in in-coming students' ability to reason and problem-solve. The decline has been most evident in the past few years as high schools rely more heavily on standardized tests. Clearly, the teaching-for-tests philosophy is not serving our students well and is also doing a disservice to our fine teachers. Most research we are aware of shows standardized pencil and paper test scores are not a good forecaster of future success in college and that a diploma should be granted based on the coursework, projects and papers throughout the student's career. This legislation usurps the authority of local school districts to determine whether their students have earned a high school diploma. It is also clear that this is yet another unfunded-mandate that will burden the school district and draw resources away from more worthy educational endeavors. Thank you for considering our concerns.

Jack Vanden Heuvel, PhD

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