

2696

RECEIVED

859

Buckheit, James**From:** kym.grosso@comcast.net

2008 JUN 23 AM 10:19

Sent: Friday, June 13, 2008 2:40 PM**To:** jbuckheit@state.pa.usINDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION**Subject:** Comments about Proposed Graduation Competency Assessments

Jim Buckheit
Executive Director
State Board of Education
333 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

June 13, 2008

Dear Mr. Buckheit,

I am writing to submit comments about the proposed Graduation Competency Assessments (GCAs). As a parent of a school age child and a taxpayer, I am strongly opposed to the proposed Graduation Competency Assessments. There are several reasons why the proposed GGAs should not be implemented.

First, thanks to No Child Left Behind (NCLB), schools and teachers are already over focused on standardized testing. Instead of implementing a holistic teaching method, teachers are being forced to teach to a test, the PSSA. There is no longer any time in the day to teach anything else but what is on the NCLB tests. For example, our local school district had to eliminate teaching Spanish in elementary school because they need more time to teach the Science portion of the PSSAs. Until this country gets control of NCLB and fixes its issues, it would be foolish for the state to think of implementing yet another set of standardized tests.

Secondly, the proposed CGA testing will be detrimental to special education students and students who may have difficulty taking a standardized test. In an effort to have typical students pass the CGAs, resources will inevitably be diverted from teaching special education to teaching to the CGA test. There may be an increased incentive for teachers and parents to provide typical children with an IEP so they do not need to take the test.

In addition, children who have difficulty taking a standardized test will be penalized. Are we going to spend hours trying to teach these kids "how to take a standardized test"? This would be a total waste of resources. Are we really going to deny children a diploma if they have done well in school but can't take a standardized test? It would be ridiculous to evaluate all a child's learning in one standardized test.

Third, the proposed testing will waste taxpayer money. With the current recession, taxpayers are struggling to afford increased costs of food, gas and other necessities. Do we really have the luxury of spending possibly millions of tax dollars trying to implement another set of standardized tests? A set of tests that is not even proven to help students and society? I am quite sure the taxpayers who are just struggling to get by on a daily basis would differ.

6/13/2008

Lastly, if the state feels it has enough disposable income to actually consider implementing an enormous set of standardized tests, then perhaps the state should divert those funds to where they can actually help students, early intervention. Learning begins early yet, the state board is proposing to spend tons of money to implement a test that happens during the last year of school.

In conclusion, I oppose the proposed Graduation Competency Assessments. The very last thing parents, taxpayers and students need is another set of standardized tests piled on top of No Child Left Behind. School districts and teachers should be responsible for determining if a child is eligible to graduate high school not a singular, standardized test.

Sincerely,

Kym Grosso
West Chester, Pennsylvania