

Buckheit, James

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From: The Laceks [6lacek33@connecttime.net]
Sent: Friday, June 13, 2008 8:15 AM
To: j buckheit@state.pa.us
Subject: Graduation Competency Assessment comments

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

Dear Mr. Buckheit,

I am opposed to the proposed Graduation Competency Assessments that would have to be successfully completed by students before they can receive their diplomas.

A great deal of time and money is already being spent on the PSSAs that are given at many stages throughout a student's school career. My understanding is that the PSSAs were to keep everyone on track so that only competent graduates receive diplomas. The PSSAs allow for intervention at many times before graduation. This proposal for the GCA would seem to indicate that the PSSAs are ineffective. Are the PSSAs ineffective? If so they should be fixed or abolished, not retained while adding yet another test!

I have recently read articles that there is a trend among colleges and universities to no longer require SATs as a measure of student achievement for admission. Why would Pennsylvania add yet another "make or break" test, when colleges find that standardized tests are unnecessary, or at best only part of the picture?

Adding yet another test, and the time and resources to teach to it, also reduce resources available to provide broader based educational opportunities. Is it really in the best interest of students to divert money and time from course offerings such as foreign language instruction or laboratory work to teach to this test? This would be counterproductive.

Finally, costs at the state level to implement this test are estimated to be \$48 million, plus more at the local level most likely. At a time when local property taxes are already too high, and soaring energy prices and a sluggish economy are pinching the resources of many citizens, there is no point spending money on redundant, unnecessary, and counterproductive testing.

Sincerely yours,

Margaret A. Lacek
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