

2696

RECEIVED

4777 Old Berwick Road  
Bloomsburg, PA 17815  
570-784-2850 ext. 4016

2008 JUN 23 AM 11:43

**Pennsylvania Heartland Coalition of Schools**

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
REVIEW COMMISSION

November 7, 2007

Mr. Karl Girton, Chairperson  
State Board of Education  
333 Market Street, First Floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

Dear Mr. Girton:

The undersigned superintendents from the Pennsylvania Heartland Coalition of Schools write this letter of support for the State Board's proposed Graduation Competency Assessments (GCA).

It is our belief that a GCA system, when coupled with the current PSSA, will provide a comprehensive measure of student proficiency on the Reading, Writing, Mathematics, and Science Academic Standards. In addition, we believe that such a system will strengthen high school curricula and instruction and will restore the value of the high school diploma. Ultimately, it is our belief that this system will provide for improved student academic achievement and an improved workforce.

We understand that there are questions to be answered and issues to be worked out. We believe, for example, in the need for ensured validity and reliability—that these assessments will provide a true measure of minimum proficiency and will be consistent with the PSSA. We believe that the flexibility must be provided to schools with varying schedules. We believe that students should have multiple opportunities to pass assessments and that students with disabilities should be provided appropriate accommodations consistent with federal and state law.

However, we believe that concerns can be answered, and that the system will provide for stronger high schools throughout our region.

Please call with questions.

Sincerely,

*[Signature]*  
Mark D. DiRao  
Kathleen Stark  
Joseph T. Kelly  
David M. Campbell  
Alan J. Lomax

*[Signature]*  
Frederick C. Johnson  
Charles D. Rich  
Charles Latorre  
Peter J. Martz