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WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD 2008 JUN 23 AM 10:13

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INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

June 13, 2008

State Board of Education
333 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17126

Dear Board Members:

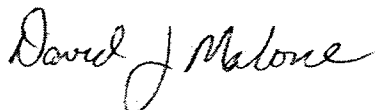
As Chairman of the Pennsylvania Workforce Investment Board (PA WIB), I am writing to express our support for the implementation of graduation competency assessments.

The PA WIB is a business-led body established by the Workforce Investment Act that oversees state workforce development policy in the Commonwealth. We believe that graduation competency assessments will help to ensure Pennsylvania's high school graduates possess the skills and confidence to compete and succeed in the new global economy. This requires workers to be proficient in science, mathematics and language. We recognize that even manufacturing-based jobs that were once open to workers with lower skills now require readiness in these core areas.

On January 30, 2008, the PA WIB endorsed a resolution in support of the State Board of Education's requirement for students to demonstrate proficiency in core subjects by passing graduation competency assessments in order to earn a high school diploma. Additionally, our Board believes that the Commonwealth must provide the necessary tools and resources to support students and schools, before making any tests mandatory for graduation. A copy of the full resolution is attached to this letter for further information.

On behalf of the PA WIB, we stand behind this effort and will work with the Board of Education to help this new graduation requirement become a reality.

Sincerely,



David Malone
President and CEO
Gateway Financial Group

Pennsylvania

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

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PA WIB Resolution regarding Graduation Competency Assessments January 30, 2008

Resolution

Whereas, the continued growth of Pennsylvania's economy depends on a well-educated workforce and citizenry; and

Whereas, the well-paying, high-skill jobs of the global economy demand employees who can demonstrate strong literacy, math/science and problem-solving skills; and

Whereas, gainful employment in today's workforce demands that students master the same essential skills regardless of whether they plan to enroll in college or immediately find a full-time job; and

Whereas, in 2006, 45% of Pennsylvania's high school graduates did not score proficient on the 11th grade reading and math PSSAs; and

Whereas, 26 states have or are currently adopting high school graduation requirements designed to better prepare students for college and high-skill careers; and

Whereas, members of the Pennsylvania Workforce Investment Board served on the blue-ribbon Commission on College and Career Success, which recommended that Pennsylvania require all high school students to demonstrate proficiency in English, math, science and social studies in order to earn a high school diploma; therefore be it

Resolved, that the Pennsylvania Workforce Investment Board strongly endorses giving the high school diploma meaning by requiring all students to show that they are career- and college-ready in English, math, science and social studies before they graduate; and be it further

Resolved, that the State Board of Education should adopt a requirement that students demonstrate proficiency in these core subjects by passing state assessments in order to earn a high school diploma; and be it further

Resolved, that the Commonwealth must also provide the necessary tools and resources to support students and schools in meeting these real-world expectations for college- and career-readiness, before making any tests mandatory for graduation.