

**Buckheit, James**

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**From:** William Kaufman [wkaufman@riu6.org]**Sent:** Monday, June 16, 2008 3:34 PM**To:** jbuckheit@state.pa.us**Cc:** Superintendents**Subject:** GCA Concern

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INDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
REVIEW COMMISSION

Dear Mr. Buckheit,

I am writing to express concerns about the proposed Graduate Competency Assessment program in its current form. Although I support the concept of end-of-course exams that are uniform across the state, I have serious reservations about requiring all students to pass the specified assessments in order to graduate from high school.

If enacted, the new requirements will practically eliminate local control over curricular offerings and academic standards and will, in effect, convert local diplomas into state diplomas. Also, the increased graduation mandates will have a detrimental impact on Career & Tech Center enrollments and will diminish the number of students who complete state-approved vocational programs and/or licensure/national certification programs.

My proposal for revisions to the GCA proposal is straightforward: provide a two-tiered pathway to graduation. Students who successfully complete the GCA sequence will be awarded a 'Commonwealth Honors Diploma' in addition to receiving local district high school diplomas. Those who fail this rigorous process will be eligible only for locally issued diplomas.

I recognize and appreciate efforts by the State Board to establish high performance targets for students in PA. However, in the attempt to raise the bar for all kids, it is my belief that a large segment of the student population will become disenfranchised. The notion that all students can conform to or be forced into a single intellectual mold is simply specious. As we search for the proper tool(s) to measure student success/achievement/proficiency, the old maxim emerges...one size does not fit all.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of my position on this matter.

William Kaufman, Ed. D.  
Executive Director  
Riverview Intermediate Unit #6