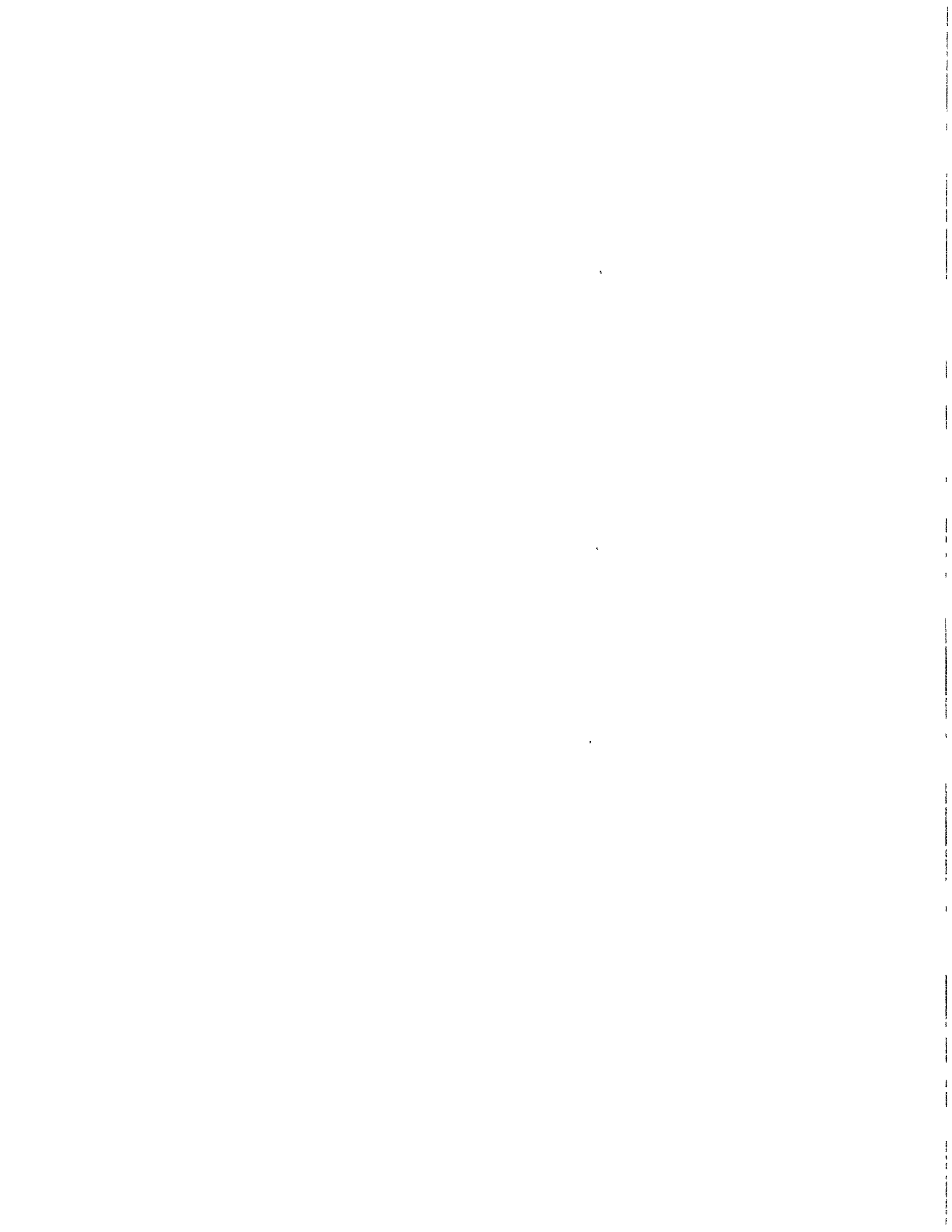


STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
**HIGH SCHOOL REFORM**  
 INTERMEDIATE UNIT 4  
 LG. GROUP INST. RMS. 1 2  
 GROVE CITY  
 TUESDAY, MARCH 3, 2009  
 10:00 A.M.

RECEIVED

2009 MAR 12 AM 9:35

	NAME	ORGANIZATION/ADDRESS
10:00	MARK ROOSEVELT	PITTSBURGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS - SUPERINTENDENT
10:10	GEORGE WHITE	CLARION AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT - SUPERINTENDENT
10:20	LAWRENCE KORCHNAK	BALDWIN-WHITEHALL SCHOOL DISTRICT - SUPERINTENDENT
10:30	JEAN GOOL	KEYSTONE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT - SUPERINTENDENT
10:40	JERRY KNIGHT	PRECISION MANUFACTURING INST. - EXEC. DIRECTOR
10:50	BILL BAILEY	CLARION UNIVERSITY - DEAN OF ENROLLMENT MGMT.
11:00		
11:10	BRENDA BRINKER	ALLEGHENY-CLARION VALLEY - SUPERINTENDENT
11:20		
11:30	KAREN WINNER	WINNER INTERNATIONAL - SHARON SCHOOL DIST.
11:40	DALE DEIST	BUCK FABRICATING - PRESIDENT/GEN. MANAGER
11:50	<del>PAULA RULE</del>	<del>ARC OF GREATER PITTSBURGH</del> <i>cancelled</i>
12:00 - 1:00		
1:10	V. JOSEPH JAMES	INDIVIDUAL
1:20	JAY BADAMS	ERIE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT - ASST. SUPERINTENDENT
1:30	JACKIE SYKTICH/MARY JONES	DUBOIS BUSINESS COLLEGE - PRES. & CEO/ACADEMIC DEAN
1:40		
1:50	RON SOFO	FREEDOM AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT - SUPERINTENDENT
2:00	LYNN FOLTZ	WILMINGTON AREAS SCHOOL DISTRICT - SCH. DIRECTOR
2:10	SANDY ROMANOWSKI	BRADFORD AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT - SUPERINTENDENT
2:20	RICHARD SCALETTA	GENERAL MCLANE SCHOOL DISTRICT - HS PRINCIPAL



#2696

**Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
State Board of Education  
Public Hearing  
on  
High School Graduation Requirements  
March 3, 2009**

RECORDED

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Good morning, Chairman Torsella and members of the State Board of Education. My name is George White and I am superintendent for Clarion Area School District. I appreciate having this opportunity to address you on the critical issue of high school graduation requirements.

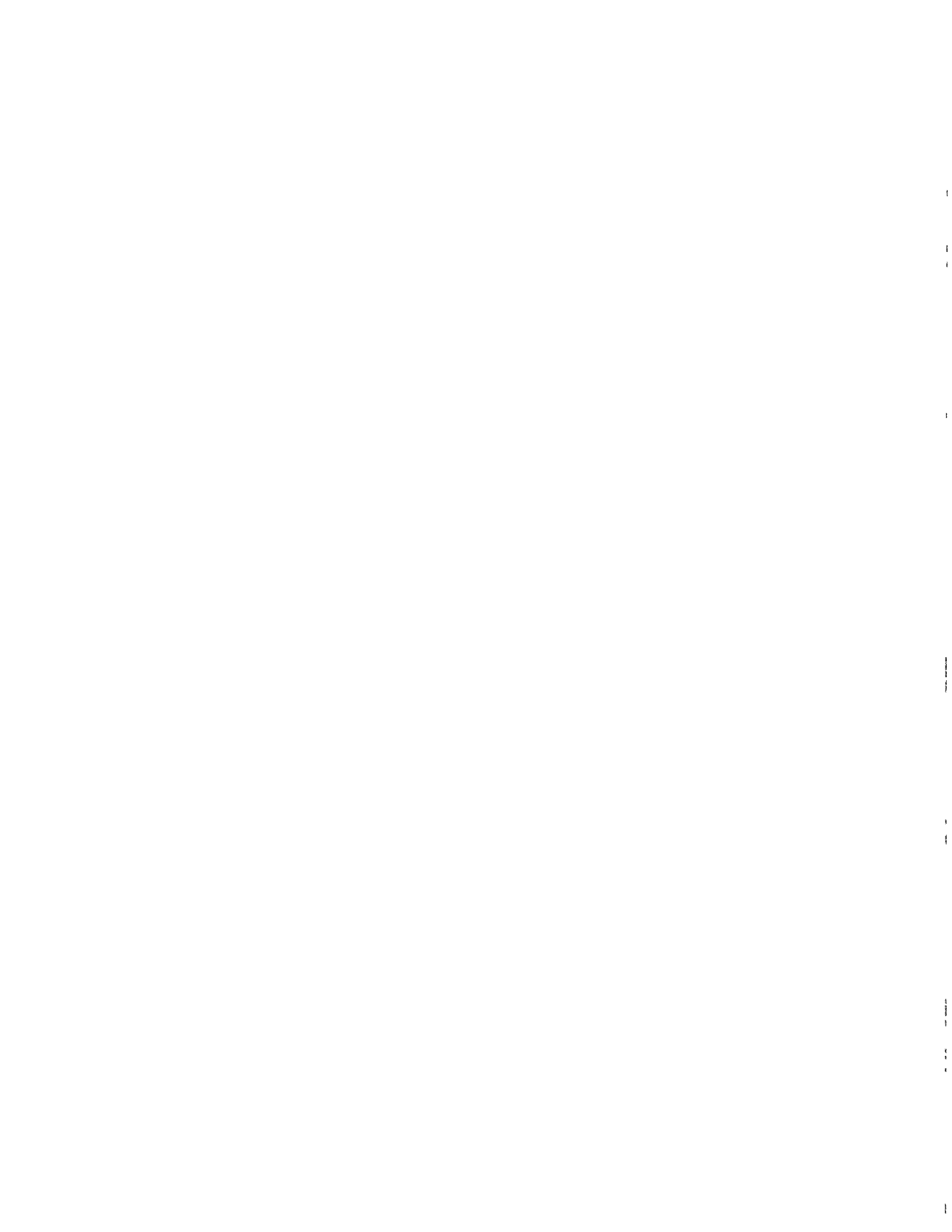
Let me state at the outset that it is not my purpose this morning to simply restate concerns already ably advanced by such groups as the Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators (PASA), the Pennsylvania School Boards Association (PSBA) and the Pennsylvania Association of Career and Technical School Administrators (PACTA), among others. Nor will I cite any of the available research regarding the negative effects of high-stakes testing. My goal this morning is simply to put a face on the concerns expressed by these groups. I hope to do this by sharing with you the story of one student and one school district.

Before I do that, I want to first stake out some common ground with the proponents of graduate competency assessments (GCAs), who seek to improve education in Pennsylvania. Proponents of GCA's seek to ensure that schools are delivering a world-class education to all Pennsylvania students so that they can compete for jobs in a global marketplace. I fully support this effort. Indeed, I am working toward this same goal in my own district.

That being said, I disagree with GCA proponents on one very important issue. That issue comes down to this: The GCA proponents believe that a test can improve student learning. More specifically, they believe that a series of 1-2 hour exams can adequately measure the important components of a student's thirteen years of schooling. I do not accept this premise. I do not believe that any single test or series of tests can fairly or meaningfully evaluate a student's potential for success after graduation. To illustrate my point I want to share with you the story of one Clarion Area graduate. Let's call him Student C.

Despite many hours of remediation, individualized instruction and tutoring, Student C did not pass the Math or Reading PSSAs. It is not that Student C could not read or perform math computations; this student was simply unable to pass the PSSA. A staff of highly trained and dedicated teachers worked with Student C over many years, yet this student was still unable to pass the PSSA. If GCA's had been in place at the time, undoubtedly, Student C would not have received a high school diploma. However, Student C did ultimately graduate by meeting the Pennsylvania standards through local assessments. Those who advocate GCA's might well contend that the diploma received by this student was issued under false pretenses. After all, the student did not pass the test.

I am pleased to report, however, that Student C currently works for an international corporation and earns a good wage. I might add that this work does involve a fair amount of reading and math. How is it that Student C could fail the PSSA but still find success in the workforce? It is because Student C possessed a rare and valuable skill that was not tested by the PSSA. Student C could take a car apart, place all the parts on the floor, and re-assemble those parts into a fully functional automobile.



Now consider that there are hundreds or perhaps even thousands of Student C's all across this state, each with their own unique ability. What will become of these students if they are required to pass a battery of ten tests as the sole condition of receiving a diploma? Superintendents in my county are already considering the prospect of having to remove students, like Student C, from their studies at our career and technical school, so that these students can take additional academic subjects. In my view, denying students like Student C a diploma because they cannot pass a gauntlet of high-stakes exams is the true definition of leaving students behind.

Let me be clear. I am not arguing that acquisition of academic knowledge is not an important goal of schools. I am simply making the obvious point that a one size fits all exit exam cannot measure all of the important things students learn that contribute to their success after graduation. The decision to award a diploma must remain at the local district and this decision must be based on more than a single test score. To help you better understand why this is so, I want to share with you my own district's effort to improve instruction.

The work of our district flows from our mission to:

"graduate students with the knowledge, critical thinking skills and character necessary to become responsible and productive citizens."

(You will notice that our mission statement does not say we will graduate students who can pass a rigorous algebra or chemistry test.)

At Clarion Area we do not believe it is our purpose to prepare students to take tests. That is not to say that our students do not take tests. We simply do not view test taking as the key exit skill. Nor do we believe that mastery of academic knowledge alone constitutes a world class education. As we saw in the case of Student C, it is something more.

We believe the purpose of education is to prepare students to be independent critical thinkers and future citizens. Therefore, we seek to go beyond teaching students to know about algebra, about chemistry, about economics and about composition. Our goal is to help students to acquire a depth of understanding that permits them to transfer and apply this academic knowledge to real world tasks. In doing so, we also seek to nurture productive habits of mind and to engage important emotional and intellectual skills.

This approach will require many changes in our curriculum. Chief among these changes will be the development of performance tasks and assessments. We are currently engaged in an ambitious plan to develop these tasks and assessments. While objective tests will still play a role in our assessment of student knowledge, they will not be the cornerstone assessments. We will rely on well designed rubrics to evaluate more complex learning outcomes. Such assessments could never be part of a statewide testing plan. They rely upon the training, experience and judgment of local teachers. After all, who knows more about our students?

My concern is that implementation of GCA's will distract my district from this curriculum reform which we believe is necessary to provide a world class education. To illustrate this point further, I would like to use an analogy. Imagine for a moment that basketball was among the proposed exit exams. Obviously, the "standardized" basketball exam could not include assessment of students actually engaged in playing basketball anymore than a GCA could assess a student engaged in "doing" science. Thus, in the same way that GCA's can only test what is testable, the basketball test would be based on measurable knowledge and skills. Perhaps students would be tested on their knowledge of game rules. Or, perhaps their would be a performance



component wherein students are asked to shoot free throws. Success on such an exam could hardly predict success on the basketball court. We all know that such attributes as leadership, on court decision-making, attitude and work ethic also contribute to each player's potential.

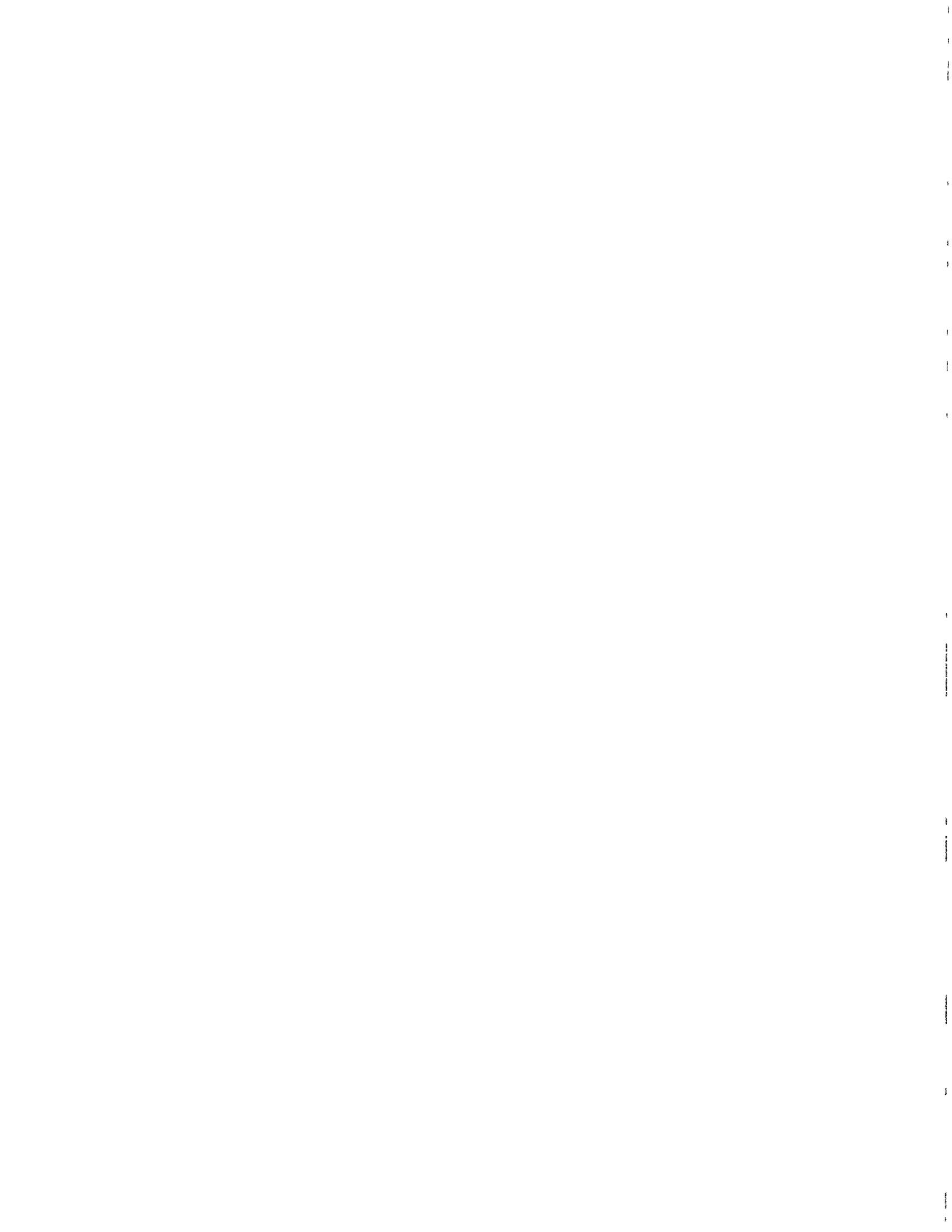
In preparing students to "pass" this basketball exam, schools would most likely reduce the time students were engaged in playing basketball so that each student could practice shooting free throws and study the game rules. In other words, schools would tend to spend more time teaching students "about" basketball and less time teaching them how to "do" basketball. Likewise, a graduation exam built around content knowledge alone will encourage districts to reduce their focus on engaging students in performance tasks aimed at promoting transfer and application to real world experiences, so that they have time to present more content. Thus, schools would cover more topics while sacrificing depth and understanding. Furthermore, high-stakes testing would encourage schools to narrow their course offerings. In my view, this does not lead to the world-class education we desire for our students.

In closing let me again emphasize that there is nothing wrong with using a test to gather information about what students know and can do. Schools do this everyday. Indeed, using the GCA to gather information on each school's success in teaching content knowledge makes sense. However, to use a single content test, even a well designed test, to determine the future of our young people, is not only misdirected, I believe it reflects a troubling lack of trust in teachers and school administrators. This is unfortunate because, as I have argued, if we are to improve education in Pennsylvania in the way that my district advocates, it will require us to engage students in real world tasks that can only be properly assessed by teachers.

Once again. thank you for providing this time to share my concerns with you. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

Respectfully submitted,

George E. White, Ed.D.  
Superintendent  
Clarion Area School District





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**State Board of Education**  
**PUBLIC HEARING ON HIGH SCHOOL REFORM**  
**Graduation Competency Assessments**  
**March 3, 2009**

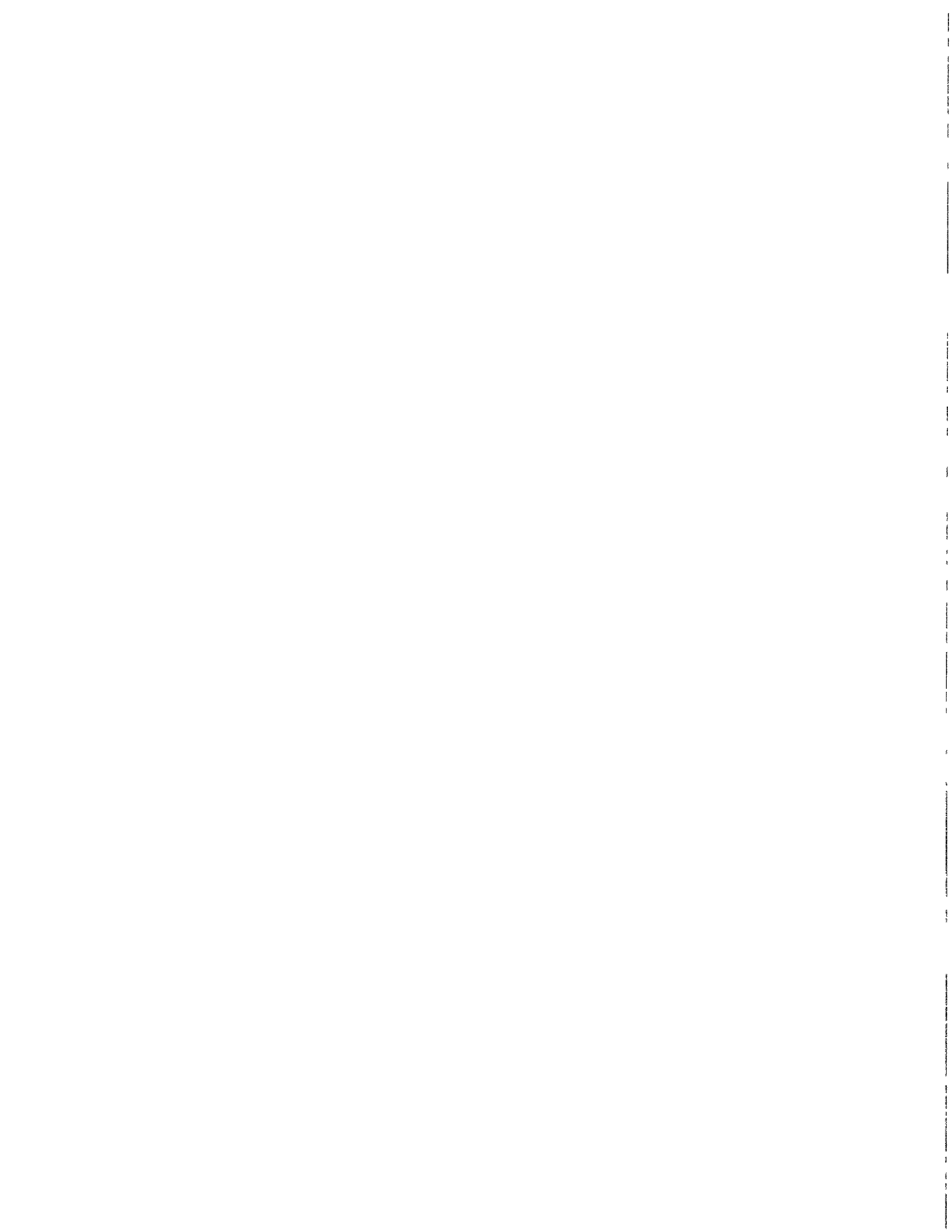
My name is Dr. Lawrence Korchnak, Superintendent of the Baldwin-Whitehall School District

First of all I want to thank Governor Rendell and Secretary of Education Zahorchak for their commitment to improving the quality of Pennsylvania public schools. I also want to thank you, the State Board of Education, for the opportunity to address the issue of Graduation Competency Assessments.

**I believe that students can hit any target that they can see that doesn't move on them.**

In Pennsylvania public schools, student achievement is scattered over a wide range of scores. This phenomenon is less a product of what the child brings *to* the classroom than what takes place *in* the classroom. While proficiency for graduation is measured by the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA), students who fail to achieve the standard might still graduate without attaining proficiency due to the array of alternate assessments administered at the local level.

For the past 40 years, I have served children in multiple capacities as a teacher, counselor, principal, Assistant Superintendent, and Superintendent. While most of that time was spent in successful school districts, I have had the honor to serve as a Distinguished Educator for the Pennsylvania Department of Education in some of the most dismally failed schools in the Commonwealth. Drawing from my experience, it became abundantly clear that student achievement is based on high standards, rigorous curriculum and quality instruction. This should be no surprise. Unfortunately, high standards, rigorous curriculum and quality instruction mean different things to different people.



As Pennsylvania's schools try to compete on a national and global scale, it is inconceivable that there is no standard other than PSSA upon which student achievement towards graduation is measured... and then, only with respect to minimum competencies in core subject areas.

Presently, when students fail to achieve proficiency on the PSSA, local school districts attempt to validate proficiency using their own assessments with mixed results. Consequently, there is no guarantee that students who fail to reach proficiency on the PSSA leave our schools with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed once they graduate. The recently released Local Assessment Validity Study Report confirms this. The report "documents considerable variance in the type and form... as well as the manner in which these [local assessments] are used as graduation requirements."

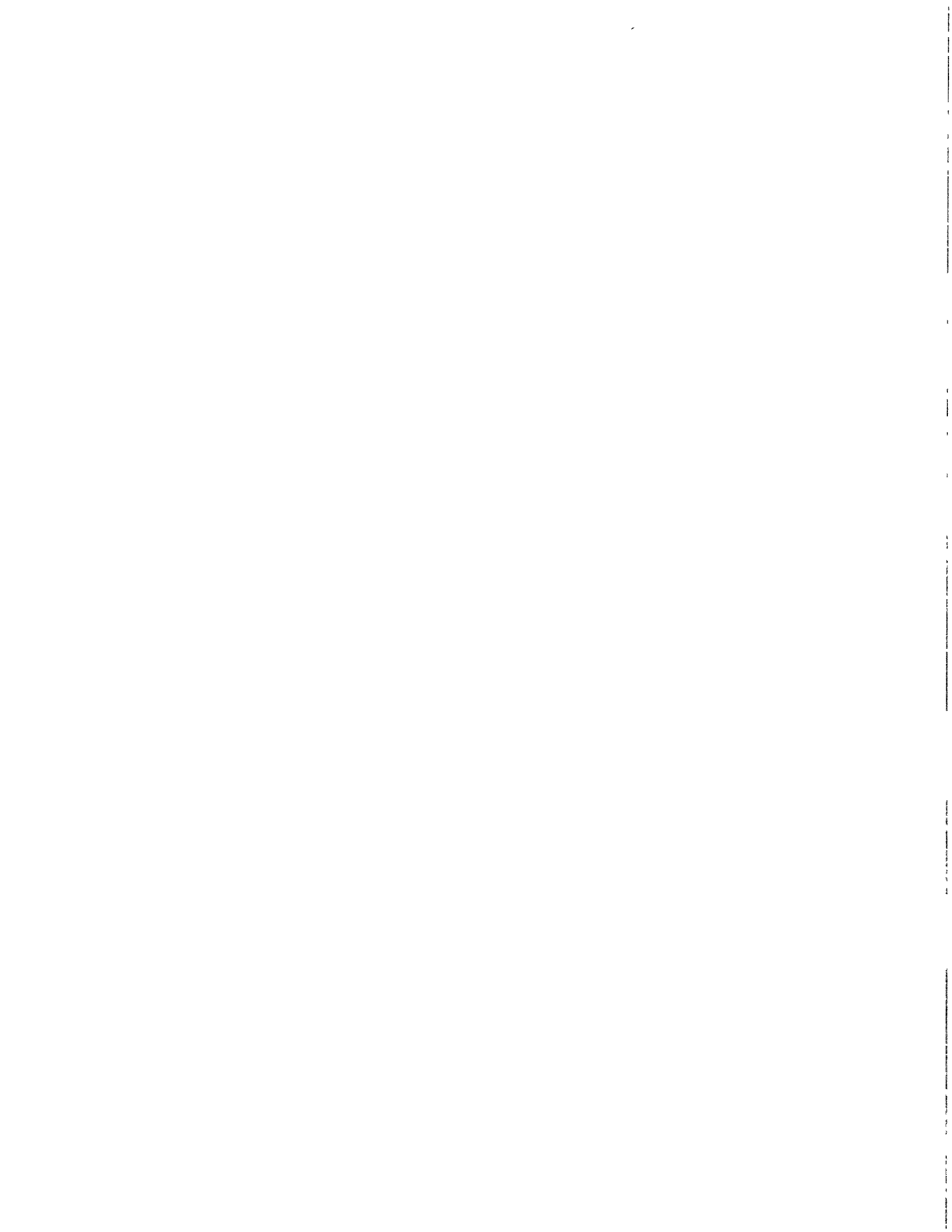
Under the present system, there is no consistency and no real standard of proficiency. Hence, there is no real accountability.

Graduation Competency Assessments (GCA's) would provide the standard and the means to determine accountability. They would provide a clear, consistent measure of academic achievement in specific subject areas throughout the Commonwealth.

Furthermore, GCA's would provide progress monitoring where it counts... at the classroom level where teachers could assess instructional effectiveness and student achievement in real time - as students complete their course work and prepare to move on to the next level. The opportunity for retaking the GCA would also soften the "high stakes" pressure of cumulative assessments and offer students a chance to really demonstrate what they learn before graduation.

**Students can hit any target that they can see that doesn't move on them.**

Graduation Competency Assessments are a significant first step to establishing that target for our children - a clear standard, consistent throughout the Commonwealth, providing much needed accountability for learning.



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Good morning. My name is Dr. Jean Atkin Gool. I am the Superintendent of the Keystone School District.

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Thank you for the opportunity to represent the administrators, teachers, and students involved in career and technical education in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania this morning in testifying before the members of the State Board of Education.

As the State Board considers the adoption of new high school graduation requirements in Chapter 4 of the State Board Regulations, I believe it is imperative the Board understand and recognize the full impact this decision will most likely have on the nearly 90,000 students in Pennsylvania who elect to enroll in State-approved career and technical education programs at the high school level. I believe that the implementation of these regulations will have harmful effects on the education students receive in high school, as well as cause significant cost and operational burdens on school districts and career and technical schools, as yet another unmandated initiative with no monies allocated to sustain it. Additionally, the dubious and highly questionable value of a single high-stakes test in various specific subjects to accurately reflect the educational attainment of students severely distorts true educational measurement when the decision to award a diploma is based on that test score.

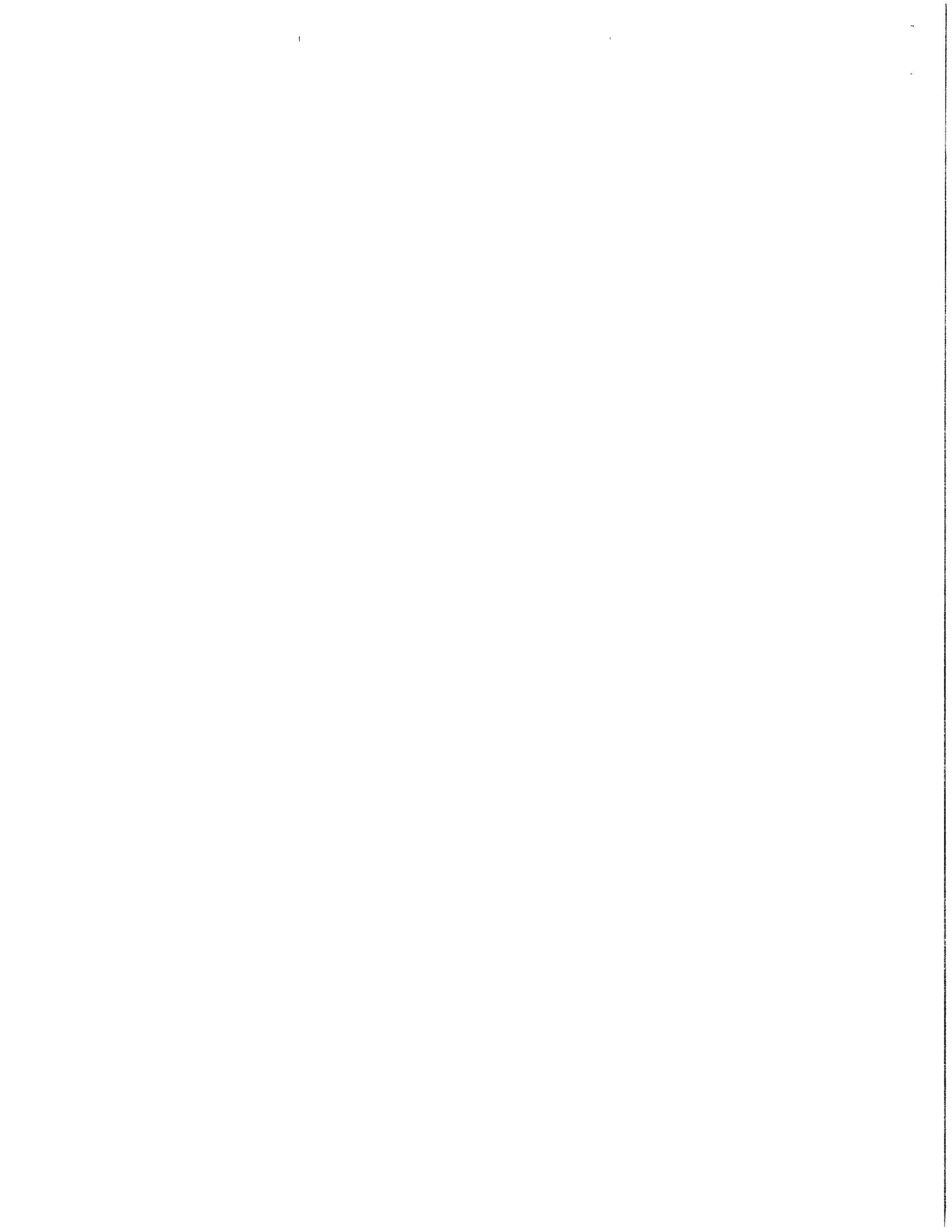
This possibility affects all students but places additional burdens on the career and technical education system and the students who currently benefit from that system. The way the new regulations are written, one high-stakes test score could mean the difference in a student graduating or not.

When career and technical education is measured appropriately, high levels of student success along with industry satisfaction and support are evidenced.

### **Effects of High Stakes Testing on Achievement and Graduation**

The proposed changes to Chapter 4 are directly counterintuitive to research findings for student achievement, and if implemented, would most likely exert minimal influence on student achievement while creating conditions for students and teachers that have proven to be extremely detrimental to appropriately measuring student achievement in other states. *The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* further states that “test users must guard against allowing the testing process – the need for students to pass a certain test – to overwhelm the rest of a student’s mastery of a wide curriculum.”

This is precisely what the new regulations will do – enhance the need for a student to pass a certain test, which overwhelms or invalidates mastery of a wide curriculum necessary for true educational attainment.



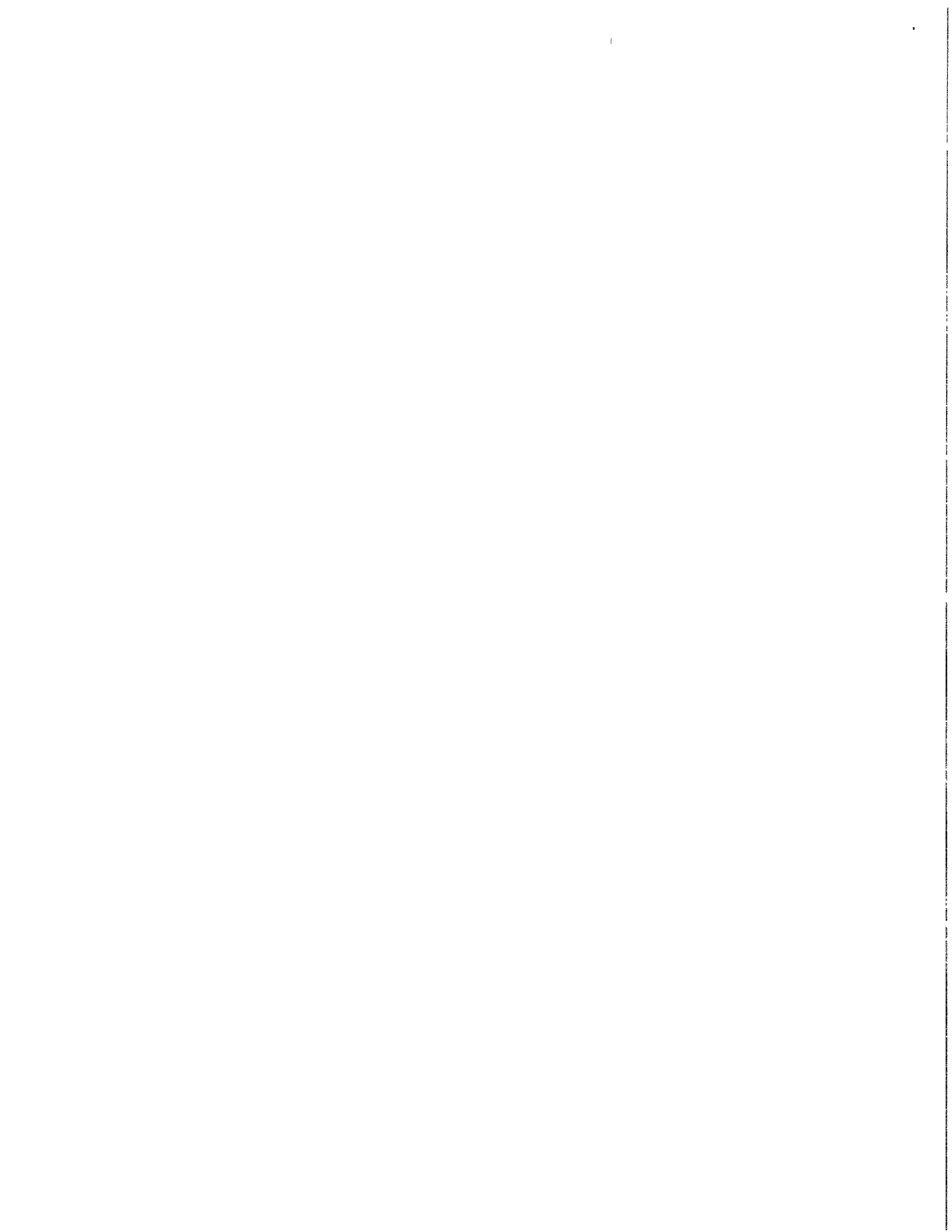
Dr. Eva Baker, co-director of the National Center for Research on Evaluation at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) believes that the most perverse problem with high-stakes tests is that they have become a substitute for the curriculum instead of simply a measure of it. An *Education Week* article from March of 2003 reviews a study by the National Board of Educational Testing and Public Policy at Boston that supports Dr. Baker's view. More than seven of ten teachers in the study agreed that state-mandated testing programs lead teachers to teach in ways that contradict ideas of good educational practice. In other words, the tests are becoming the curriculum, and we would be doing more testing than teaching.

### **Local Assessments and Funding**

The proposed regulations offer school districts and career and technical schools the option of utilizing locally developed graduation competency assessments, but the requirements for those GCAs are so onerous they make it an unrealistic option. The local option does not provide a real alternative that would allow the utilization of a broad-based local assessment system that would allow for the effective measurement of student achievement. For comprehensive Career and Technical Centers (CTCs), that option would be literally impossible. CTCs simply do not have the staff or fiscal resources to establish local assessments that meet the impossibly stringent requirements stipulated in the proposed regulations. Already constrained by member district's adherence to the fiscal restraints of Act 1, CTC budgets are being pared to the bare minimum required to deliver quality career and technical programming. Comprehensive CTCs are almost totally reliant on their member districts for funding, and the costs associated with creating local assessments would severely impact their budget. **The recent costing-out study did not include the costs for a creating a new local testing option, and it also found that the State is already \$4.4 billion short of being able to help students meeting academic standards.** For comprehensive CTCs, the high cost of creating an alternative GCAs would effectively eliminate that option and, consequently, force them to implement the State-mandated high-stakes test.

### **NOCTI**

For many years, the Federal Perkins requirements have included student assessment in each career and technical education program. Pennsylvania requires all career and technical education program completers to take program specific exit examinations created by the National Occupational Testing Institute or NOCTI. These nationally validated exams consist of both a performance and written test. These exams are required by the State and endorsed by the State and business groups as valid indicators of a student's achievement in career and technical education. Implementation of the proposed revisions to Chapter 4 would disadvantage students in career and technical programs because they would not be measuring the education areas on which career and technical student have concentrated during their high school careers. If the high-stakes tests are adopted, consideration must be given to creating tests that are aligned with assessments already validated and accepted by the State.





### **Additional Academics**

The high-stakes Graduation Competency Assessment would require students to take more academic courses to enhance their chances at achieving the State graduation requirements. This would severely impact a student's ability to choose a career and technical education path to fit his or her needs and interests. Industry supported and validated career and technical education has been available to Pennsylvania students for many decades, and it should remain a viable option for students. In fact, the recently released Governor's Commission on College and Career Success recommended that the state *"Increase and enhance the number of educational options available to high school students to achieve high standards with particular attention to career and technical education."* Requiring all students to pass Graduation Competency Assessments would potentially limit the option of career and technical education by requiring more academic courses that students may not need nor desire to take.

The Commission's final report emphasizes that the high school experience does not need to be the same for all students and that aligning students' needs with curricular options is a key element in ensuring that all students complete their high school education ready for college and career. These high-stakes tests would potentially be counterproductive to assuring differentiated high school experiences and would make students take specific academic courses to earn a diploma. Career and Technical Education proponents strongly support the approach recommended by the Commission. For example, in the book *Other Ways to Win: Creating Alternatives for High School Graduates*, Drs. Ken Gray and Ed Herr propose a three-phase system that includes core academics for Grades 9 and 10, different transitional phases for Grades 10 and 11, and transitional placement services in the 12<sup>th</sup> Grade. Their proposal allows students to take core academic courses and pursue a transitional phase consistent with their interest (with appropriate accompanying academics) that could include either Honors AP, Baccalaureate, Pre-Baccalaureate (Tech Prep), and School to Career/Career and Technical Education. The transitional phase then leads to post-secondary options for four-year college, two-year college, or work-based education. Graduation Competency Assessments would prevent or significantly restrict the options presented by Drs. Gray and Herr and give students fewer choices. We strongly support continuing to give students the options recommended by the Governor's Commission report and allow for creative solutions for implementation on the local level rather than State-mandated high-stakes tests.

### **Industry Expectations**

The State Board of Education and the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) have endorsed Career and Technical Education's alignment with industry expectations. Many programs (through state workforce incentives and high priority occupations requirements) now offer industry-based credentials that reflect a student's knowledge in a career and technical area. In fact, Perkins Regulations require credentialing. However, the State's current assessment system does not place adequate value on career and technical achievement and credentialing. With industry support and funding from PDE,



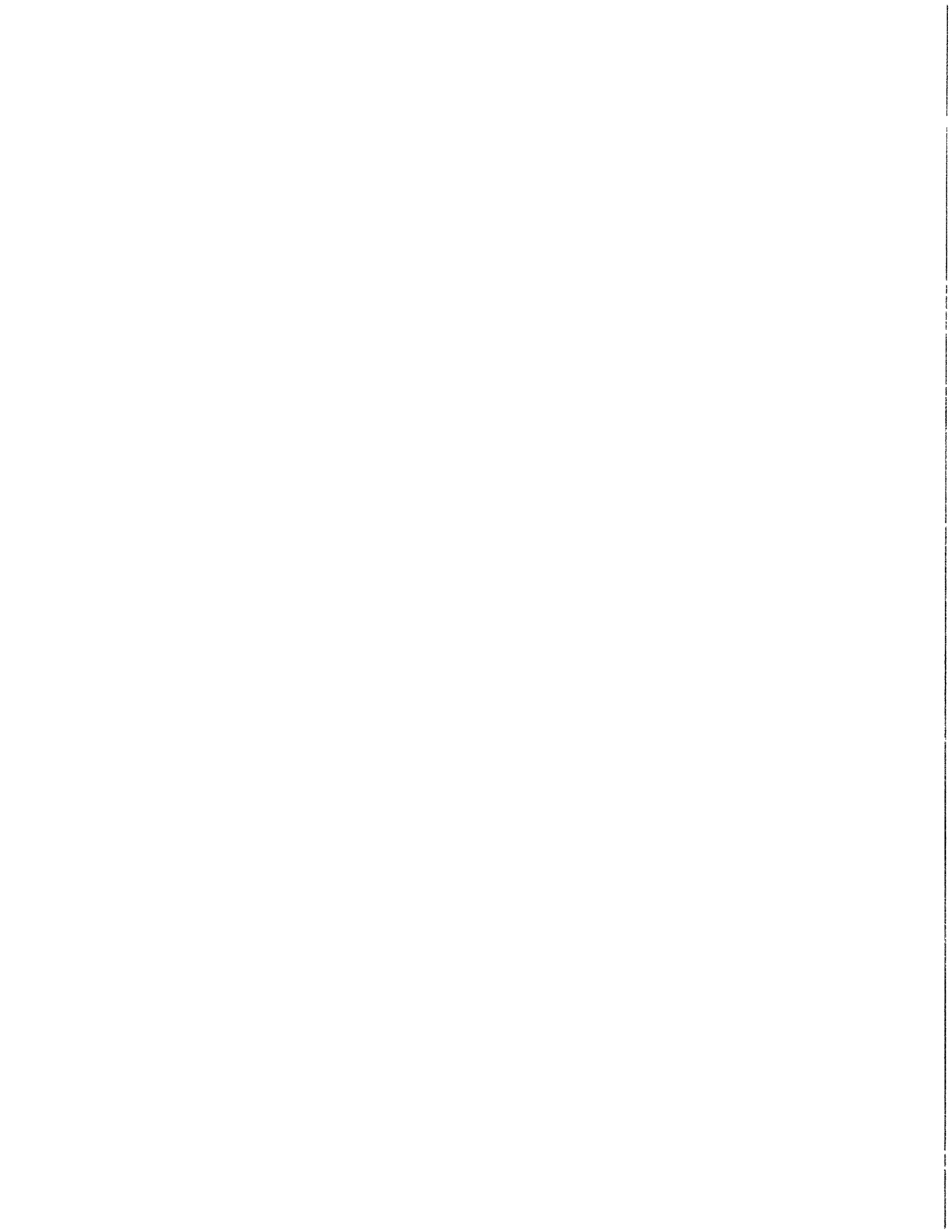
student achievement in Career and Technical Education cannot continue to be on the sidelines in the debate on student preparation for college and career success. Unfortunately, the State does not value career and technical achievement for accountability purposes. The adoption and implementation of high-stakes tests may further reduce the emphasis placed on career and technical achievement.

### **Perkins Requirements**

The reauthorization of the Carl Perkins Act now requires academic achievement and accountability within Career and Technical Education. It is important to note that the regulations do not focus on academic achievement at the expense of Career and Technical Education, but as a part of it. The implementation of high-stakes GCAs would most likely emphasize academic achievement and accountability at the expense of Career and Technical Education by requiring students to take more academic courses with little time left for Career and Technical Education. To compare, colleges do not disenfranchise English majors because they do not take the same high levels of mathematics taken by engineering students. Colleges provide avenues for students in both majors to be successful; and when they graduate, they receive the same diploma. It is an important comparison to consider in this debate because the corollary in high school means that students who take career and technical courses instead of high-level academic courses may not receive a diploma.

### **Conclusion**

- ◆ The time and energy being extended in these hearings is very challenging when we know RFP's have been issued to vendors.
- ◆ Boards of Education throughout the Commonwealth have resoundly voted against GCA's.
- ◆ We spent the summer gathering and sending data to Penn State only to find flawed statistics.
- ◆ The Honorable Senator Mary Jo White very clearly wrote that the Senate voted to prohibit the adoption of Graduation Competency Exam Regulations by the Department of Education.
- ◆ Additionally, the General Assembly prohibited the use of any State funding for the development of such regulations.
- ◆ It is about respecting the right of local school districts to set curriculum standards.
- ◆ We cannot yet again bear the cost of another unfunded mandate.
- ◆ Our children cannot continue to be tested more than taught.
- ◆ Thank you again for the opportunity to present these views to you today.



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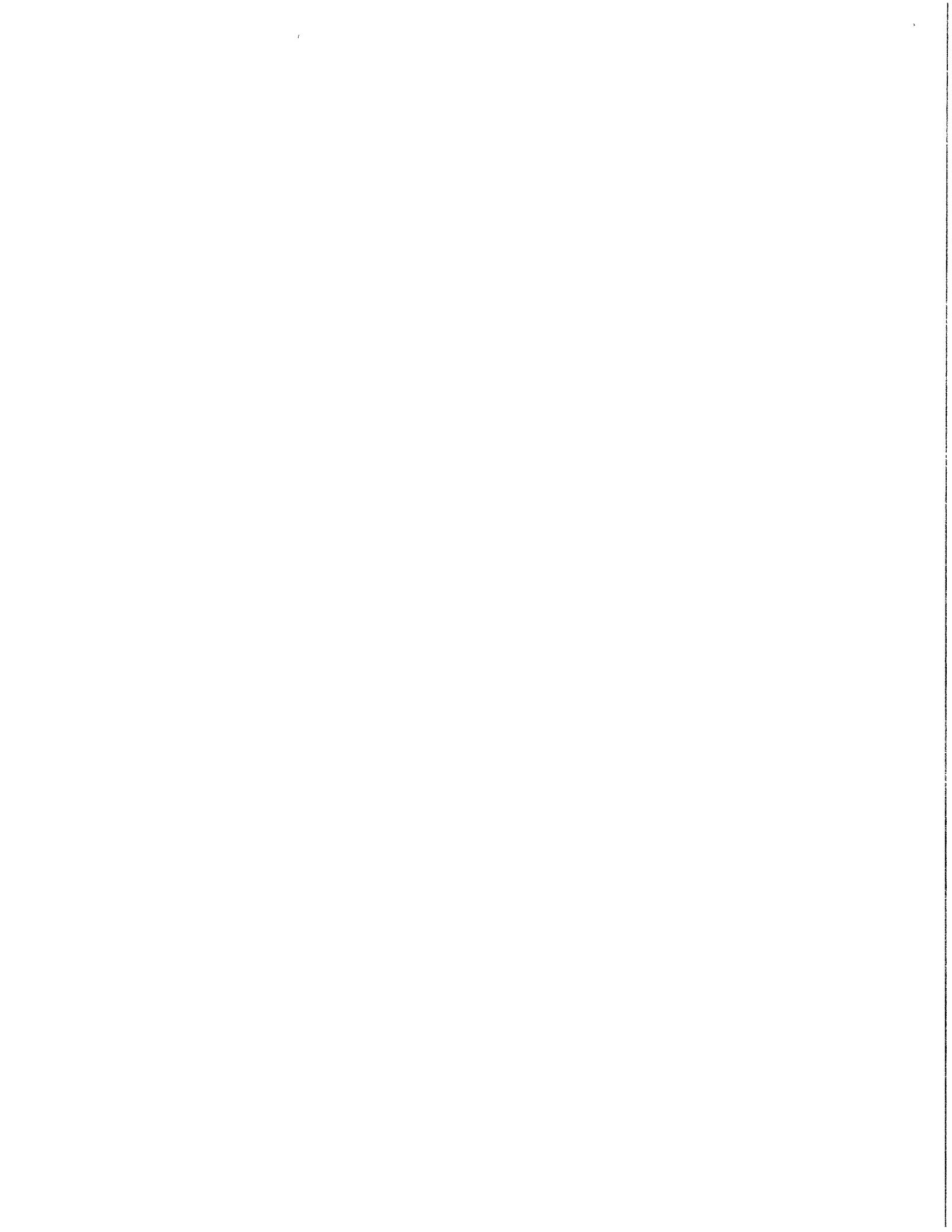
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Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

State Board of Education

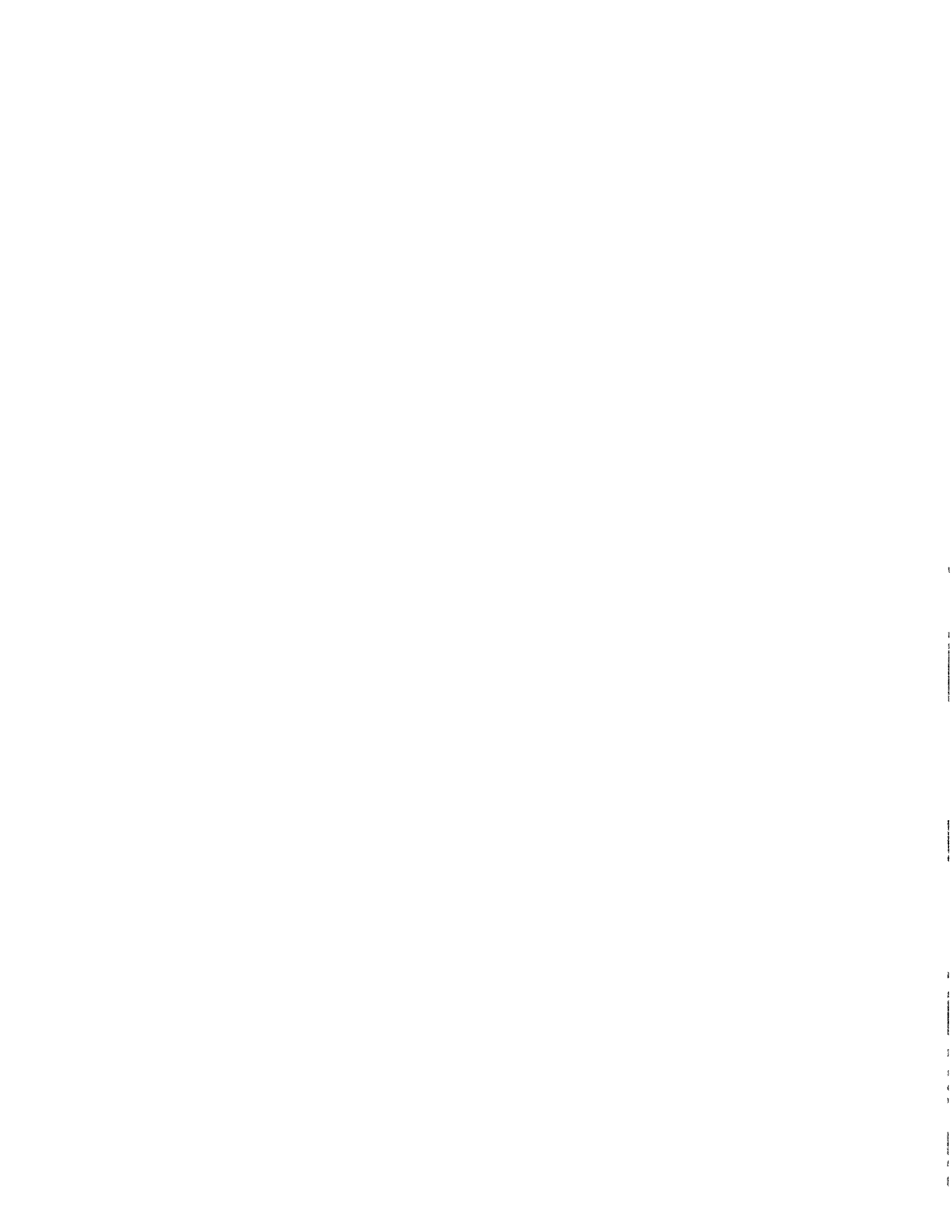
Public Hearing on High School Reform

March 3, 2009

Testimony submitted by:

Jerry E. Knight, Executive Director,  
Precision Manufacturing Institute -Meadville, PA

John Holiday, Director,  
PMI Shenango Valley-Sharon, PA





Good Morning. Members of the PA Board of Education, fellow colleagues and guests I am Jerry Knight, Executive Director of Precision Manufacturing Institute located in Meadville, PA. Also attending today along with me is Mr. John Holiday who is our Director of our Shenango Valley branch campus. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to provide testimony this morning regarding the proposal for Graduation Competency Assessments now being currently considered. I would like to commend the State Board of Education for taking a closer look at high school education requirements across the Commonwealth and for carefully considering the impact of both the pros and cons that this standard would have on not only at the high school level, but also for the post-secondary technical education providers like PMI.

I would like to take a moment to briefly describe the history of PMI and to our commitment to the manufacturing industry and our students.

Precision Manufacturing Institute (PMI) was originally formed by members of local industry as the National Institute of *Flexible* Manufacturing (NIFM) in 1987 as the nation's first Shared Use Training Factory. Its mission was to bring state-of-the-market machine tools into the area and train the manufacturing industry in their use. In 1998, NIFM became the Precision Manufacturing Institute. At this time, PMI expanded its mission to include providing entry-level training for unemployed and underemployed individuals who were interested in entering into a manufacturing trade. This change was in direct response to local industry's need for competent new workers in the tooling and machining trades.

Today, PMI strives to fulfill that mission by providing a variety of services to the local community. PMI works with local manufacturers to customize the training programs necessary to upgrade the technical skills of employees. As a private licensed school with the Pennsylvania Department of Education and a nationally accredited institution recognized by the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges of Technology, PMI offers students 18 diploma programs. PMI works with various funding agencies to provide training for the unemployed and underemployed in the region. In May of 2006, PMI celebrated the opening of its new Regional Technology and Education Center. This \$4.5 million dollar manufacturing training center is one of the largest in Northwest PA with its new 32,000 square-foot facility. In 2008 PMI opened another branch location in Sharon PA at a cost of over \$1.5 million dollars and now has 4 full time staff and expects to train over 150 students in its first full year of activation. PMI strives to continually expand upon the programs and services offered to the

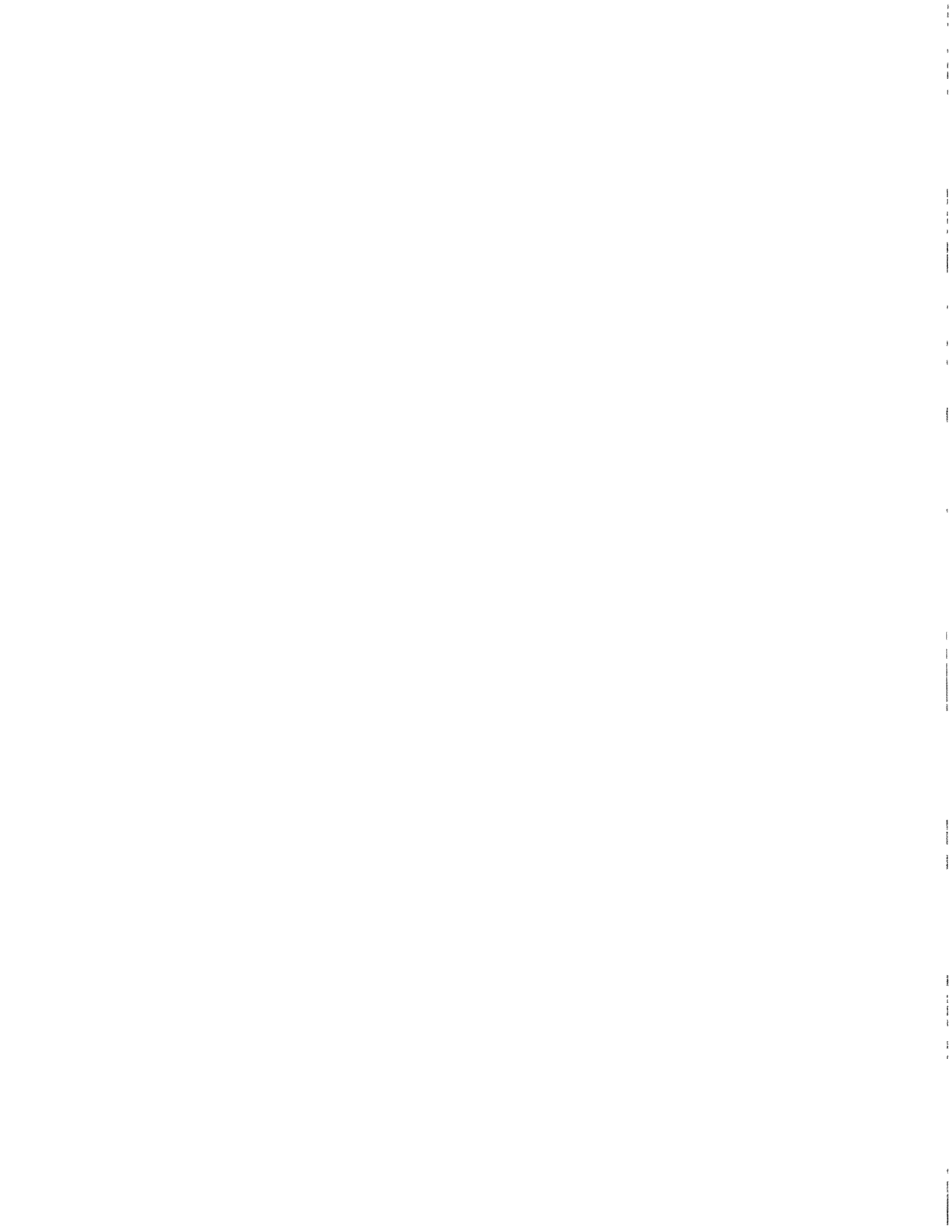


manufacturing community. PMI has 19 full-time employees, including 11 instructors and 6 administrative staff members. In addition, PMI has 12 adjunct instructors who assist with class instruction on an as-needed basis.

PMI averages approximately 600 students a year in our Meadville training facility and another 150 students from our branch location in Sharon, PA. The vast majority of our students are unemployed or underemployed and searching for training that will enable them to enter into the manufacturing environment. All our students are required to have a high school diploma or GED equivalent as part of our student enrollment policy. Prior to admission, all students are required to take the Wonderlic Basic Skills to ensure that students have the basic math and reading skills required to succeed in our technical training programs. It is not uncommon for us to encounter recent high school graduates who are unable to demonstrate basic reading and math skills below a 12<sup>th</sup> grade level. As part of all our technical programs, we include a Technical Math course which reviews basic math concepts which are essential for the manufacturing trade, such as algebra, geometry and working with decimals and fractions. There is no question that adult students who have been out of the education system for a number of years must have some sort of remedial training in math and reading, but we have found that recent high school graduates are often prone to similar difficulties as well. Reading skills are also key to success in our school. Our curriculum involves the use of technical handbooks and other textbooks that are written at or above a 10<sup>th</sup> grade reading level. Students who cannot demonstrate a strong reading ability may have to be denied enrollment.

It is imperative that in today's high tech manufacturing environment that we provide a work force that is capable of operating and performing at that same level. If manufacturers are asked to compete on an international basis in a world economy we need to be able to train individuals who have the basic math and reading skills necessary in order to learn the more advanced technical training skills that will be required for them to enter the manufacturing environment.

At PMI our most all of our curriculum is developed employing a national accepted standard of testing in the metal working industry called "NIMS". NIMS stands for the National Institute for Metalworking Skills. The National Institute for Metalworking Skills (NIMS) is the nation's only ANSI accredited developer of precision manufacturing skill standards and competency assessments.



NIMS certifies individual skills against standards and accredits programs that meet its quality requirements. NIMS stakeholders represent over 6,000 American companies. PMI fully embraces this standard because if one of our graduates presents his/her Diploma or certification to an employer and provides their "NIMS" credentials, the employer knows exactly what the individual can do competency wise. It is a national standard within the metalworking and manufacturing society.

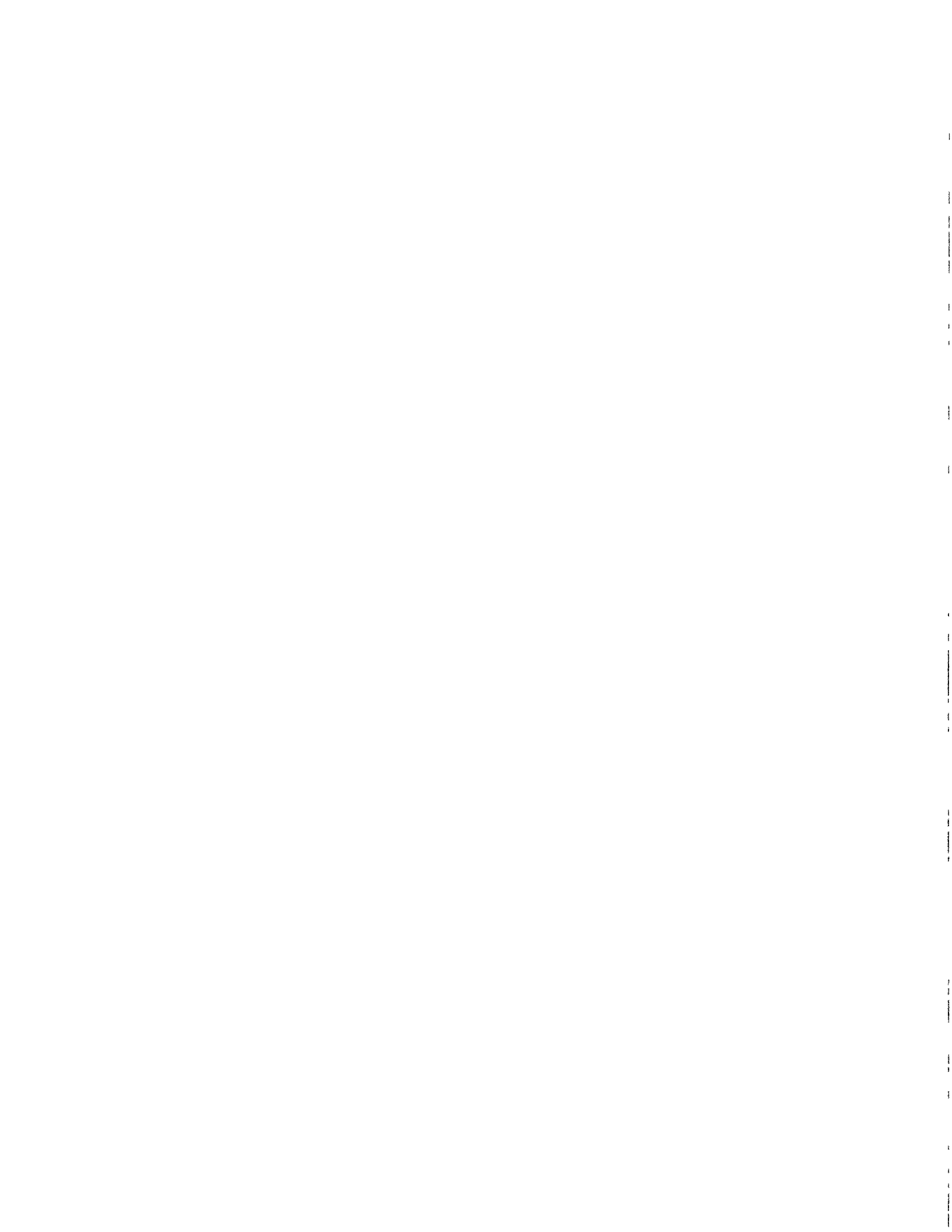
If a post-secondary technical training facility like PMI can utilize a national testing standard such as NIMS, so too we believe that Pennsylvania needs a public education system that establishes clear accountability and provides every child with the opportunity to receive a quality education. I am in support of the proposed Graduation Competency Assessments and believe this is an important and necessary step forward to strengthen and improve high school education in our Commonwealth. As technology steadily dominates our society at all levels, should not our expectations of graduates at the high school level seek to improve and provide some sort of uniformed standards and achievements? The questions might be asked do we have so little faith in our own education system that we are uncertain as to the expected level of standards that we should demand from our graduating high school students. Let's have the courage to support the research and trust that our educators and students can achieve the standards for graduation based on a valid and reliable measure across the Commonwealth.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jerry E. Knight

Executive Director, PMI



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Grove City  
10:50 AM  
William Bailey  
Dean of Enrollment Management  
Clarion University

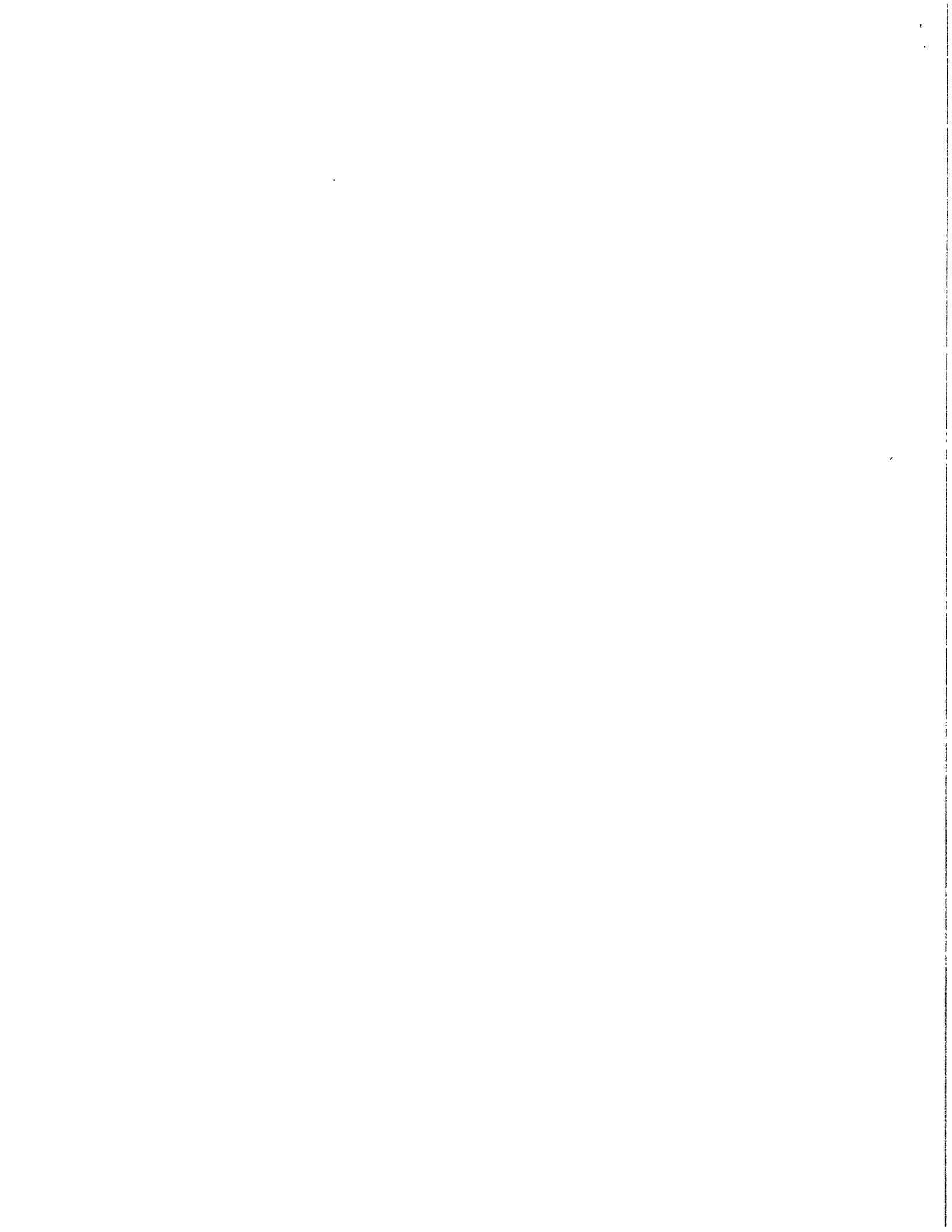
I've worked in higher education in three different states for more than 25 years. Since the beginning of my career, my responsibilities have related to educating students about preparation for college and the importance of a college education. During this time I have had various levels of responsibility at the university level for providing student orientations, support services and structures, to enhance student success toward learning, and graduation from college.

I'm here to testify because I believe that expectations and standards need to be set, so students and their parents/guardians are clear on what is needed to be prepared for college and a career.

Through the process of admitting students to college and tracking student retention and graduation, colleges learn which high schools prepare students well and those that do not. It is no surprise that a higher frequency of urban and rural schools, and those from economically depressed areas, graduate a larger percentage of less prepared students. Students in small rural schools, have fewer courses to choose from, which often causes time conflicts with getting other needed courses. These students also have fewer role models who have college degrees or professional careers, so they don't know what it takes and why it is important to prepare for college. Parental and school system expectations for these students are often lower. Most high schools (even those in rural and urban settings) offer the basic core courses that most college bound students need. But, many students choose (or are permitted) to complete courses that do not adequately prepare them for college. As well, some of the core courses that students do take, are not taught at a level demanding enough to for entry to college.

Clarion University draws from 66 PA counties, 49 states and 37 foreign countries, but our primary service area is western PA, which has a high frequency of first generation college students and mid to lower income families. Of approximately 3,800 annual applications for admission, 70% are offered admission to the university and 1250-1350 new undergraduate students enroll each fall. Of these enrolled students, an average of 30% (370-390) are identified by the admissions office as being at risk for not graduating based on their high school course selection, grades and SAT scores. As a result, the university invests significant resources to provide assistance ranging from summer courses as a pre-requisite for enrollment, developmental course work, additional advising, progress checks and tutoring.

An example of the lack of preparation for college, is an energetic student from an urban eastern PA high school who graduated with slightly less than a "B" high school average and an SAT score that was about 100 points below the state average. Part



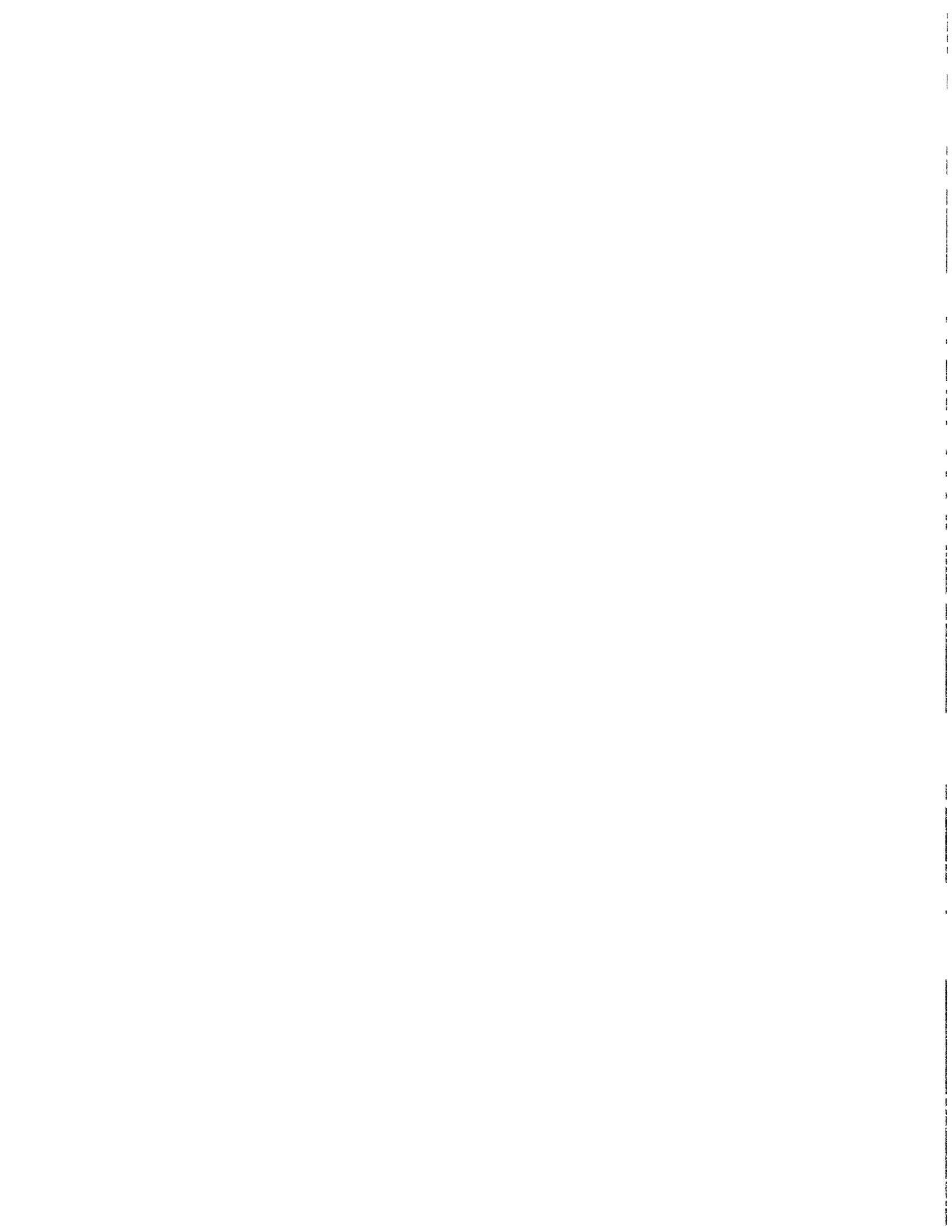


way through the first semester of her freshman year she admitted that she did not know how to use a computer. She reported that her high school was hesitant to allow students to use the computers, since they might break them. She was unable to complete assignments that required use of a computer, nor could she access on-line notes, study guides and practice quizzes. Despite university intervention, the student withdrew from the university half way through the semester.

Another student from a very rural school graduated at the top of his class and performed well on his SAT's. He did not complete a foreign language course and, as a result, did not qualify for a Federal Academic Competitiveness Grant, that is available for Pell eligible students.

What is my point. Although there are exceptions, despite any Graduation Competency Assessment you put in place, there will continue to be a divide between the financially able and less able, the rural and the urban student, and the type of support, guidance and encouragement students receive in high school.

Efforts to provide students with early exposure to learning rich experiences and environments, mentoring, clear guidance, clear expectations and a minimum prescribed high school curriculum, will pay dividends. A Graduation Competency Assessment provides a measurement at the end, but does not address the necessary steps to providing competency during the educational process.



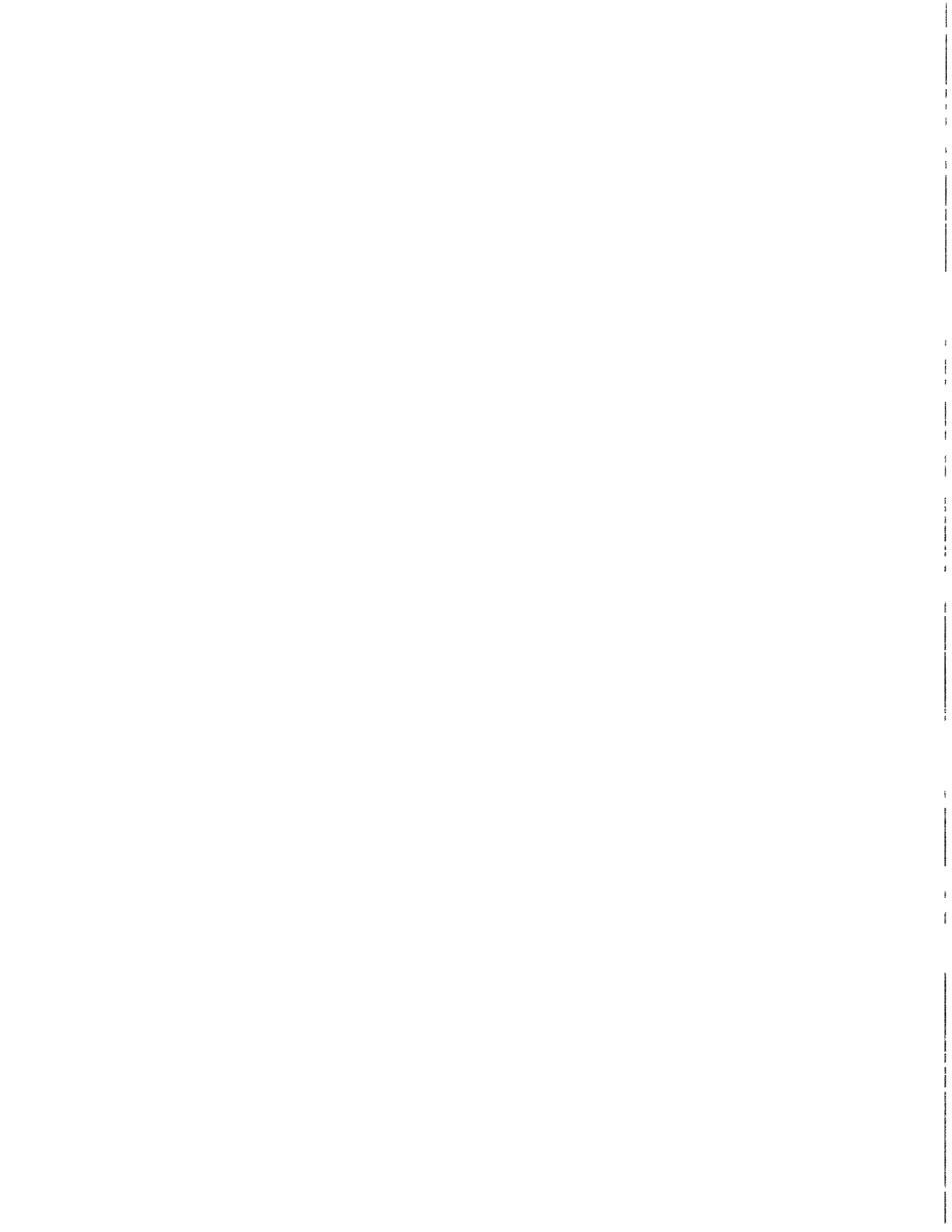
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RE: ED  
" 12 " " " "

Good morning. My name is Brenda Brinker and I am the Superintendent of the Allegheny-Clarion Valley School District. Thank you for providing the opportunity to voice our concerns about Graduation Competency Assessments.

You have already heard testimony citing research and data noting the negative impact of GCA's. My purpose in testifying today is to speak to you about the detrimental impact GCA's could have on the A-C Valley students.

High stakes testing is not a new topic for those of us in education; however, GCA's take this discussion to a whole new level. Educators are constantly seeking ways to improve student learning. In A-C Valley we have taken advantage of many government funded programs, such as Reading First, Dual Enrollment, and Classrooms for the Future as a means of changing the instructional landscape and providing more learning opportunities for our students. Accountability Block Grant funding enabled us to implement a full day kindergarten program last fall, and we are housing a Pre-K Counts program for children in our area. Through Classrooms for the Future we are progressing in our efforts at high school reform by adding rigor and relevance to our English and Science curricula with the teachers reporting that students are more actively engaged in the learning process. In addition to PSSA assessments in reading, math, writing, and science, 4Sight reading and math benchmark assessments are administered three times during the school year to students in grades 3-11, and to seniors who did not score at proficiency levels on their 11<sup>th</sup> grade PSSA's. 4Sight assessments are aligned with the Pennsylvania state standards and assessment anchors and provide data pertinent to student achievement that is beneficial to classroom instruction and meeting individual students' needs. Information from both PSSA and 4Sight is currently being used to locate gaps in our curriculum and direct classroom instruction. With preliminary work being done this school year, in 2009-10 we will be collaborating with Dr. Marilyn Howe from Clarion University in mapping all areas of our curriculum in an effort to close those gaps and to ensure that our curriculum is vertically aligned.



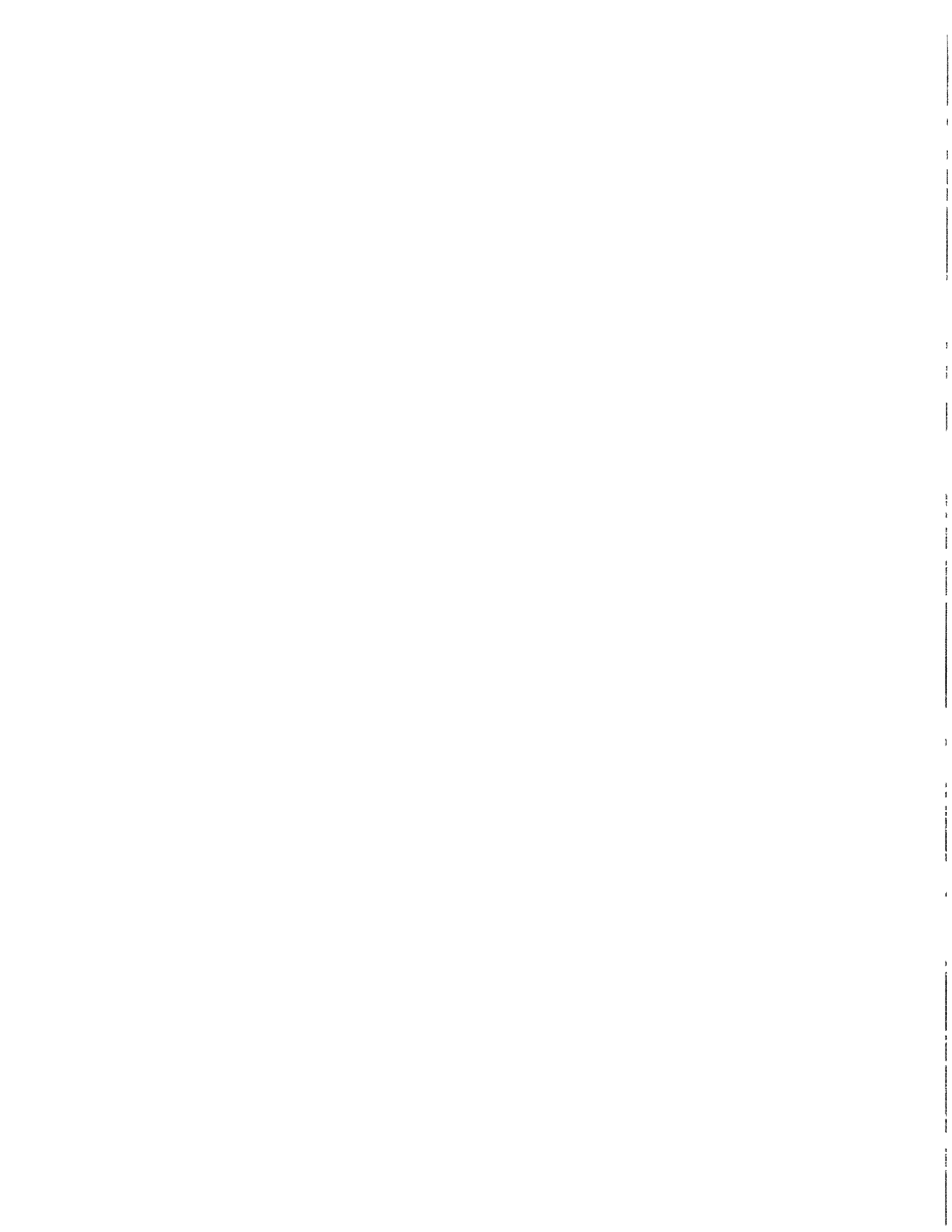
The activities I just mentioned are only some examples of how Allegheny- Clarion Valley School District is being proactive in addressing needs specific to our students and our school district in an effort to promote student achievement and academic success. Forcing Graduation Competency Assessments on us just results in more tests; not in more achievement. Mandating Graduation Competency Assessments places the focus on testing, not on students. This means our staff will be teaching for the Geometry GCA; the Algebra I GCA; the Algebra II GCA; the Biology GCA; the English Composition GCA; U. S. History and World History GCA's; the Literature GCA; and the Chemistry GCA; and the Civics and Government GCA. Our goal is to ensure rigor AND relevance, not just regurgitation of information.

In our technology-saturated world today, performance can not be measured by testing; it must be demonstrated through actual performance of a myriad of tasks. I can get a 100% on my driving test, but not be able to stay in my own lane on the highway; I can get a 100% on the CPR test, but not be able to actually perform the life-saving act on a real person; I can get a 100% on my Auto Body test, but not be able to change my car's oil. Testing is not the endgame--performing is.

At A-C Valley we are very concerned about our dropout rate. Reportedly other states, like California and Virginia, where a version of GCA's has already been implemented, realized a marked increase in the student dropout rate particularly among the economically disadvantaged and racial minorities. While we do not have a lot of racial diversity in our school district, we do have a high number of economically disadvantaged students. A-C Valley School District's 92% graduation rate exceeds the state's 90% average, and the 80% graduation target, however, 92% is not acceptable to us. The strategic planning committee designated improvement of the A-C Valley graduation rate as one of our goals. We are extremely concerned about GCA's becoming another barrier for us to overcome in our efforts to keep students in school.

The cost of GCA's is another concern to our school district. If GCA's are approved, what additional expense will A-C Valley be expected to provide for in our budget?

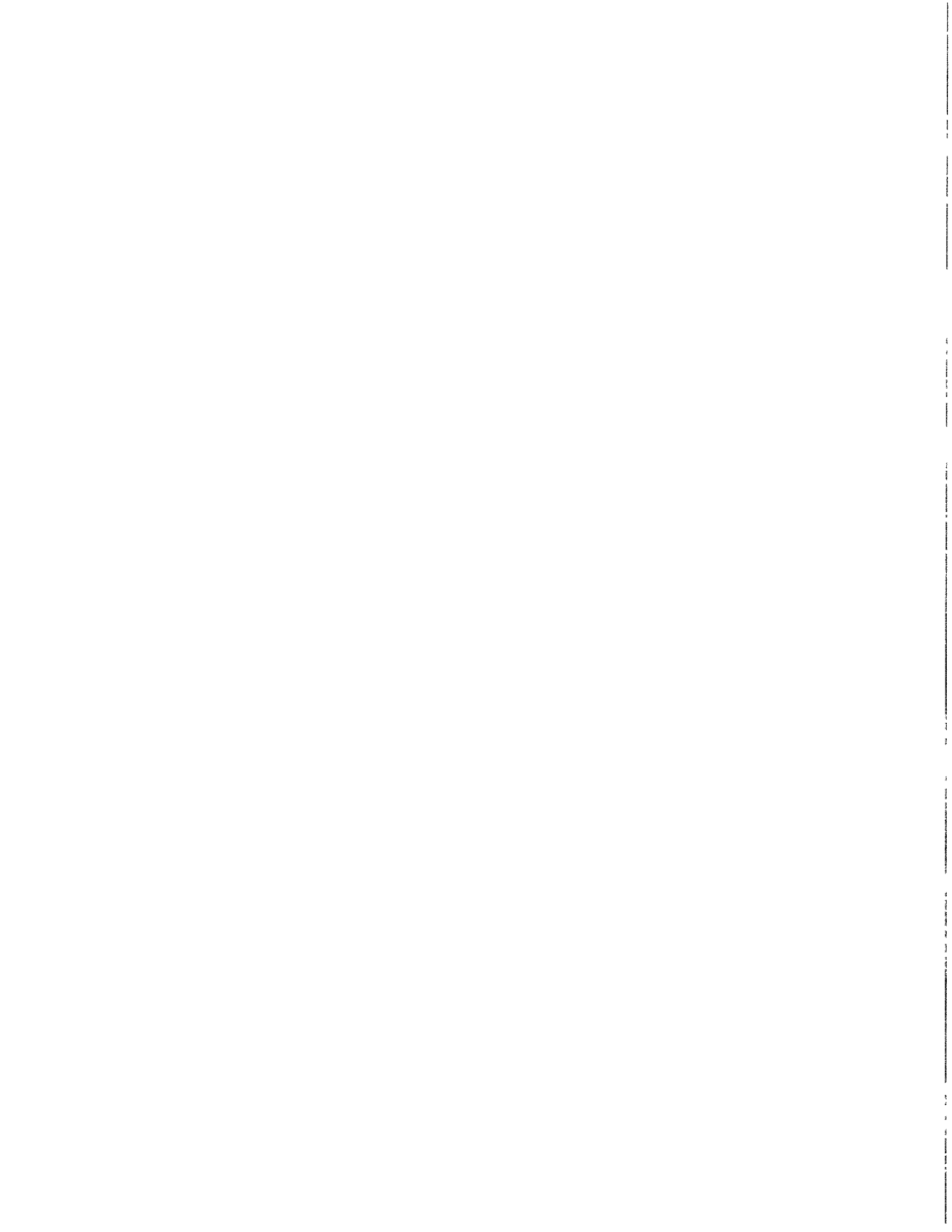
Although you report the proposal will not add costs to our local budgets, it has been our experience that there are often 'hidden' costs, time and money costs, we are expected to assume. Unlike larger school districts with personnel in place to oversee the curriculum



and assessments, or transportation, the administration and staff at A-C Valley and many other small school districts are already handling multiple assignments pertinent to managing the school district. State mandated GCA's would mean tasking the principals with another diversion from their work with students, teachers, educational programs, and the public.

The Allegheny-Clarion Valley School District does not oppose reforming high school education. We do support giving programs and initiatives already underway a chance to change the educational environment and increase student successes. Increased testing in the form of Graduation Competency Assessments is not the answer.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.





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TESTIMONY OF:  
KAREN WINNER, CEO  
WINNER INTERNATIONAL  
SHARON PA 16146

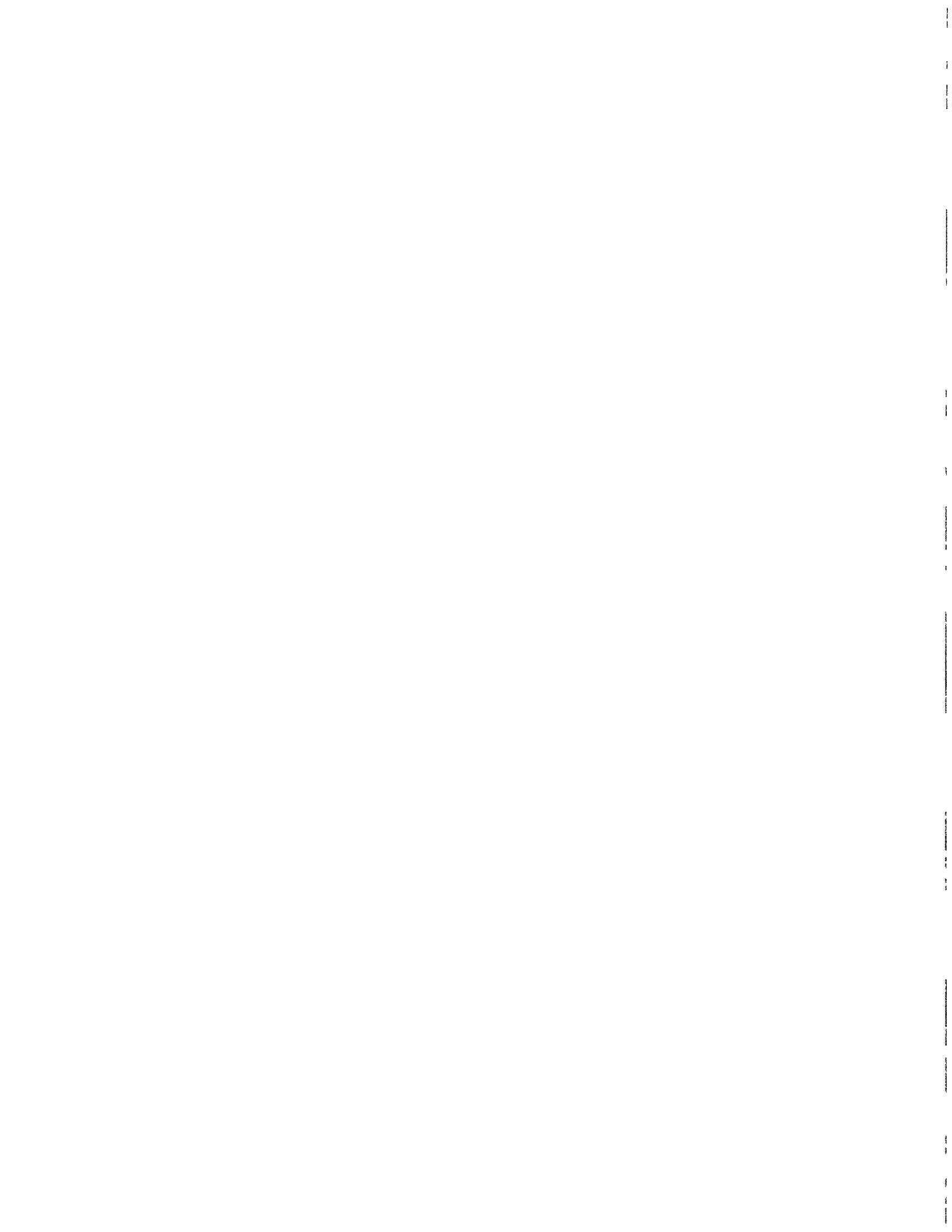
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Good morning. My name is Karen Winner, and I am the CEO of Winner International, and Vice-Chair of the various Winner companies, headquartered in Sharon Pennsylvania. Today I am here to speak in favor of the proposed Graduation Competency Assessments, and why as a business person, I feel that taking steps to improve high school education in Pennsylvania is critical.

Our companies are of a mixed variety. We have hospitality businesses with overnight guest rooms and dining facilities. We have a sizeable retail store, a marketing and distribution company, and a recently sold steel galvanizing business. In addition to these businesses we also had a culinary school. Although the nature of each business is dramatically different, there were and are common threads. A few of those threads are the lack of basic skills, seen too often from recent high school graduates. Please let me explain.

Most of the jobs at Winner do NOT require postsecondary education. With the computer skills most people graduate with, one can do quite nicely in a support role, as a clerk, or in a sales position. Interestingly enough, computer skills do not seem to be a shortcoming with our younger employees. Nearly everyone hired within the recent years has demonstrated strong skills with computer use and programs.

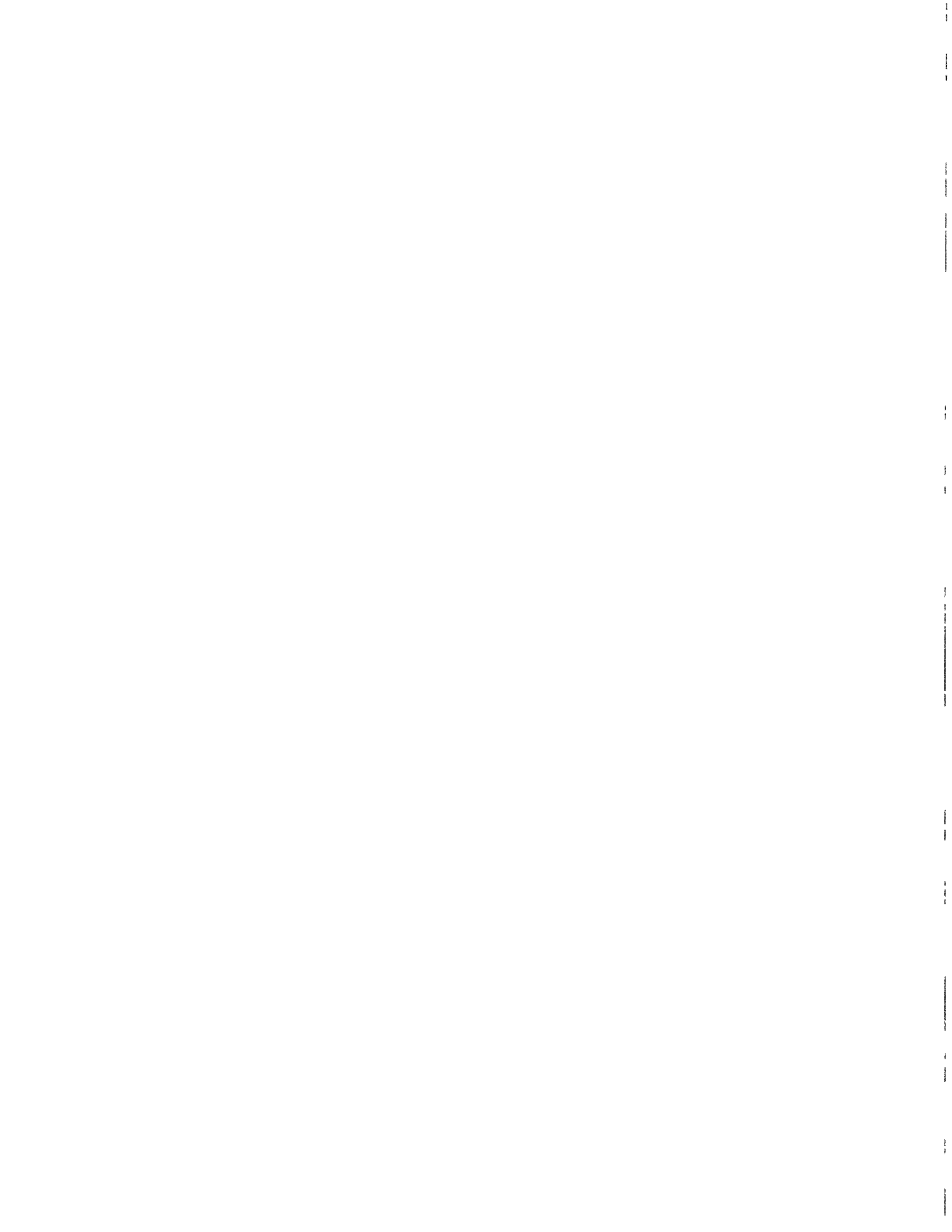
One of the things we all must be able to do on the job is communicate. We communicate with co-workers, with managers, and most of all with customers. Even the service sector, which is the growing sector in our area, demands communication skills. Typically employees are better at verbal communication than written, but glaringly obvious is the diminishing skill of composition. I have had several experiences that when I asked an



office staff member to put together a letter or a memo, what I got contained sentence fragments, run on sentences, and obvious incomplete thoughts. We have had to send office staff, which because of having other favorable, strong skills, for remediation in writing and composition, just so that we can keep them employed with us. In operating our culinary school, we had high school graduates who couldn't keep up with coursework because of not understanding fractions, or even having a grasp on their multiplication tables. This was so common (especially struggling with fractions) that we had to have instructors available regularly for tutoring on students' off hours. These were not hours we were compensated for. The students who needed help with math often needed help with basic English skills as well. Spelling, grammar, composition – all seemed to, too often, be a lost art. It's very disheartening for me to see a young person struggling to compose a letter, and concerning to think letters may go out in poor form before being caught and corrected.

We even find this short fall in maintenance. What they seem to struggle with the most is converting skills in math. Things that most of us do easily such as converting to decimal points challenge many of our younger employees.

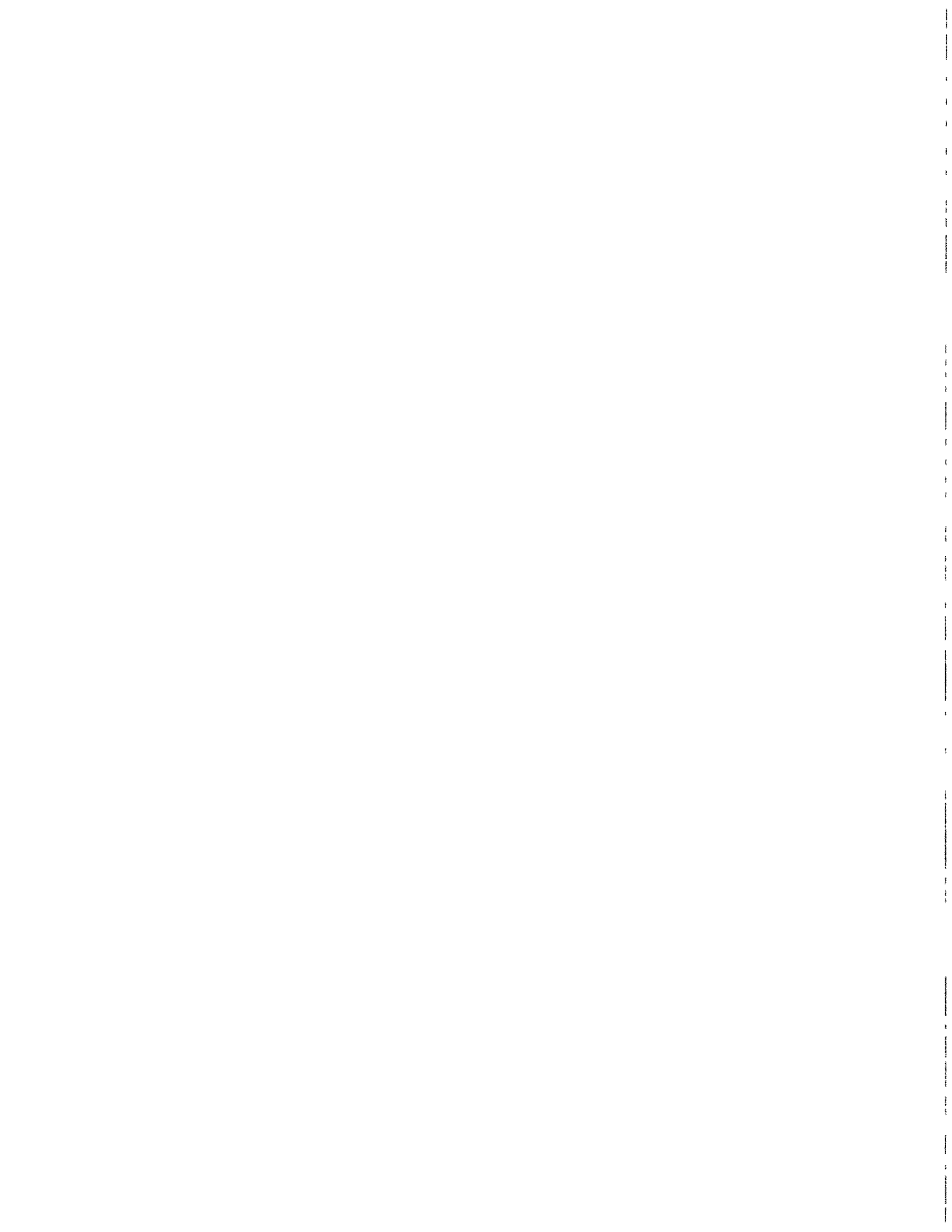
When interviewing applicants for our Foundation's college assistance programs, it startles me to see how someone who is supposedly ready for college doesn't follow simple instructions on a form. A form which is offering them financial assistance to go to college! It concerns me that the essay they're required to submit with that application is often fraught with grammatical errors. Whether they get the assistance from us, or from another source, I know they're headed for college with a few strikes already against them – they can't compose and they're not ready for what's waiting for them. When I think about the competition they'll face from other students, to get into the college of their choice, and during their course work, I genuinely get very concerned for them as individuals. I feel like many of them are being set up for failure, yet they don't realize how far behind they already are.



Of course this is not the case with all of our younger people who join us. Many of them come ready to work. That's what makes us question, how can these graduates come out of high school with such drastically different skills? How can the same high school diploma result in such a variety of math ability? In composition skills? How, when I hire someone who interviews well, and has a diploma in their portfolio, short of putting them through a battery of tests, be certain of their real skills? Only a few months ago did I learn that there is no standard for a high school diploma from Pennsylvania. In fact, nearly everyone I shared this with was as surprised as I was to learn that. To further learn the statistics of how many graduates (graduates with diploma in hand) who do not meet 11<sup>th</sup> grade proficiencies was alarming. 93% of our school districts graduated 20% more students than scored proficient on the 11<sup>th</sup> grade tests. 93% is a very high number, a very large sample size. 20% in the business world equates to a very large overrun, or a very large error. These numbers would never fly in business. They would never be considered an acceptable performance. Nor should they be acceptable to us for our high school graduates.

I have tried to quantify what remediation has cost our companies, but it quickly became evident that it wasn't possible. It wasn't possible because so many of our managers, so many of our instructors, took this role on just to save a co-worker or an underling. Others choose to do certain tasks themselves (such as write a letter) rather than wait for it to come back, and make the corrections (the old "I can do it quicker myself"). That may be time effective, but it serves no one well – not the employer or the employee. I can add up how many \$400 classes, how many hours for tutoring, but can't imagine how much productivity was lost – which is more costly - with all the other scenarios.

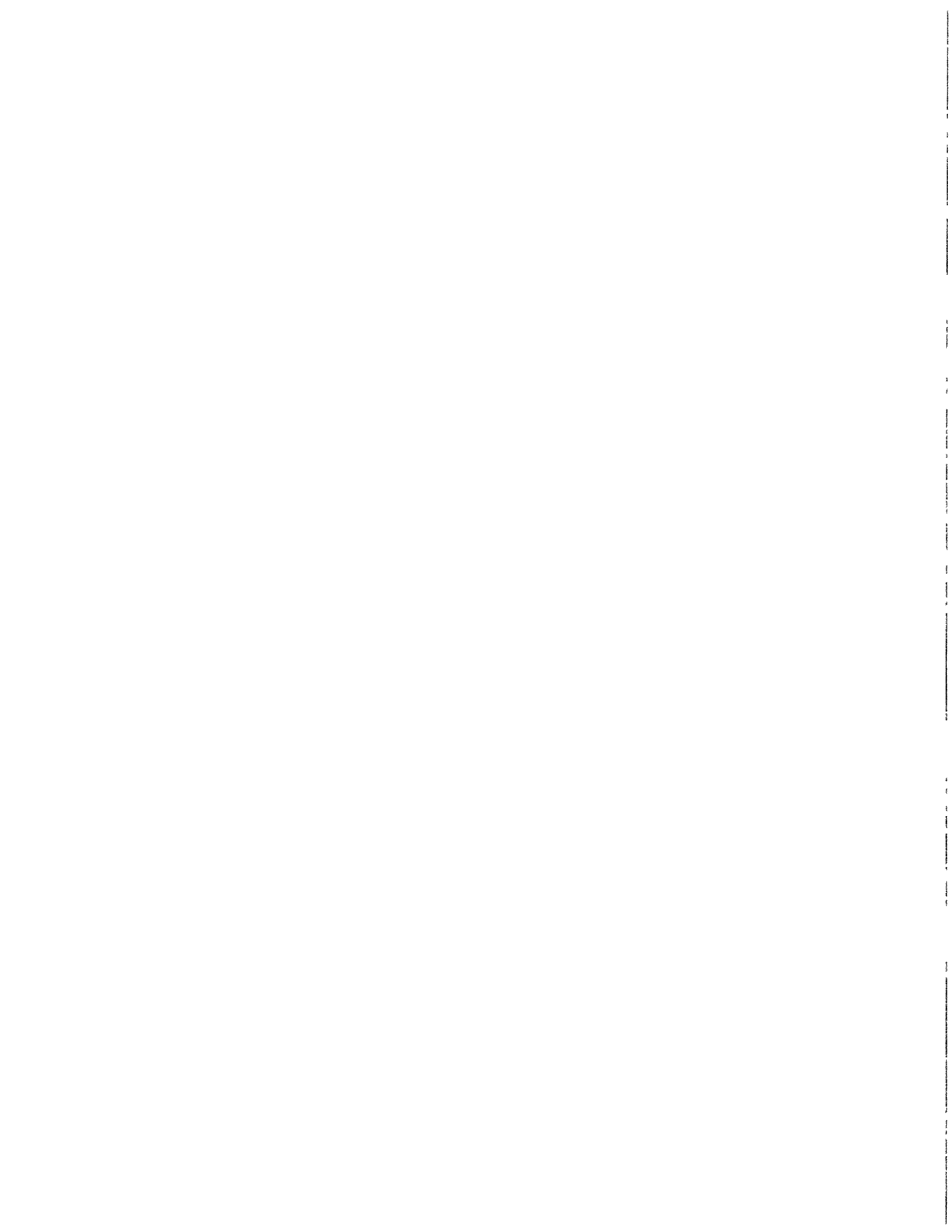
In preparation for today, I've talked with many fellow business owners and employers that experience similar situations, and agree that something must be done to better prepare our students for work, for life, for what it takes to just get by in the world. Is that even what we want? Don't we want to prepare each and every graduate with a formula for success in whichever road they choose? Don't we want to arm them with the skills – the basic skills – they need so that they can go out and make a livable wage?



Whether its college bound or work bound, don't we want to be known as a state that holds our academics to a higher standard? A state whose graduates are prepared to go on? What are our responsibilities as business leaders to these students? What about the other companies we try to recruit to Pennsylvania? Or to stay in Pennsylvania? We have responsibility in workforce development to provide a labor pool for new businesses, with at least a standard that can be expected. I believe we are not only responsible to our businesses, but we have some responsibility to our youth as well. We need to take responsibility by speaking out and saying "Yes, we see the deficiencies. No, they're not okay. Yes, we want higher standards. No, 501 different school districts having 501 different standards is not okay – it is not efficient – it is not effective – it is not done that way in business. Yes, we want to know that a high school diploma in Pennsylvania means the same thing irrespective of what high school it comes from".

As a business owner who is actively involved in the community, including the school district, as well as being a parent of a 7<sup>th</sup> grader, I'm glad to see this coming to light. I'm thankful to be taught the facts, but concerned about the true situation.

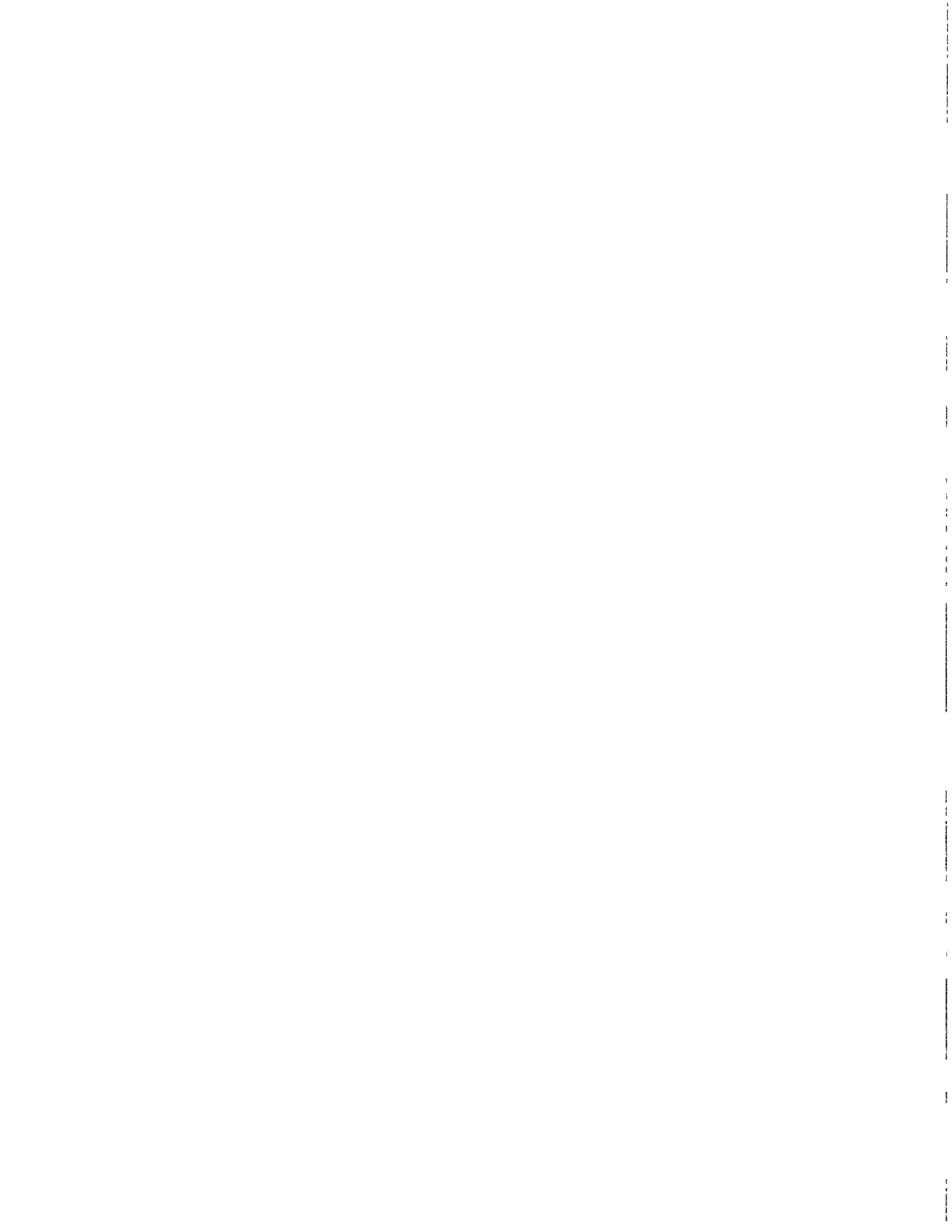
The truth is - it is unfortunate for all involved. Its unfortunate for the employer, who is being squeezed by the economy, forced to deal with rapidly and constantly changing business landscapes, and now is too often being faced with finishing the basic education of too many new, young employees. How very unfortunate for the high school graduate, who leaves school with a paper in their hand, believing that that paper is a ticket - a ticket that will take them into a job and insure their success. We owe it to every child enrolled in a Pennsylvania school today, to teach them what they will be required to know, and preferably enough to springboard them into a career path of their choice. We owe it to them to make every day in school count, and every diploma mean something. We business people owe it to them, to make sure their educators know what we require of them before they join our companies.





The proposed reforms, specifically to implement a competency test would benefit the business community by knowing that every new hire that comes with a Pennsylvania High School diploma will be able to present a specific skill level. We can better plan our work force, our development needs and be a better employer to our employees. As an employer, we don't believe its all about us – we know that our employees truly are critical to our success.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to be here and speak on this important matter today.





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March 3, 2009

Thank you for inviting me to comment on the proposed High School Competency testing.

My name is Dale W. Deist. I am the President of a manufacturing business in steel fabricating. We employ about 50 people, of which about 2/3'rds have technical skills in metal fabricating and welding, two in the unskilled category and the remainder in general administrative, management and sales careers.

Yes, is my recommendation for the Graduation Competency Assessments. This reason is primarily because, in the example where a student takes Algebra I in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, he or she can take the competency test immediately after finishing rather than wait for 5 years to take the PSSA.

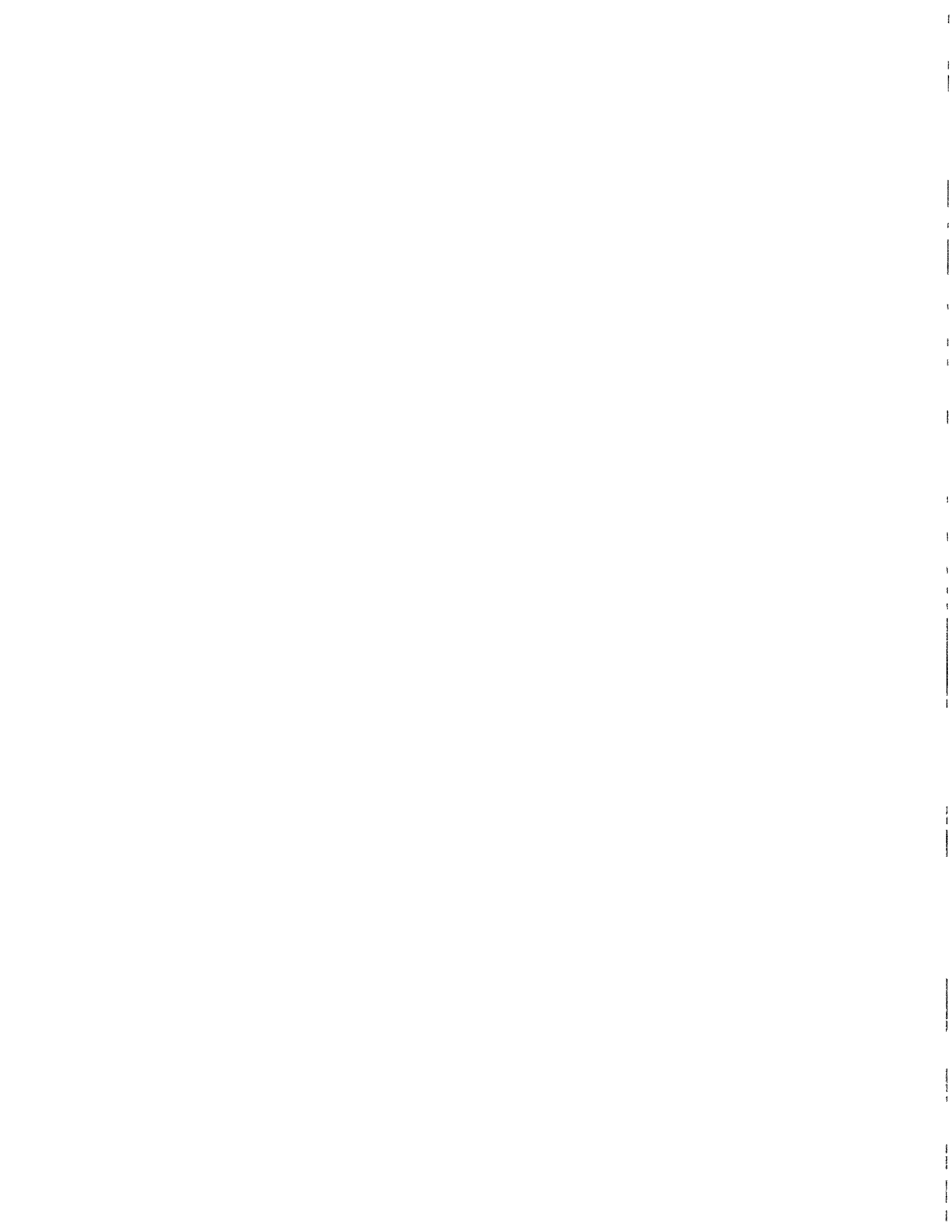
I believe that measurements are good. What you measure you can attempt to control.

However, I wonder what is our high school education objective?

Is it to get a certain test score, or to prepare and launch students into successful careers?

Are we trying to use the Graduation Competency Assessment to fix our Education System?

If so, it alone will not work. There is a comparable example in industry. When we raise



performance goals, that alone does not make it happen. Dr. Edwards Deming taught us in the 1980's that if we don't change methodology, "we can beat the horses harder", so to speak, but there will be no lasting performance improvement without a change in technique.

I believe that everyone surrounding this education situation has good intentions, guided by 1000 opinions. I believe that we have a motivation problem with students. I believe that we have a situation whereby administrators are "trying to play God for the betterment of our students, but it is being done in an unintended, destructive way". They are pushing all students to college careers.

Motivation of students:

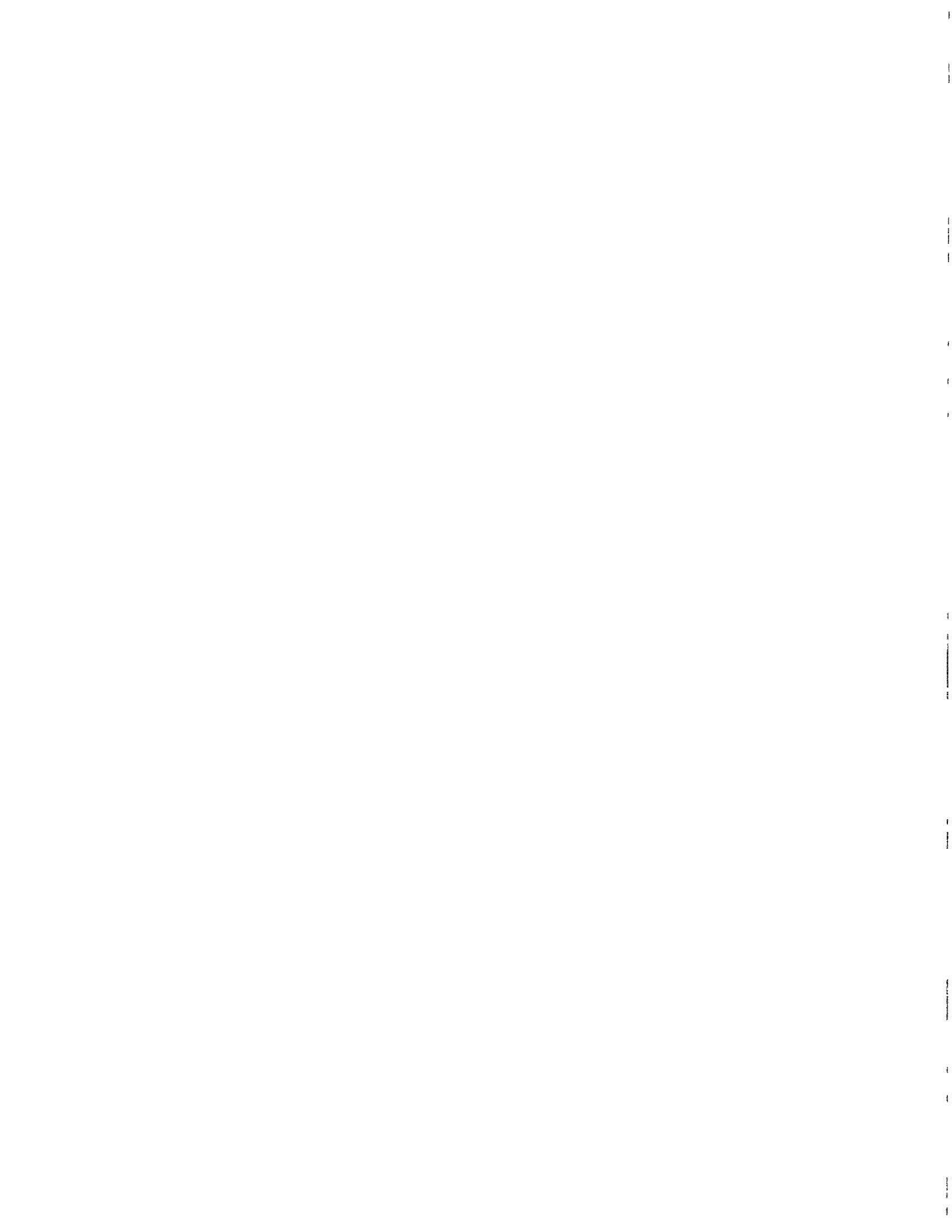
Some of our students are motivated to pay attention and learn, some are unmotivated and just filling chairs until they can quit or are be pushed out the door.

Playing God by administrators:

It seems like many administrators want to impose upon every student the education that will allow them to have a "career in an office behind a computer screen" for life.

We are all created equal by our Creator and are given equal rights at birth by our government. But, we are not all equal. I can not play basketball equal to LeBron James, nor football like Hines Ward. Yet, if football were the representation for high school academics, we would be forcing everyone to learn to be the quarterback. Even in Chess, the pieces have different abilities, each of which is important in its own right.

Why do we not recognize this in our secondary education system? Well, we do, but we don't act that way. Our school administrators, our Governors, our Presidents, and maybe all of

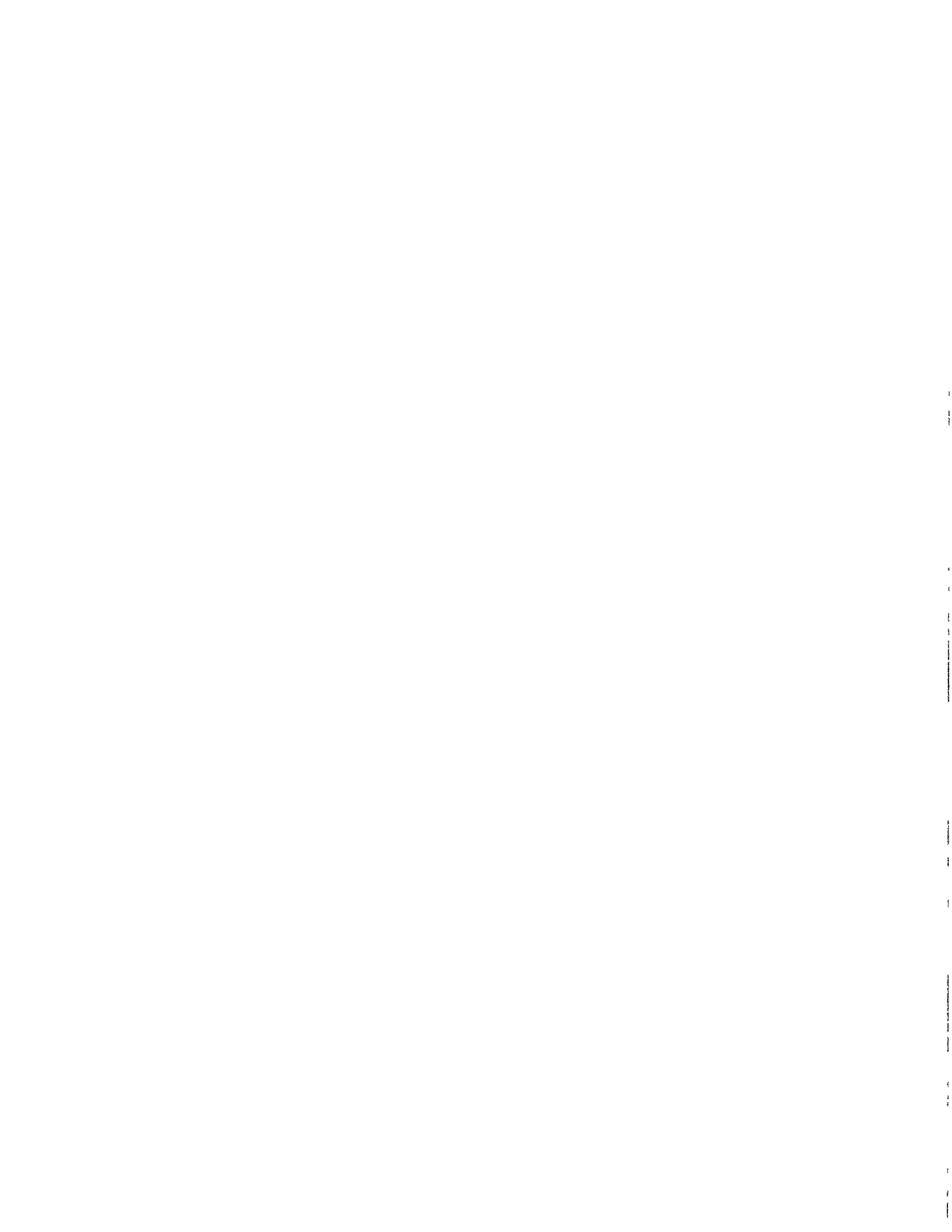


you, speak in sound bites to our communities, parents and students in ways that imply or directly say “that college is the only way to a successful career.” This seems to say in our football analogy, that everyone should study to be a quarterback on a pro team. How many pro football players do we have in our 330 million population, let alone quarterbacks?

- Only 25% of all careers require college. (see attachment)
- 45% of all careers are in technical skills --- college is not required. High schools do not seem to report that fact, nor, that these skills can be learned in high school!
- Our high schools send 80% of their students to college and only 25% of those graduate from college.
- Education is never wasted, however, those students who list “some college” on a resume are not using to their best advantage the time and money spent for “some college”, when they could be learning a respectable technical skill career, even while in high school.

We should be motivating our students with their parents help to discover the student’s gifts, talents and likes and the career sets that match. We can not push our students in directions they do not want to go in anymore than we can push rope. We need to lead and design an effective career discovery plan for each team of [student – teacher- parent – guidance counselor].

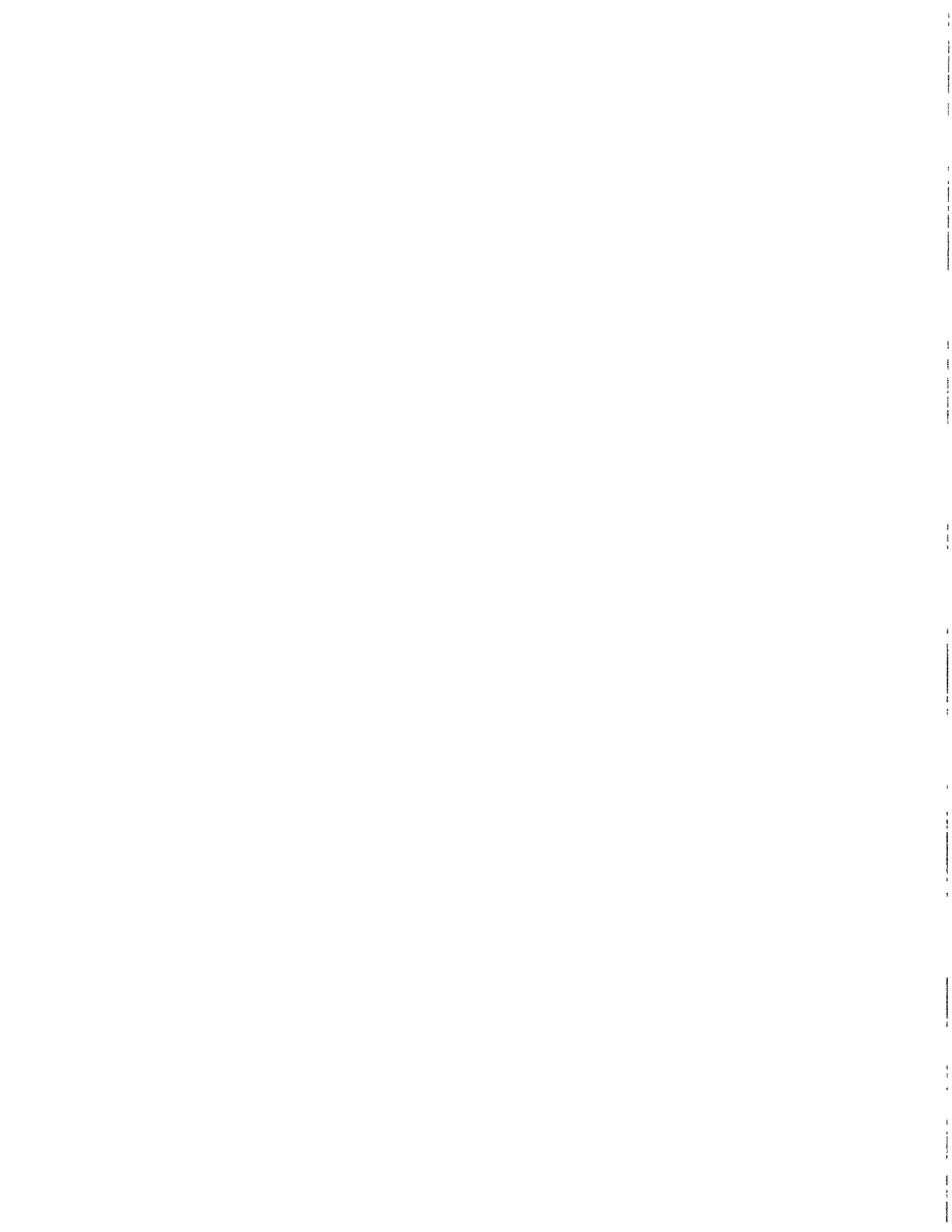
This problem and the solution is amazingly already described in the PA document “Academic Standards for Career Education and Work”, see the attached example. This 18





page document helps students discover their talents and interests in grades 3, 5, 8 and 11. If the student has a career interest goal that is encouraged and built upon, then we are helping lead them to their desired life's work. Subjects in school can be made relevant to that career or exchanged for subjects that are applicable. We can then stop trying to push rope and begin asking for parental and student involvement on a talent plan early, and lead the process in the student's preferred direction. (see the attachment for examples of some of the deep and interesting questions and directions that are investigated) The Commonwealth needs to enforce compliance to this constructive Academic Standard for Career Education and Work in every school.

So what does this have to do with High School Graduation Competency Assessments? Please allow test scores to be applied for the career for which the student is learning. A comparison could be drawn from the existing college entrance SAT exam example. SAT's have a perfect 800 math score possible. At some universities in their engineering and science programs they require scores of 575 to 675 or higher for entrance requirements in math. The same SAT math test for a Liberal Arts course of study may only require 525. This SAT math test might only require a 450 passing score for a more basic non college vocation. I think that you see the point. Let's find out what the math requirement is for each career the students are pursuing and let the passing score apply accordingly. Industry associations, institutions, and businesses probably already know those answers, and if not, they will be willing to cooperate and identify them.



Please allow test scores to be applied for the career the student is learning. Let's not require every student to have trig or calculus if it is not required in the student's career pursuit.

Currently, only 65% of our Pennsylvania 11<sup>th</sup> graders meet the PSSA reading proficiency and only 54% meet the math PSSA proficiency (see attachment). Let the new assessment test succeed because Pennsylvania changes the methodology by enforcing and following up the Academic Standards for Career Education and Work in all schools. The students and their parents can be motivated to help these career plans succeed. This will help us stop trying to "push rope" in our education system, and begin leading students to a career goal.

Finally, if Career success is what our education should be about, let's require that high schools track where our 11<sup>th</sup> graders are two years later, 5 years later and 10 years later to give feedback as to how our students are doing after leaving school.

When we do this we can measure how our education system is assisting our students in finding family sustaining careers as adults. This information would be useful. The question is whether it is realistically attainable.

Attached is a 9 minute dvd demonstrating how Metals Manufacturers in Mercer County are trying to communicate good, non-college, careers options to students and parents.

Also attached is one wise teacher's thoughts on the "hands on career options."

Thank you. I am for the Graduation Competency Assessments and the effective use and follow-up of the PA Academic Standards for Career Education and Work.

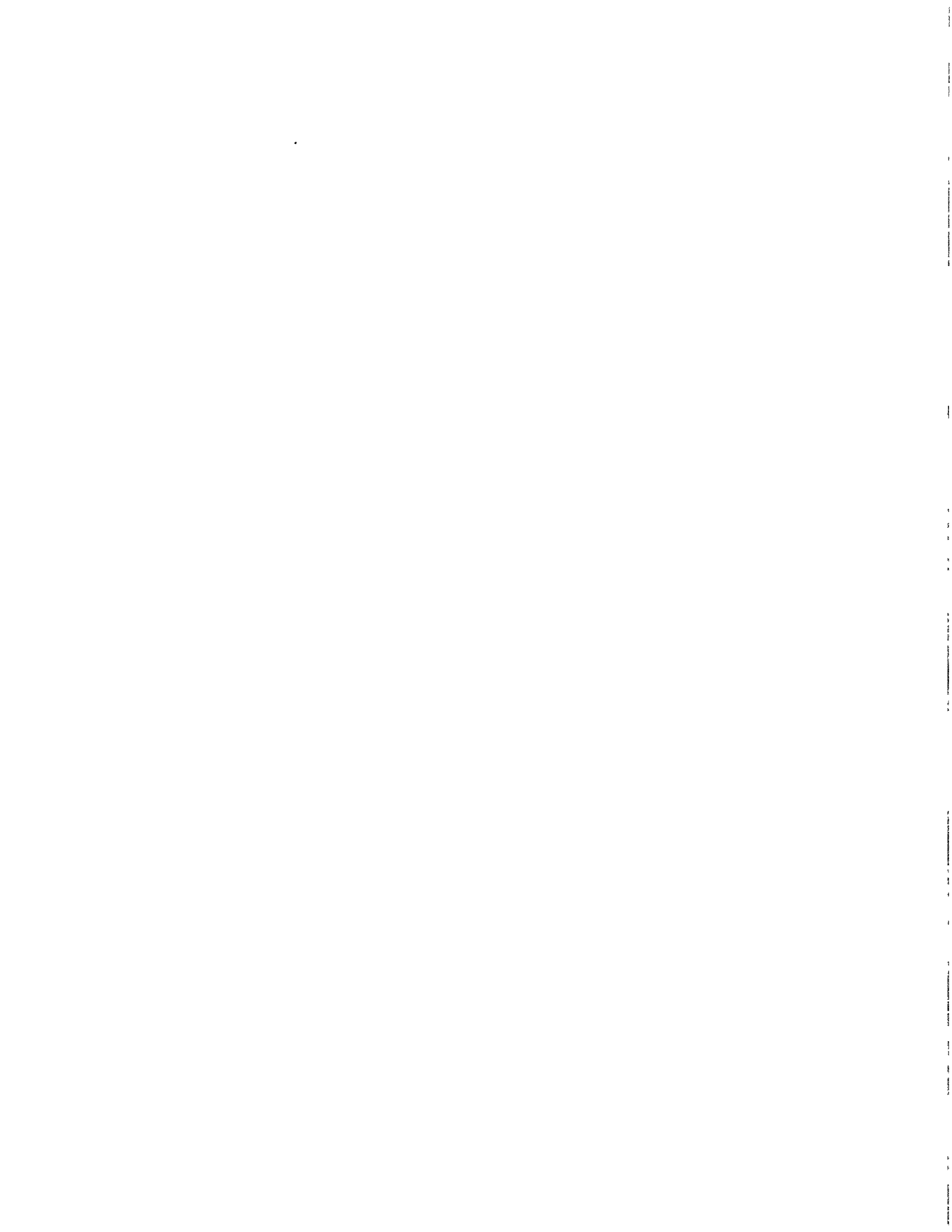


# Metals Skills Careers are Tech careers

**45% of all careers are  
in Technical training**



Real Careers



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**Pennsylvania Department of Education  
Bureau of Career and Technical Education  
Career and Technical Education Secondary Student Achievement**

**Goal**

To ensure every student achieves proficiency by 2014. To achieve this goal, it is necessary that the career and technical centers and the sending school districts coordinate courses and academic supports.

**Career and Technical Center Background**

- Career and technical centers are located in State Board of Education approved attendance areas.
- Career and technical centers are joint schools formed by one or more school districts.
- Career and technical center budgets are determined and approved by member school district school boards and the career and technical center's joint operating board.
- Career and technical centers are not taxing authorities.
- Career and technical centers operate as part time (technical education and training only) or comprehensive (academic and technical education and training).
- Career and technical centers that operate as comprehensive centers are eligible for EAP tutoring funds.
- Career and technical center enrollment of special education is 27.7% statewide average. (2005-2006 data).

**2007 PSSA Student Achievement**

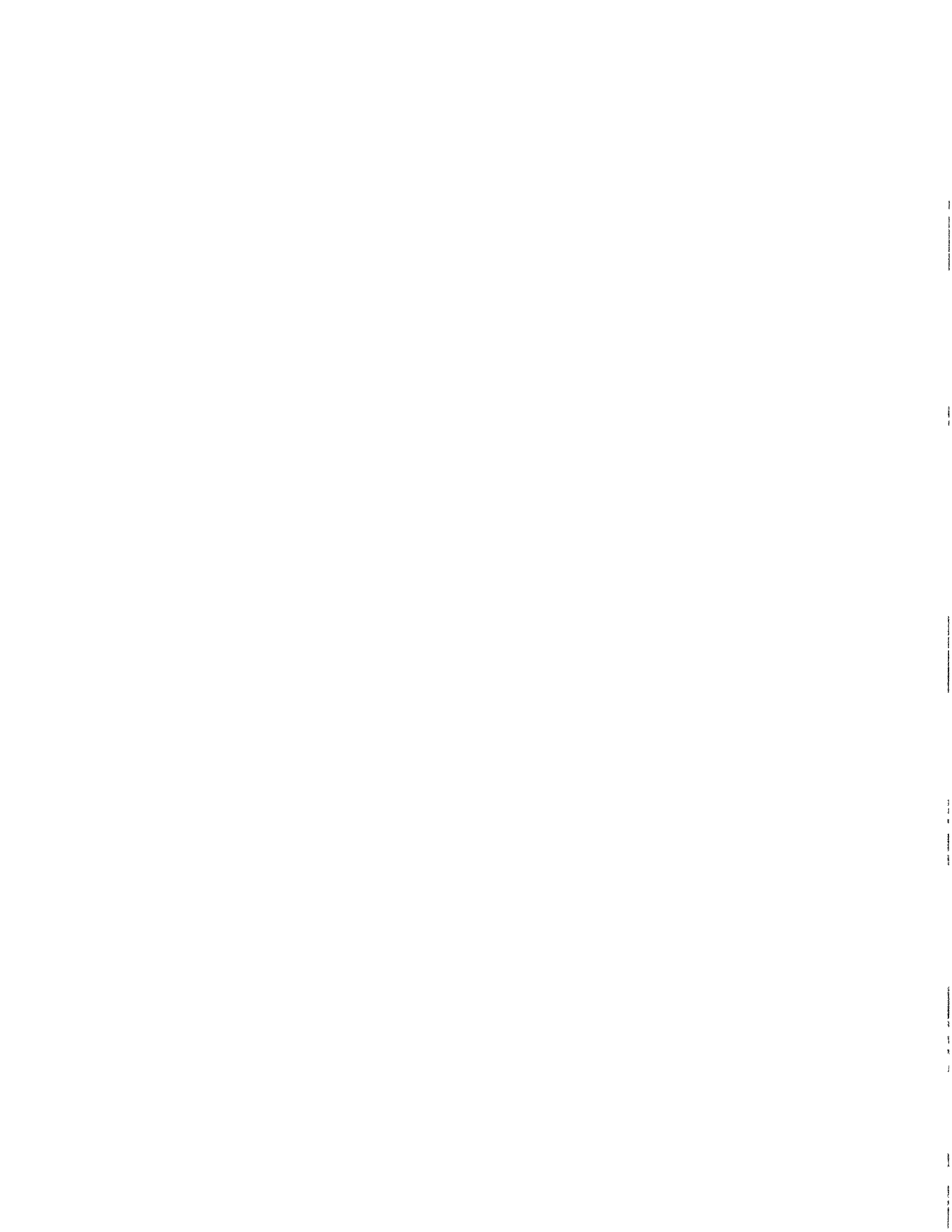
- Students enrolled in career and technical education programs are below the state average level of proficiency.
- IEP students enrolled in career and technical education programs are below the state average level of proficiency for IEP students.
- Students enrolled in comprehensive career and technical center programs are below the state average level of proficiency for all career and technical education students.

**Reading – 11<sup>th</sup> Grade**

State Average of All Student Proficiency	65.4%
State Average of Career and Technical Education Student Proficiency	41.6%
State Average of <u>Non IEP</u> Career and Technical Education Student Proficiency	51.6%
State Average of <u>IEP</u> Student Proficiency	18.7%
State Average of <u>IEP</u> Career and Technical Education Student Proficiency	11.7%
State Average of <u>Part-Time</u> Career and Technical Education Student Proficiency	37.6%
State Average of <u>Comprehensive</u> Career and Technical Education Student Proficiency	35.5%

**Math – 11<sup>th</sup> Grade**

State Average of All Student Proficiency	53.7%
State Average of Career and Technical Education Student Proficiency	29.6%
State Average of <u>Non IEP</u> Career and Technical Education Student Proficiency	37.1%
State Average of <u>IEP</u> Student Proficiency	11.8%
State Average of <u>IEP</u> Career and Technical Education Student Proficiency	7.5%
State Average of <u>Part-Time</u> Career and Technical Education Student Proficiency	24.1%
State Average of <u>Comprehensive</u> Career and Technical Education Student Proficiency	25.2%





# **Education: Our Responsibility to all Students**

By Fay Butler [www.faybutler.com](http://www.faybutler.com)

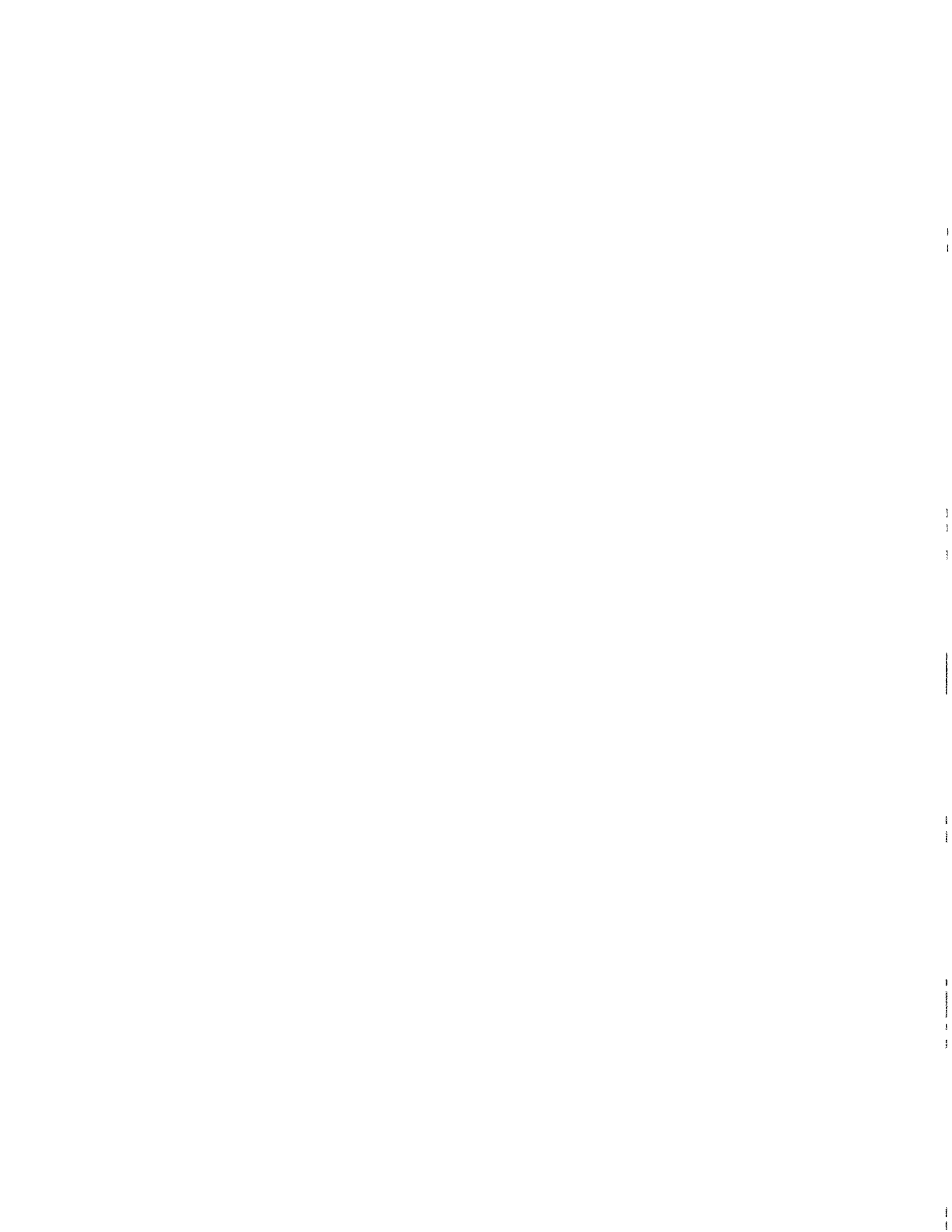
Traditional school systems quantify only a narrow type of intelligence that not all people fall into. This intelligence that school systems are dedicated to is important in the development of some students and the well being of communities yet it is only one narrow type of intelligence. So what about other types of intelligence: the people that see the world differently from the traditional white-collar “college” course of studies? These are often people with what is perceived as reading or learning disabilities, yet they have their own intelligence that is just as important to the well being of communities. In my opinion education systems let these people down and by doing so are not helping their community.

In first grade, if a student cannot read, or write well, and has a hard time comprehending this narrow way intelligence is presented and quantified, what happens is this group of students are just “shuffled” through school for 12 more years, disenfranchised from the education system. Sometimes art, music and the now removal of many industrial art programs can resonate with these students to spark them for the pursuit of truth and knowledge, allowing their uniqueness to be developed. Vocational schools are another way that this intelligence can be recognized and developed, yet we still see a “vocation” as being not as important as the traditional “white collar college” track. This could not be further from the truth.

It is my experience that humans learn best with that connection between their hands and their mind. Students that cannot learn in the traditional methods promoted in school systems often can be reconnected to the learning process when that connection between the hand and mind is brought back. This not only allows for learning and the pursuit of truth through patterns that are recognized through performing the tasks. Creating in areas such as fabrication also requires the understanding of the science of the materials, the tools and processes. This can engage the individual allowing them to develop their uniqueness and grow to becoming a productive person in a community.

As the middle class is diminishing and many of our products are not being made in our communities, it is our responsibility to engage this group of students/people that have been “thrown” out of the education system and realize that their abilities are important and that with the proper guidance they can become the “Einstein” of creating in the physical world, the people who actually make the items that allow us all to live a more comfortable life.

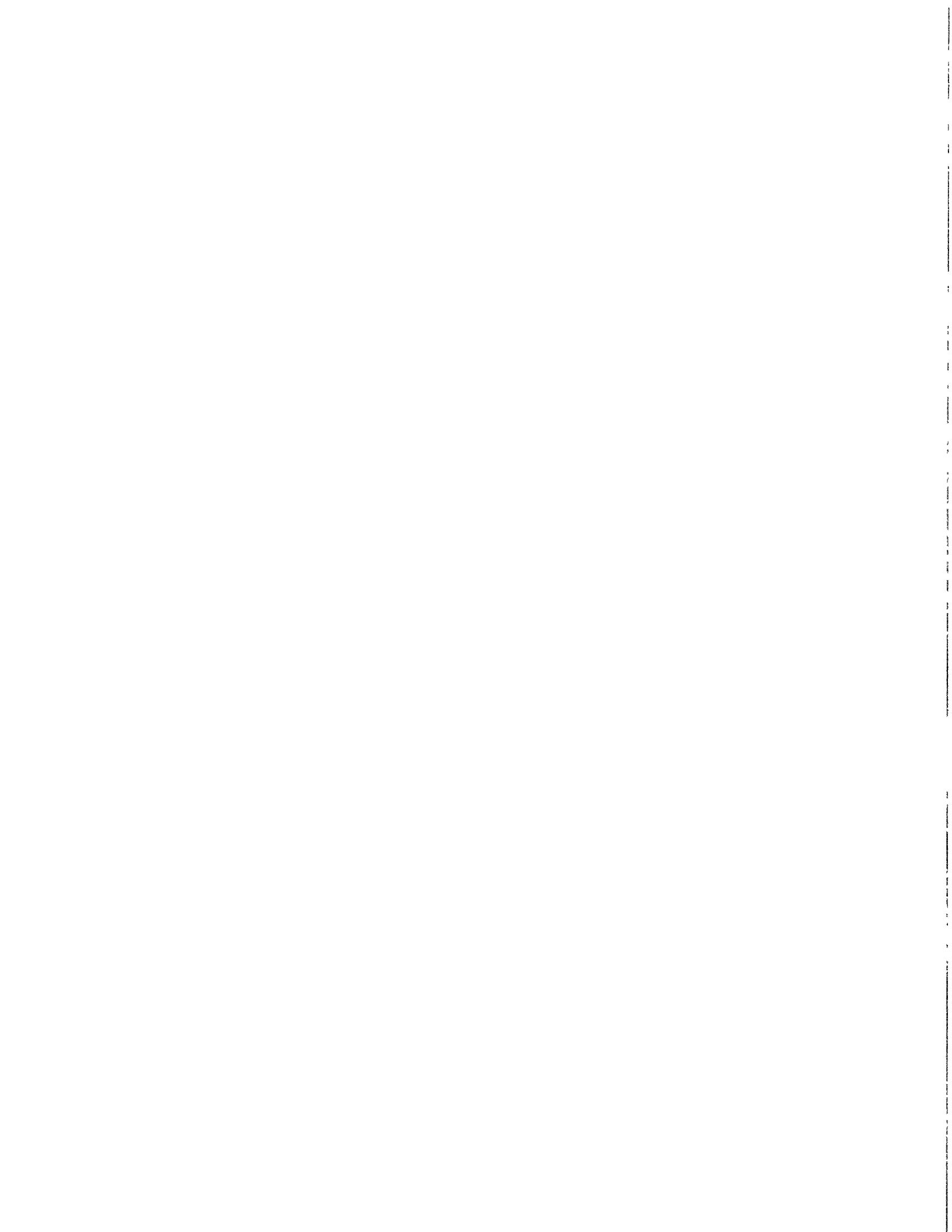
Fay Butler is an educator and craftsman teaching many high profile businesses and individuals for 35 years on metals, welding and craftsmanship. Fay has worked with many automobile and aircraft related companies from antique to early development stages of modern products. One high profile appearance as a craftsman/educator is when Fay opened a movie for Jesse James on Discovery Channel TV called Motorcycle Mania 3.



# Academic Standards for Career Education and Work



Pennsylvania Department of Education



Academic Standards for Career Education and Work

XXXVII. TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....XXXVIII.

THE ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Career Awareness and Preparation .....13.1.

- A. *Abilities and Aptitudes*
- B. *Personal Interests*
- C. *Nontraditional Workplace Roles*
- D. *Local Career Preparation Opportunities*
- E. *Career Selection Influences*
- F. *Preparation for Careers*
- G. *Career Plan Components*
- H. *Relationship Between Education and Career*

Career Acquisition (Getting a Job) .....13.2.

- A. *Interviewing Skills*
- B. *Resources*
- C. *Career Acquisition Documents*
- D. *Career Planning Portfolios*
- E. *Career Acquisition Process*

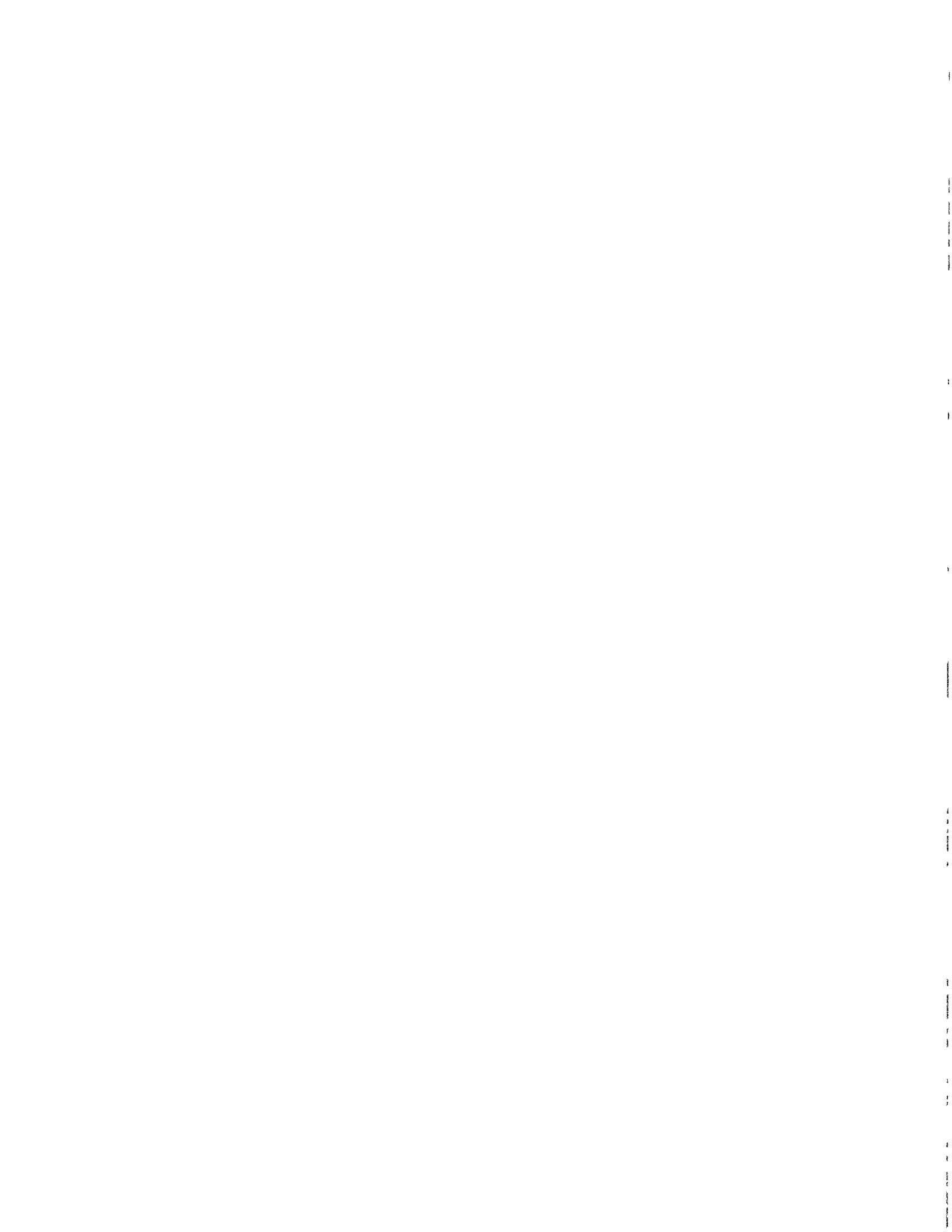
Career Retention and Advancement.....13.3.

- A. *Work Habits*
- B. *Cooperation and Teamwork*
- C. *Group Interaction*
- D. *Budgeting*
- E. *Time Management*
- F. *Workplace Changes*
- G. *Lifelong Learning*

Entrepreneurship .....13.4.

- A. *Risks and Rewards*
- B. *Character Traits*
- C. *Business Plan*

Glossary .....XXXIX.



## Academic Standards for Career Education and Work

### XXXVIII. INTRODUCTION

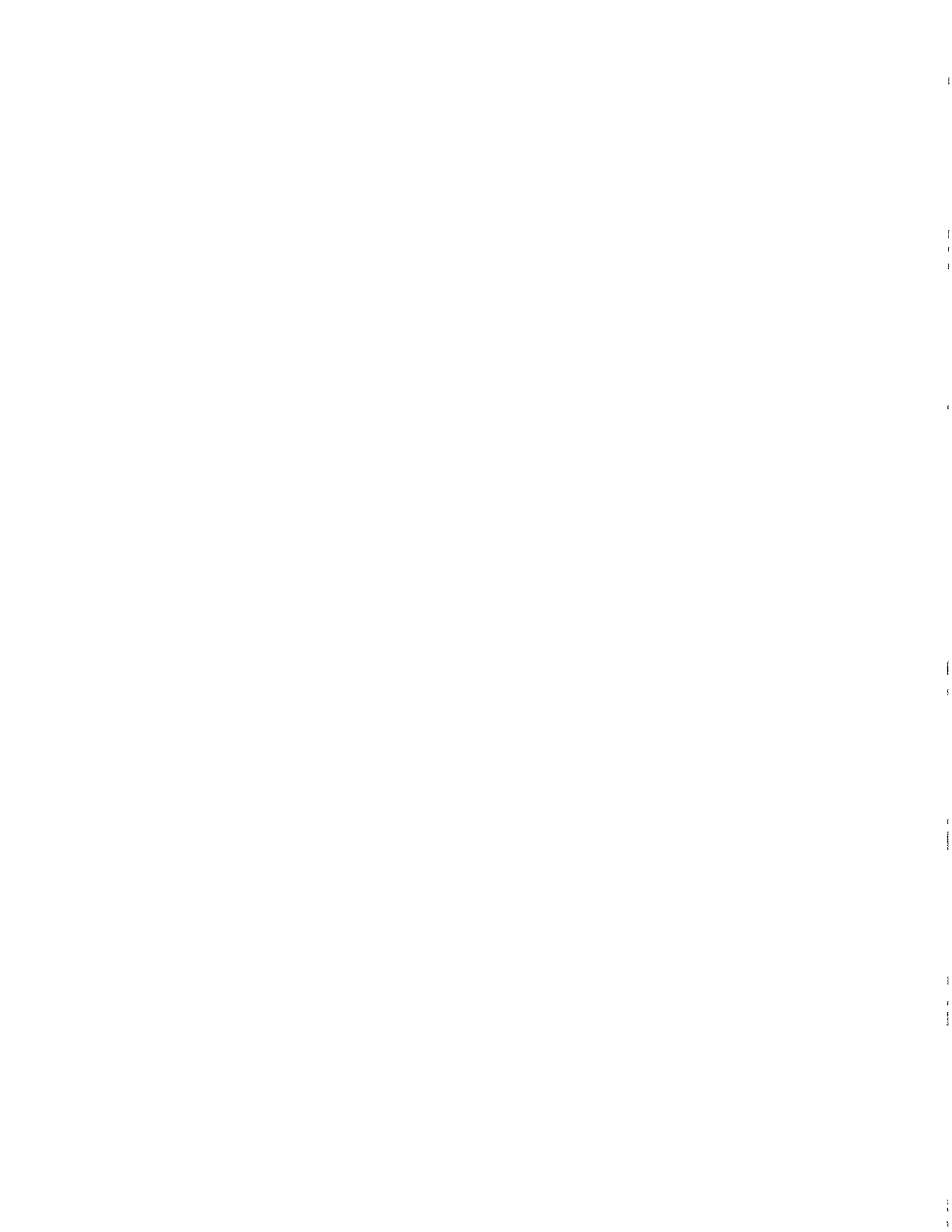
The Academic Standards for Career Education and Work reflect the increasing complexity and sophistication that students experience as they progress through school. Career Education and Work Standards describe what students should know and be able to do at four grade levels (3, 5, 8 and 11) in four areas:

- ◆ 13.1 Career Awareness and Preparation
- ◆ 13.2 Career Acquisition (Getting a Job)
- ◆ 13.3 Career Retention and Advancement
- ◆ 13.4 Entrepreneurship

Pennsylvania's economic future depends on having a well-educated and skilled workforce. No student should leave secondary education without a solid foundation in Career Education and Work. It is the rapidly changing workplace and the demand for continuous learning and innovation on the part of the workers that drive the need to establish academic standards in Career Education and Work.

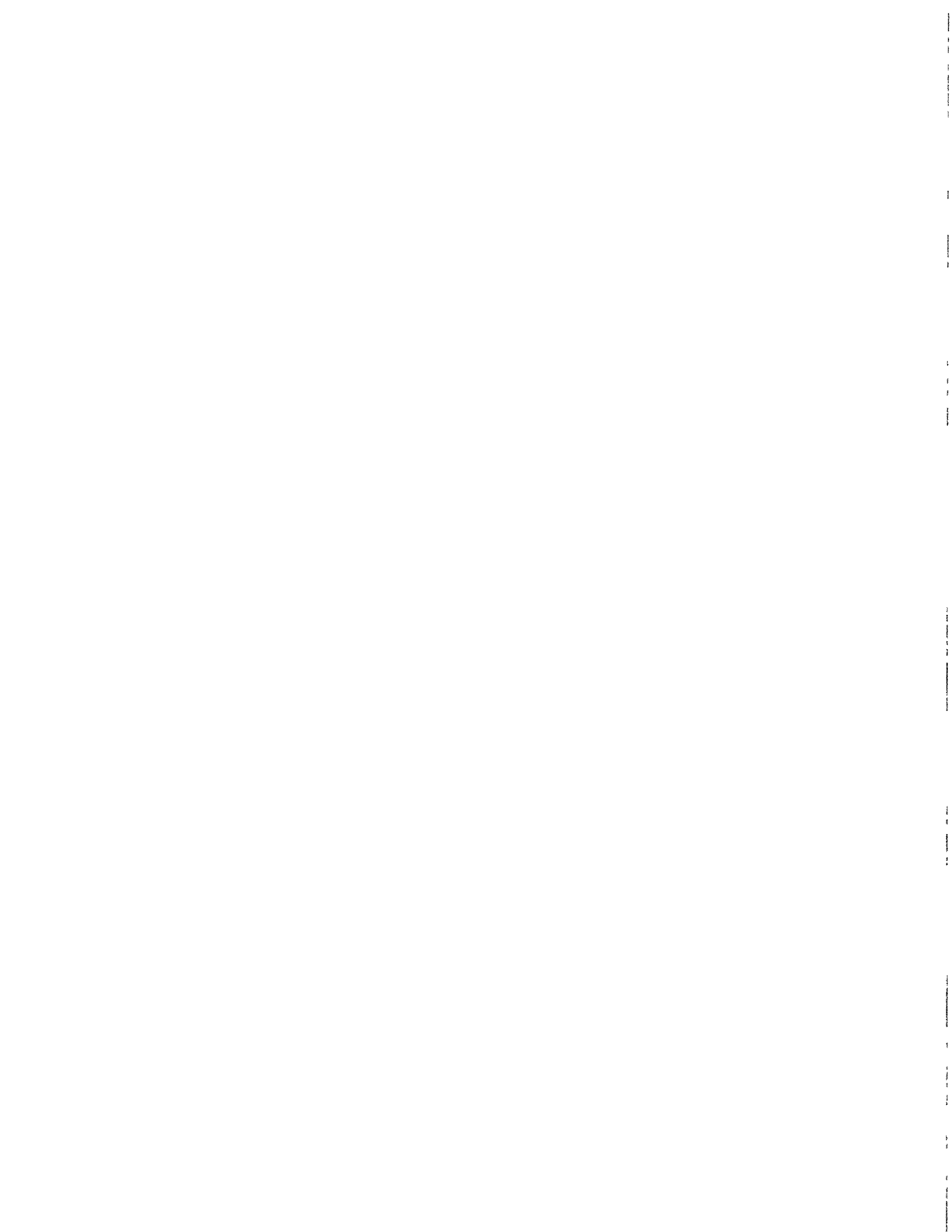
Through a comprehensive approach, Career Education and Work Standards complement all disciplines and other academic standards. If Pennsylvania's students are to succeed in the workplace, there are certain skills that they need to obtain prior to graduation from high school. These skills have been identified in the Career Education and Work Standards, but it is up to individual school districts to decide how they are to be taught. Districts can implement integration strategies within existing disciplines or can implement stand-alone courses to specifically address these standards.

A glossary is included to assist the reader in understanding terminology contained in the standards.

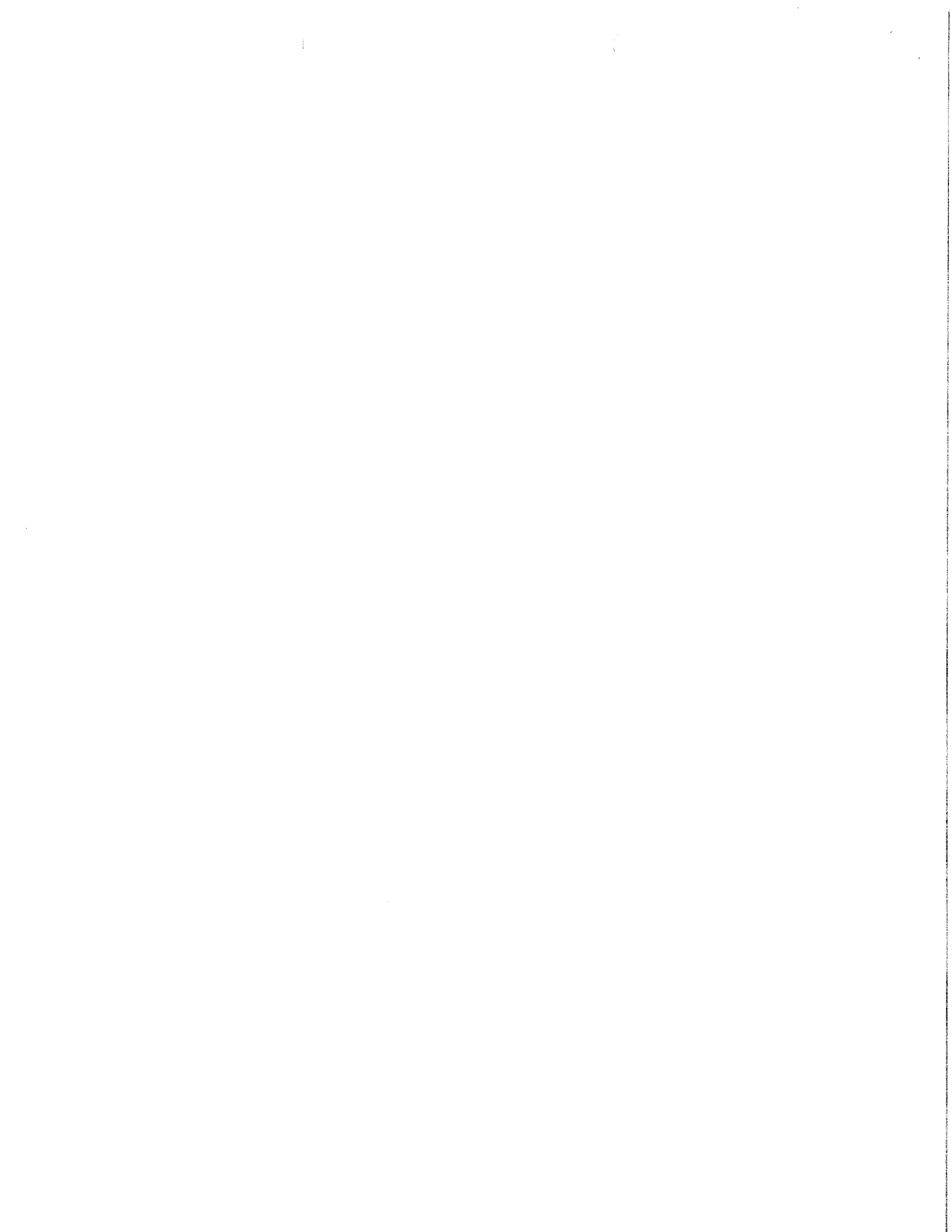




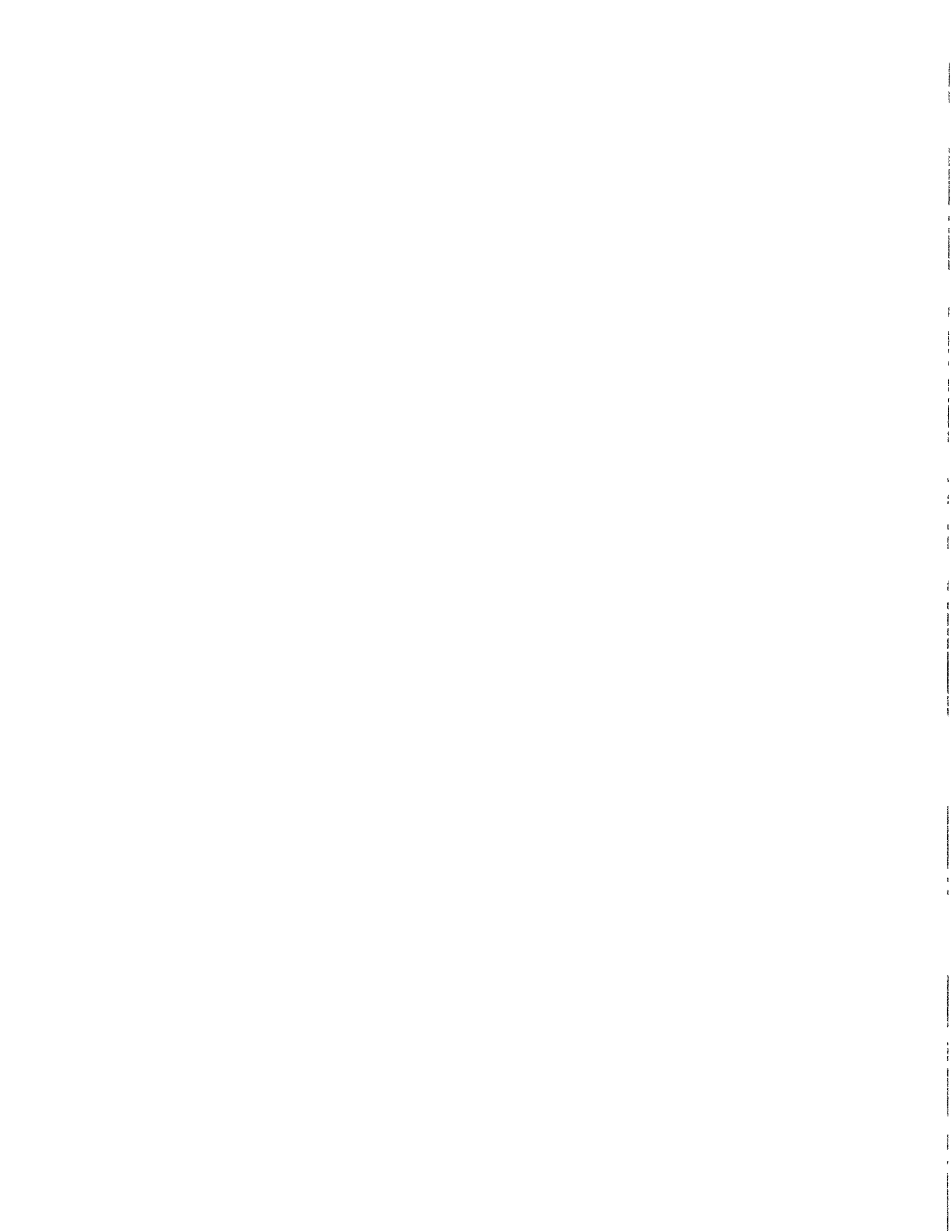
13.1. Career Awareness and Preparation			
13.1.3. GRADE 3	13.1.5. GRADE 5	13.1.8. GRADE 8	13.1.11. GRADE 11
<i>Pennsylvania's public schools shall teach, challenge and support every student to realize his maximum potential and to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to:</i>			
<p>A. Recognize that individuals have unique interests.</p> <p>B. Identify current personal interests.</p> <p>C. Recognize that the roles of individuals at home, in the workplace and in the community are constantly changing.</p> <p>D. Identify the range of jobs available in the community.</p> <p>E. Describe the work done by school personnel and other individuals in the community.</p>	<p>A. Describe the impact of individual interests and abilities on career choices.</p> <p>B. Describe the impact of personal interest and abilities on career choices.</p> <p>C. Relate the impact of change to both traditional and nontraditional careers.</p> <p>D. Describe the range of career training programs in the community such as, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two-and-four year colleges</li> <li>• Career and technical education programs at centers (formerly AVTS) and high schools</li> <li>• CareerLinks</li> <li>• Community/recreation centers</li> <li>• Faith-based organizations</li> <li>• Local industry training centers</li> <li>• Military</li> <li>• Registered apprenticeship</li> <li>• Vocational rehabilitation centers</li> <li>• Web-based training</li> </ul> </p> <p>E. Describe the factors that influence career choices, such as, but not limited to:</p>	<p>A. Relate careers to individual interests, abilities, and aptitudes.</p> <p>B. Relate careers to personal interests, abilities and aptitudes.</p> <p>C. Explain how both traditional and nontraditional careers offer or hinder career opportunities.</p> <p>D. Explain the relationship of career training programs to employment opportunities.</p> <p>E. Analyze the economic factors that impact employment opportunities, such as, but not limited to:</p>	<p>A. Relate careers to individual interests, abilities, and aptitudes.</p> <p>B. Analyze career options based on personal interests, abilities, aptitudes, achievements and goals.</p> <p>C. Analyze how the changing roles of individuals in the workplace relate to new opportunities within career choices.</p> <p>D. Evaluate school-based opportunities for career awareness/preparation, such as, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Career days</li> <li>• Career portfolio</li> <li>• Community service</li> <li>• Cooperative education</li> <li>• Graduation/senior project</li> <li>• Internship</li> <li>• Job shadowing</li> <li>• Part-time employment</li> <li>• Registered apprenticeship</li> <li>• School-based enterprise</li> </ul> </p> <p>E. Justify the selection of a career.</p>



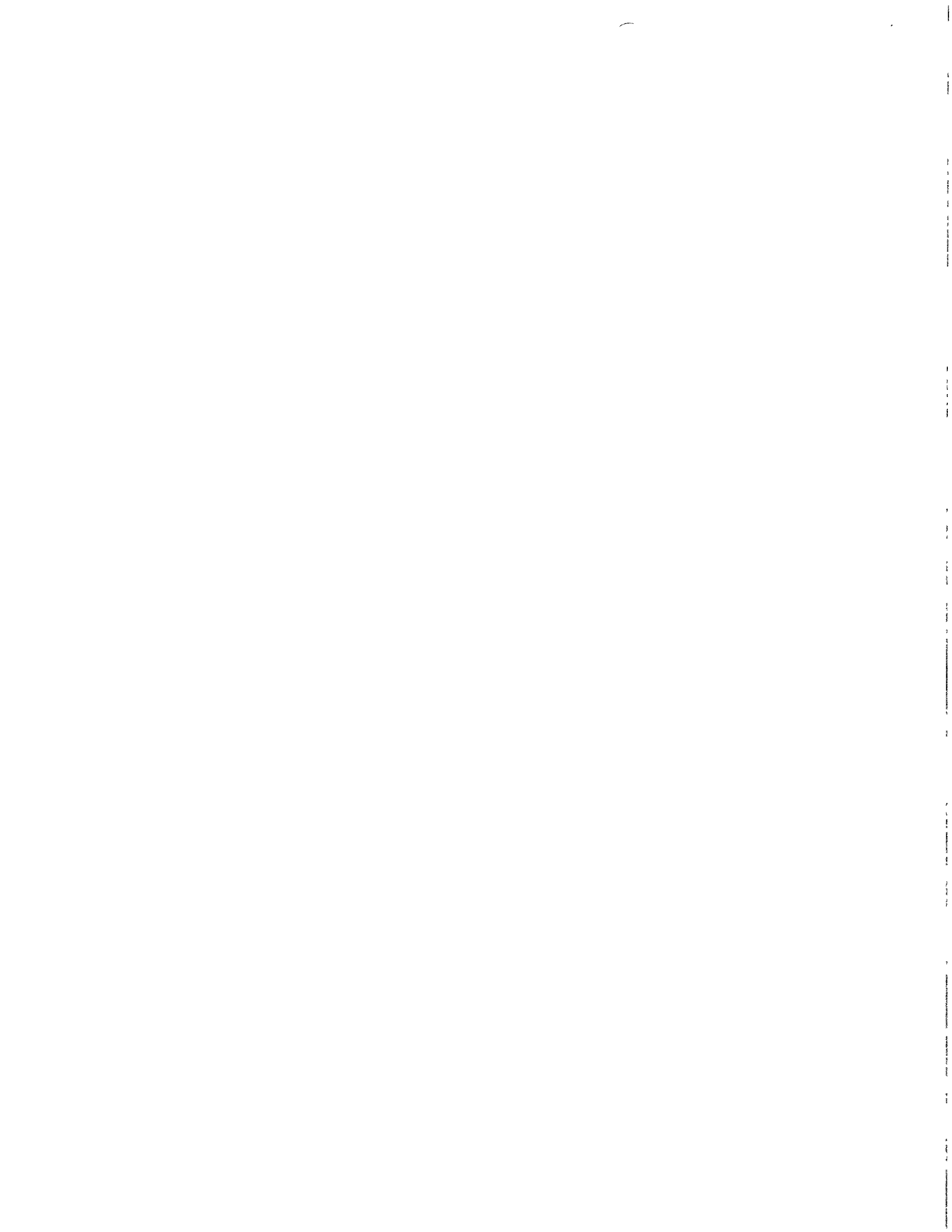
<p>F. Explore how people prepare for careers.</p> <p>G. Explain why education and training plans are important to careers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geographic location</li> <li>• Job description</li> <li>• Salaries/benefits</li> <li>• Work schedule</li> <li>• Working conditions</li> </ul> <p>F. Investigate people's rationale for making career choices.</p> <p>G. Identify the components of a career plan, such as, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beginnings of career portfolio</li> <li>• Career goals</li> <li>• Individual interests and abilities</li> <li>• Training/education requirements and costs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competition</li> <li>• Geographic location</li> <li>• Global influences</li> <li>• Job growth</li> <li>• Job openings</li> <li>• Labor supply</li> <li>• Potential advancement</li> <li>• Potential earnings</li> <li>• Salaries/benefits</li> <li>• Unemployment</li> </ul> <p>F. Analyze the relationship of school subjects, extracurricular activities, and community experiences to career preparation.</p> <p>G. Create an individualized career plan including, such as, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment and continued development of career portfolio</li> <li>• Career goals</li> <li>• Cluster/pathway opportunities</li> </ul>	<p>F. Analyze the relationship between career choices and career preparation opportunities, such as, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Associate degree</li> <li>• Baccalaureate degree</li> <li>• Certificate/licensure</li> <li>• Entrepreneurship</li> <li>• Immediate part/full time employment</li> <li>• Industry training</li> <li>• Military training</li> <li>• Professional degree</li> <li>• Registered apprenticeship</li> <li>• Tech Prep</li> <li>• Vocational rehabilitation centers</li> </ul> <p>G. Assess the implementation of the individualized career plan through the ongoing development of the career portfolio.</p>
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<p>H. Explain how workers in their careers use what is learned in the classroom.</p>	<p>H. Connect personal interests and abilities and academic strengths to personal career options.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual interests and abilities</li> <li>• Training/education requirements and financing</li> </ul> <p>H. Choose personal electives and extra curricular activities based upon personal career interests, abilities and academic strengths.</p>	<p>H. Review personal high school plan against current personal career goals and select postsecondary opportunities based upon personal career interests.</p>
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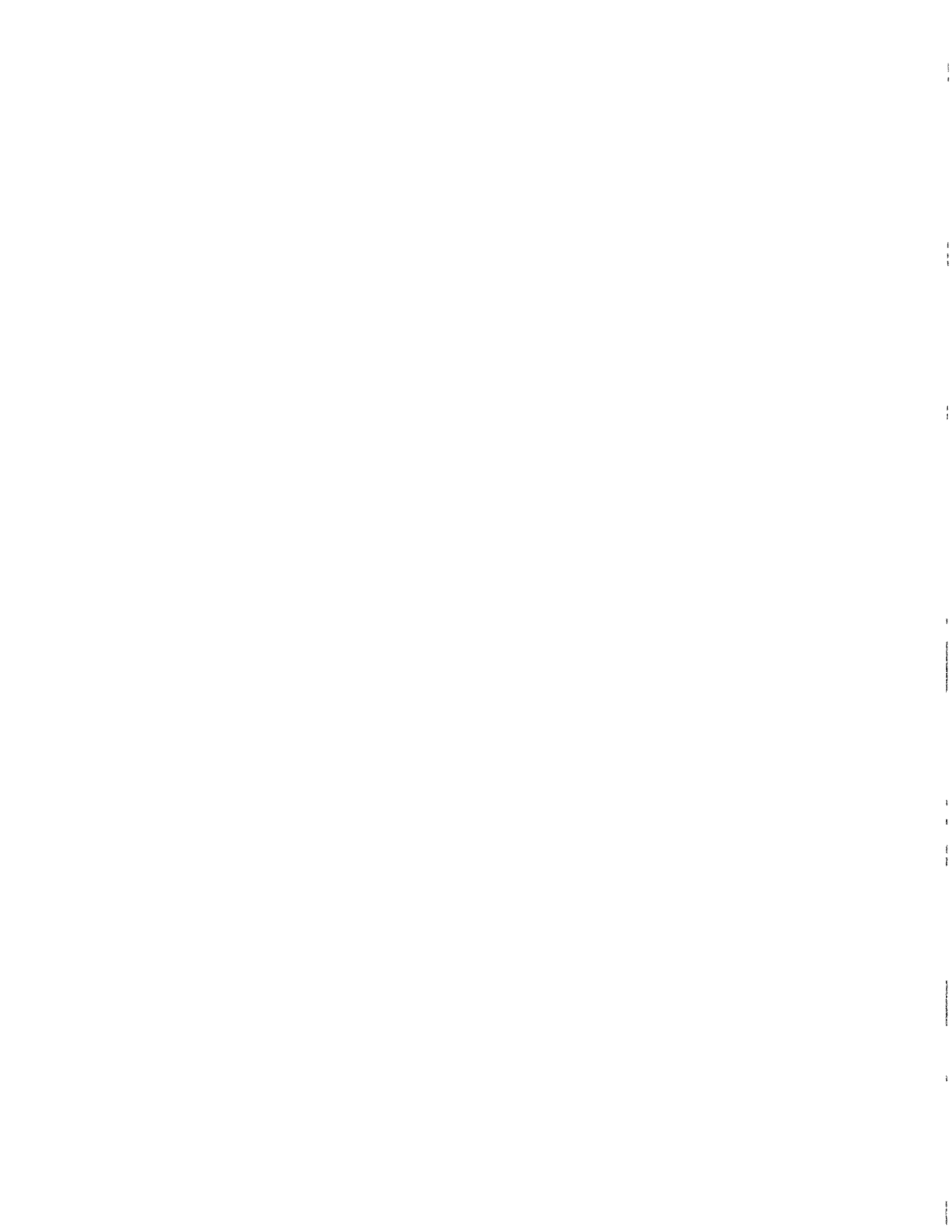


13.2 Career Acquisition (Getting a Job)			
13 2 3 GRADE 3	13 2 5 GRADE 5	13 2 8 GRADE 8	13 2 11 GRADE 11
<i>Pennsylvania's public schools shall teach, challenge and support every student to realize his maximum potential and to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to:</i>			
<p>A Identify appropriate speaking and listening techniques used in conversation</p> <p>B Discuss resources available in researching job opportunities, such as but not limited to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internet</li> <li>• Magazines</li> <li>• Newspapers</li> </ul> <p>C Compose a personal letter</p>	<p>A Apply appropriate speaking and listening techniques used in conversation</p> <p>B Identify and review resources available in researching job opportunities, such as, but not limited to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internet</li> <li>• Magazines</li> <li>• Newspapers</li> </ul> <p>C Compose and compare a business and a personal letter</p>	<p>A Identify effective speaking and listening skills used in a job interview</p> <p>B Evaluate resources available in researching job opportunities, such as, but not limited to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CareerLinks</li> <li>• Internet (i.e. O*NET)</li> <li>• Networking</li> <li>• Newspapers</li> <li>• Professional associations</li> <li>• Resource books (that is <i>Occupational Outlook Handbook, PA Career Guide</i>)</li> </ul> <p>C Prepare a draft of career acquisition documents, such as, but not limited to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job application</li> <li>• Letter of appreciation following an interview</li> <li>• Letter of introduction</li> <li>• Request for letter of recommendation</li> <li>• Resume</li> </ul>	<p>A Apply effective speaking and listening skills used in a job interview</p> <p>B Apply research skills in searching for a job</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CareerLinks</li> <li>• Internet (i.e. O*NET)</li> <li>• Networking</li> <li>• Newspapers</li> <li>• Professional associations</li> <li>• Resource books (that is <i>Occupational Outlook Handbook PA Career Guide</i>)</li> </ul> <p>C Develop and assemble, for career portfolio placement, career acquisition documents, such as, but not limited to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job application</li> <li>• Letter of appreciation following an interview</li> <li>• Letter of introduction</li> <li>• Postsecondary education/training applications</li> <li>• Request for letter of recommendation</li> <li>• Resume</li> </ul>

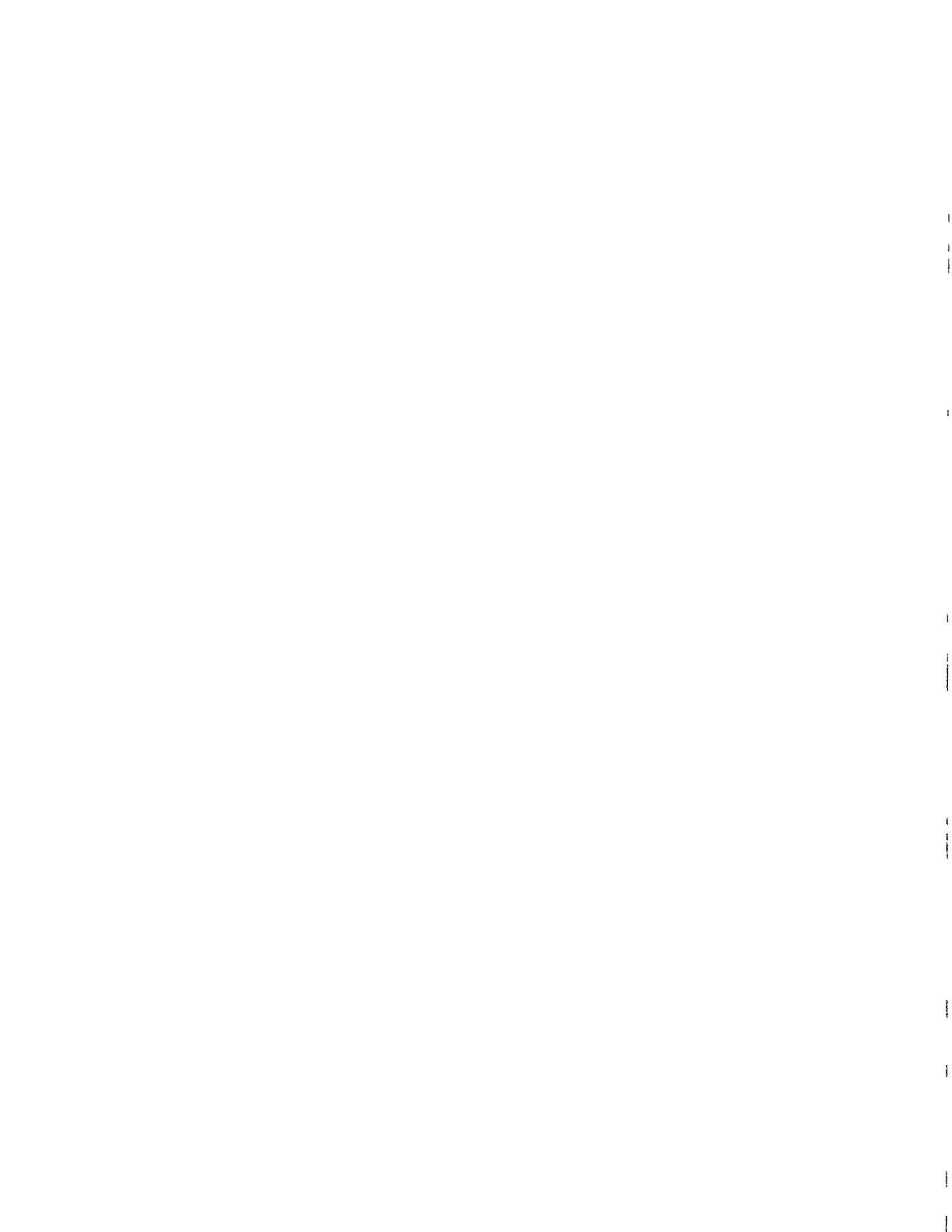




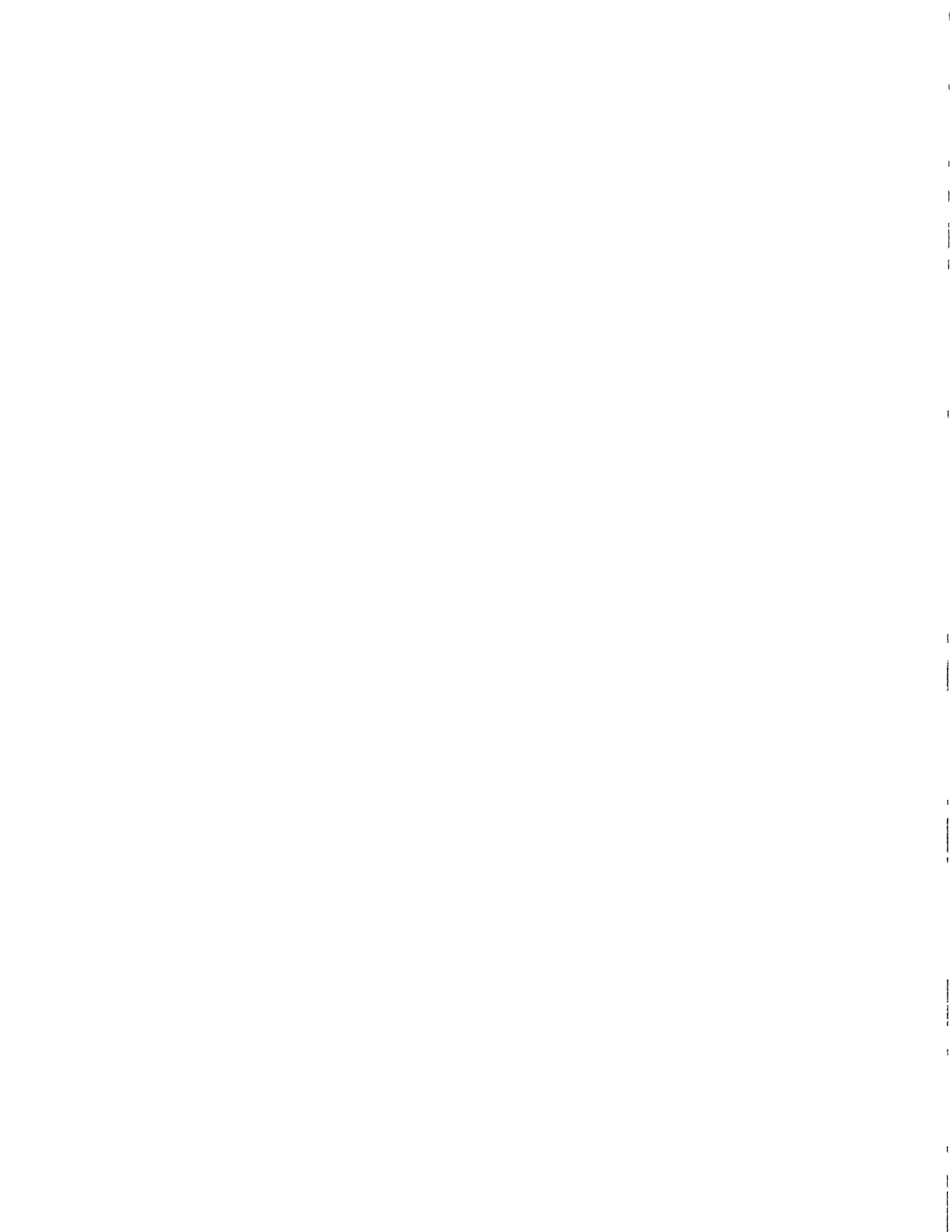
<p>D. Identify the importance of developing a plan for the future.</p> <p>E. Discuss the importance of the essential workplace skills, such as, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dependability</li> <li>• Health/safety</li> <li>• Team building</li> <li>• Technology</li> </ul>	<p>D. Identify individualized career portfolio components, such as, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achievements</li> <li>• Awards/recognitions</li> <li>• Career exploration results</li> <li>• Career plans</li> <li>• Community service involvement/projects</li> <li>• Interests/hobbies</li> <li>• Personal career goals</li> <li>• Selected school work</li> <li>• Self inventories</li> </ul> <p>E. Apply to daily activities, the essential workplace skills, such as, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Dependability</li> <li>• Health/safety</li> <li>• Personal initiative</li> <li>• Scheduling/time management</li> <li>• Team building</li> <li>• Technical literacy</li> <li>• Technology</li> </ul>	<p>D. Develop an individualized career portfolio including components, such as, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achievements</li> <li>• Awards/recognitions</li> <li>• Career exploration results</li> <li>• Career plans</li> <li>• Community service involvement/projects</li> <li>• Interests/hobbies</li> <li>• Personal career goals</li> <li>• Selected school work</li> <li>• Self inventories</li> </ul> <p>E. Explain, in the career acquisition process, the importance of the essential workplace skills/knowledge, such as, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Dependability</li> <li>• Health/safety</li> <li>• Laws and regulations (that is Americans With Disabilities Act, child labor laws, Fair Labor Standards Act, OSHA, Material Safety Data Sheets)</li> <li>• Personal initiative</li> <li>• Self-advocacy</li> <li>• Scheduling/time management</li> <li>• Team building</li> <li>• Technical literacy</li> <li>• Technology</li> </ul>	<p>D. Analyze, revise, and apply an individualized career portfolio to chosen career path.</p> <p>E. Demonstrate, in the career acquisition process, the application of essential workplace skills/knowledge, such as, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Dependability</li> <li>• Health/safety</li> <li>• Laws and regulations (that is Americans With Disabilities Act, child labor laws, Fair Labor Standards Act, OSHA, Material Safety Data-Sheets)</li> <li>• Personal initiative</li> <li>• Self-advocacy</li> <li>• Scheduling/time management</li> <li>• Team building</li> <li>• Technical literacy</li> <li>• Technology</li> </ul>
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13.3. Career Retention and Advancement			
13.3.3. GRADE 3	13.3.5. GRADE 5	13.3.8. GRADE 8	13.3.11. GRADE 11
<i>Pennsylvania's public schools shall teach, challenge and support every student to realize his maximum potential and to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to:</i>			
<p>A. Identify attitudes and work habits that contribute to success at home and school.</p> <p>B. Identify how to cooperate at both home and school.</p> <p>C. Explain effective group interaction terms, such as, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliment</li> <li>• Cooperate</li> <li>• Encourage</li> <li>• Participate</li> </ul> <p>D. Explain how money is used.</p>	<p>A. Explain how student attitudes and work habits transfer from the home and school to the workplace.</p> <p>B. Explain the importance of working cooperatively with others at both home and school to complete a task.</p> <p>C. Identify effective group interaction strategies, such as, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building consensus</li> <li>• Communicating effectively</li> <li>• Establishing ground rules</li> <li>• Listening to others</li> </ul> <p>D. Explain budgeting.</p>	<p>A. Determine attitudes and work habits that support career retention and advancement.</p> <p>B. Analyze the role of each participant's contribution in a team setting.</p> <p>C. Explain and demonstrate conflict resolution skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constructive criticism</li> <li>• Group dynamics</li> <li>• Managing/leadership</li> <li>• Mediation</li> <li>• Negotiation</li> <li>• Problem solving</li> </ul> <p>D. Analyze budgets and pay statements, such as, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charitable contributions</li> <li>• Expenses</li> <li>• Gross pay</li> <li>• Net pay</li> <li>• Other income</li> <li>• Savings</li> <li>• Taxes</li> </ul>	<p>A. Evaluate personal attitudes and work habits that support career retention and advancement.</p> <p>B. Evaluate team member roles to describe and illustrate active listening techniques:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarifying</li> <li>• Encouraging</li> <li>• Reflecting</li> <li>• Restating</li> <li>• Summarizing</li> </ul> <p>C. Evaluate conflict resolution skills as they relate to the workplace:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constructive criticism</li> <li>• Group dynamics</li> <li>• Managing/leadership</li> <li>• Mediation</li> <li>• Negotiation</li> <li>• Problem solving</li> </ul> <p>D. Develop a personal budget based on career choice, such as, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charitable contributions</li> <li>• Fixed/variable expenses</li> <li>• Gross pay</li> <li>• Net pay</li> <li>• Other income</li> <li>• Savings</li> <li>• Taxes</li> </ul>



E Discuss how time is used at both home and school	E Develop a personal schedule based on activities and responsibilities at both home and school	E Identify and apply time management strategies as they relate to both personal and work situations	E Evaluate time management strategies and their application to both personal and work situations
F Identify the changes in family and friend's roles at home, at school and in the community	F Describe the impact of role changes at home, school, and at work, and how the role changes impact career advancement and retention	F Identify characteristics of the changing workplace including Americans With Disabilities Act accommodations, and explain their impact on jobs and employment	F Evaluate strategies for career retention and advancement in response to the changing global workplace
G Define and describe the importance of lifelong learning	G Describe how personal interests and abilities impact lifelong learning	G Identify formal and informal lifelong learning opportunities that support career retention and advancement	G Evaluate the impact of lifelong learning on career retention and advancement

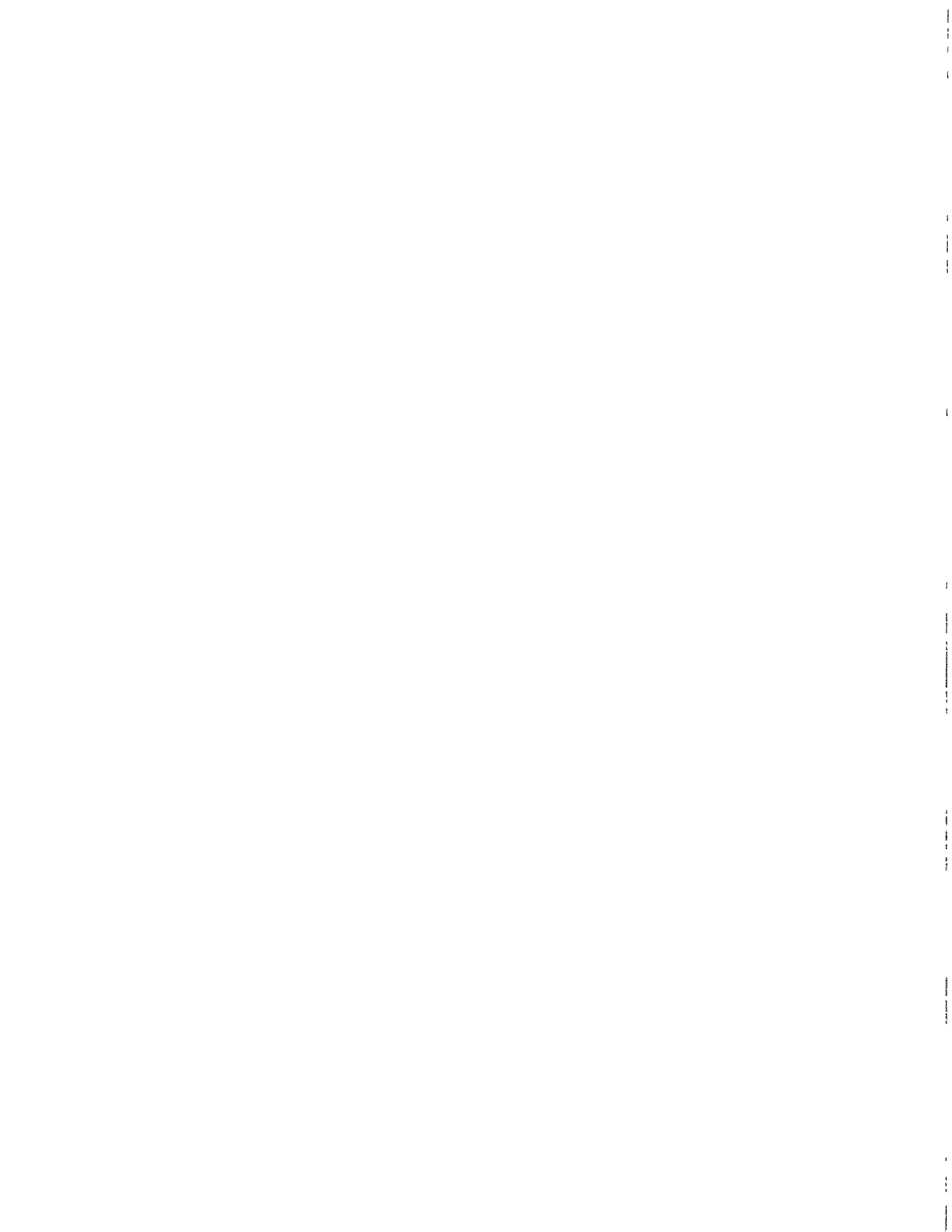


13.4. Entrepreneurship			
13.4.3. GRADE 3	13.4.5. GRADE 5	13.4.8. GRADE 8	13.4.11. GRADE 11
<i>Pennsylvania's public schools shall teach, challenge and support every student to realize his maximum potential and to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to:</i>			
<p>A. Define entrepreneurship.</p> <p>B. Describe the character traits of successful entrepreneurs, such as, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adaptability</li> <li>• Creative thinking</li> <li>• Ethical behavior</li> <li>• Leadership</li> <li>• Positive attitude</li> <li>• Risk-taking</li> </ul> <p>C. Describe age-appropriate entrepreneurial opportunities, such as, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bake sale</li> <li>• Crafts</li> <li>• Lemonade stand</li> <li>• Pet care</li> </ul>	<p>A. Identify the risks and rewards of entrepreneurship.</p> <p>B. Discuss the entrepreneurial character traits of historical or contemporary entrepreneurs.</p> <p>C. Discuss the steps entrepreneurs take to bring their goods or services to market, such as, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing</li> <li>• Production</li> <li>• Research and development</li> <li>• Selection of goods and services</li> </ul>	<p>A. Compare and contrast entrepreneurship to traditional employment, such as, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefits</li> <li>• Job security</li> <li>• Operating costs</li> <li>• Wages</li> </ul> <p>B. Evaluate how entrepreneurial character traits influence career opportunities.</p> <p>C. Identify and describe the basic components of a business plan, such as, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business idea</li> <li>• Competitive analysis</li> <li>• Daily operations</li> <li>• Finances/budget</li> <li>• Marketing</li> <li>• Productive resources (human, capital, natural)</li> <li>• Sales forecasting</li> </ul>	<p>A. Analyze entrepreneurship as it relates to personal career goals and corporate opportunities.</p> <p>B. Analyze entrepreneurship as it relates to personal character traits.</p> <p>C. Develop a business plan for an entrepreneurial concept of personal interest and identify available resources, such as, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community based organizations (that is chambers of commerce, trade/technical associations, Industrial Resource Centers)</li> <li>• Financial institutions</li> <li>• School-based career centers</li> </ul>





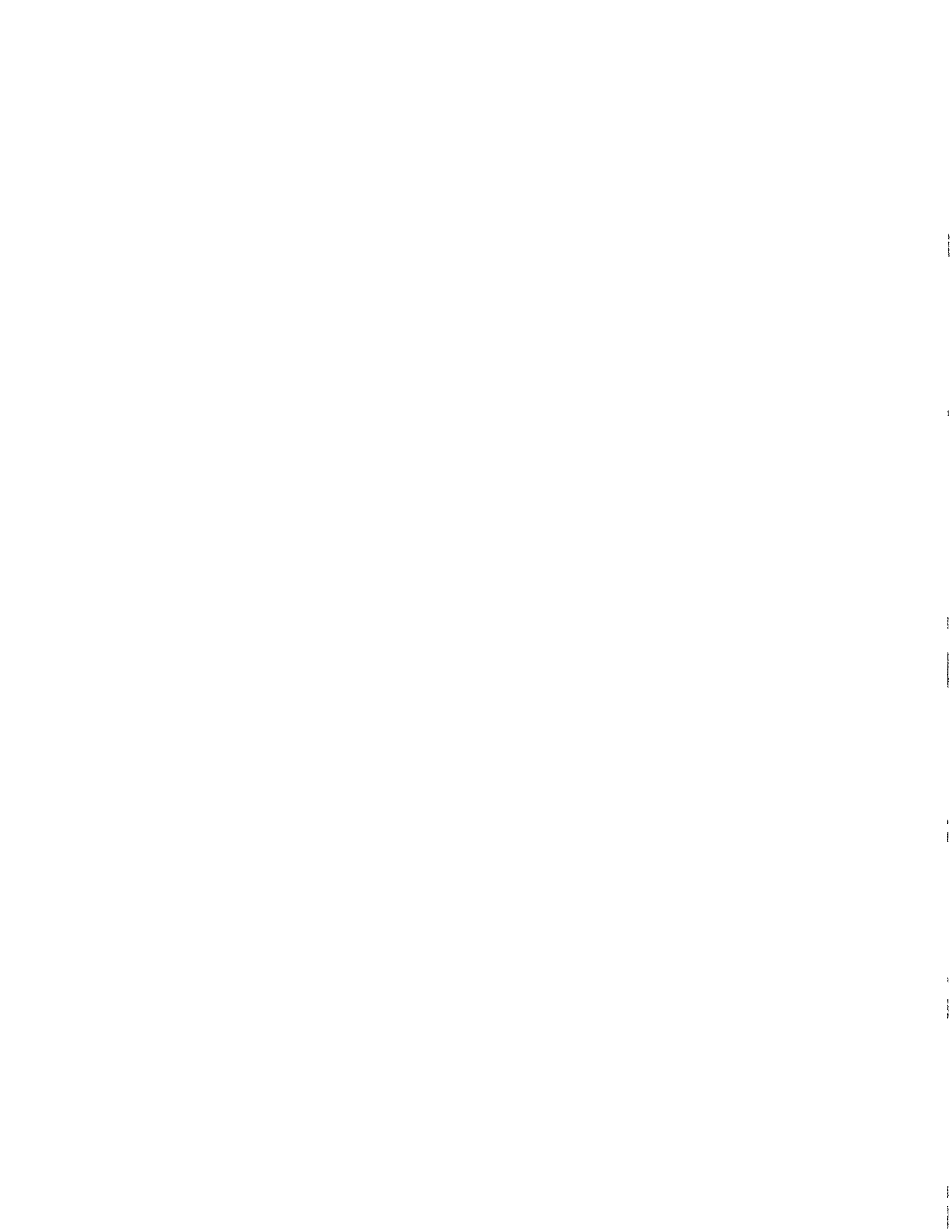
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Small Business Administration services (that is SCORE, Small Business Development Centers, Entrepreneurial Development Centers)</li><li>• Venture capital</li></ul>
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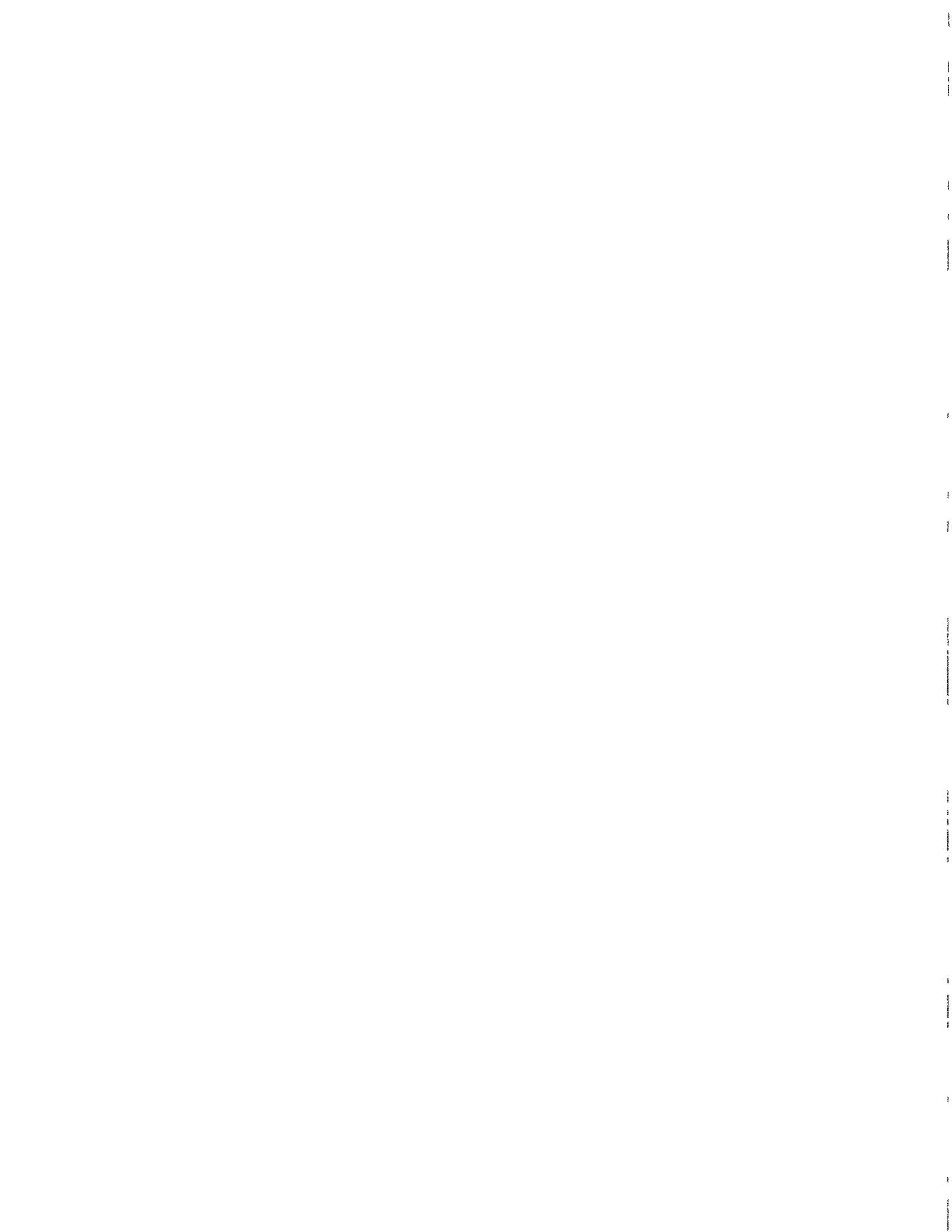
## Academic Standards for Career Education and Work

### XXXIX. GLOSSARY

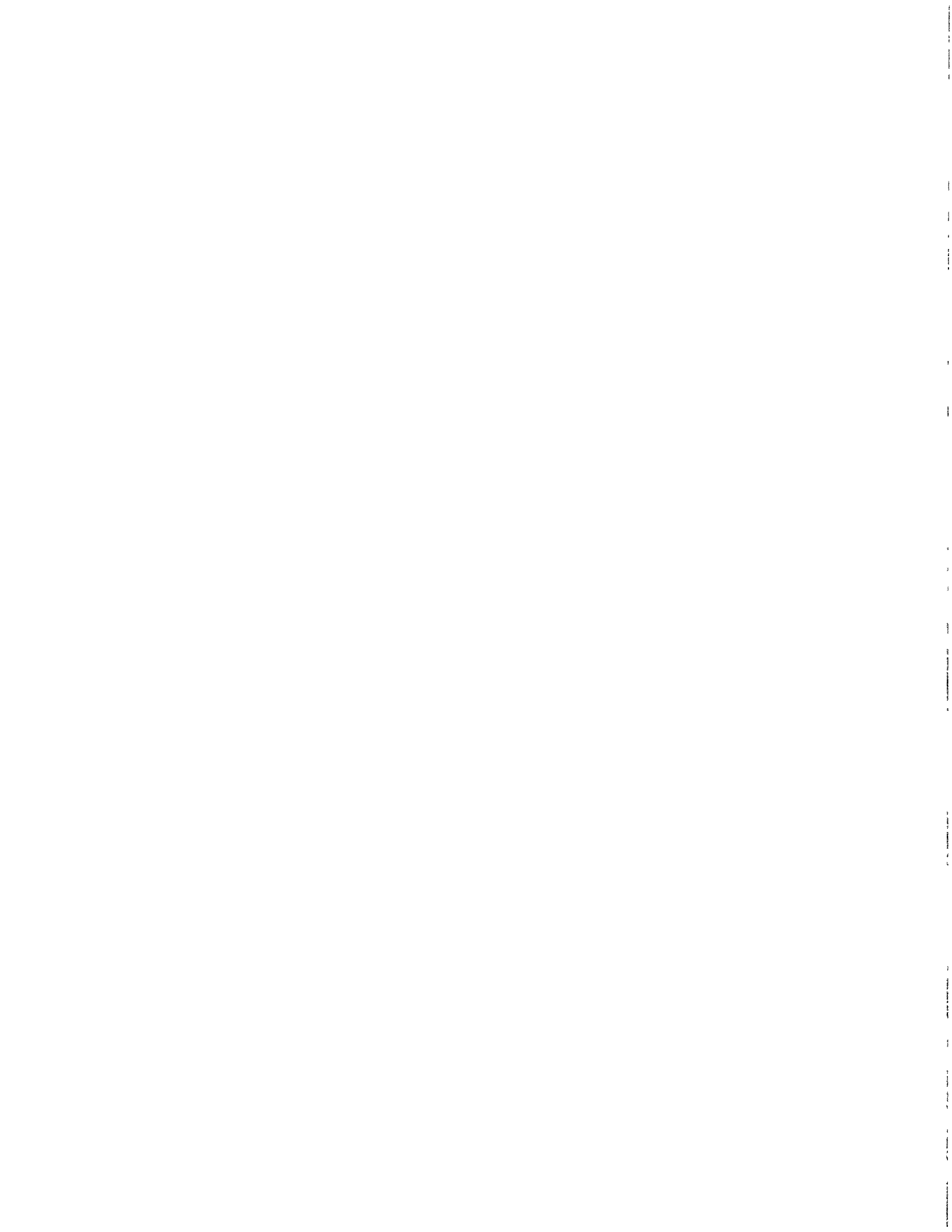
<b>Americans With Disabilities Act (Pub. L. No. 101-336):</b>	The Americans With Disabilities Act is a Federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination and for ensuring equal opportunity for persons with disabilities in employment, state and local government services, public accommodations, commercial facilities, transportation, and requiring the establishment of TDD/telephone relay services.
<b>Aptitudes:</b>	Capacity to learn and understand.
<b>Associate degree:</b>	A postsecondary degree typically earned within a two-year time frame.
<b>Baccalaureate degree:</b>	A postsecondary degree, also known as a bachelor's degree, typically earned within a 4-year time frame from a college or university.
<b>Benefits:</b>	Something of value that an employee receives in addition to a wage or salary. Examples include health and life insurance, vacation leave, retirement plans, and the like.
<b>Budget:</b>	A financial plan that summarizes anticipated income and expenditures over a period of time.
<b>Business plan:</b>	A prepared document detailing the past, present, and future of an organization.
<b>Career and technical centers:</b>	Schools that educate secondary students and adults through academic instruction, job preparation and acquisition of occupational skills leading to credentials or employment, or both, in specific industries. The centers also provide opportunities for transition to postsecondary education and continuing education.
<b>Career cluster:</b>	A grouping of related occupations, which share similar skill sets.



<b>Career days:</b>	Special events that allow students to meet with employers, career development specialists, community-based organization representatives, and postsecondary educators. Events are designed to encourage students to gain information about careers and job opportunities.
<b>Career plan:</b>	A document developed by the student that identifies a series of educational studies and experiences to prepare them for postsecondary education or work, or both, in a selected career cluster or area.
<b>Career portfolio:</b>	An ongoing, individualized collection of materials (electronic or hard copy) that documents a student's educational performance, career exploration and employment experiences over time. While there is no standard format that a career portfolio must take, it typically includes a range of work, containing assignments by the teacher/counselor and selections by the student. It serves as a guide for the student to transition to postsecondary education or the workplace, or both.
<b>Career retention and advancement:</b>	Career retention is the process of keeping a job. Career advancement is the process of performing the necessary requirements to progress in a career.
<b>CareerLinks:</b>	A cooperative system that provides one-stop delivery of career services to job seekers, employers and other interested individuals.
<b>Certificate/licensure:</b>	A document, issued by associations, employers, educational institutions, government, and the like, confirming that one has fulfilled the requirements and is able to perform to a specified level of proficiency within a career field.
<b>Child labor laws:</b>	Legislation governing the employment of children under the age of 18.
<b>Competitive analysis:</b>	A tool that allows a business to identify its competitors and evaluate their respective strengths and weaknesses.
<b>Cooperative education:</b>	A structured method of instruction whereby students alternate or coordinate their high school studies with a job in a field related to their academic or career objectives.

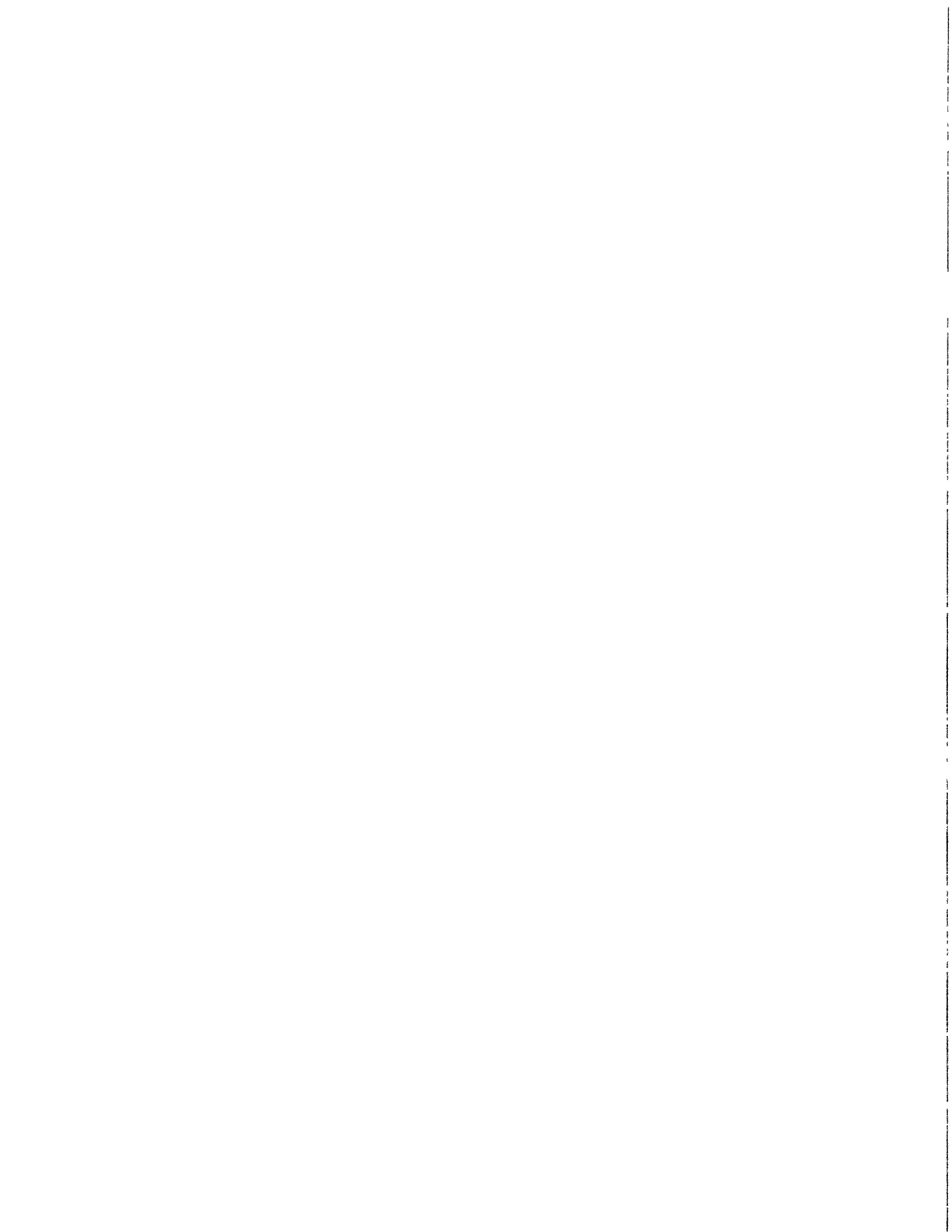


<b>Entrepreneurs:</b>	Individuals who engage in the process of organizing, managing, and assuming the risk of a business or enterprise.
<b>Entrepreneurship:</b>	The process of organizing, managing, and assuming the risks of a business or enterprise.
<b>Fair Labor Standards Act:</b>	A Federal law that defines overtime and wage requirements (26 U.S.C.A. §§ 201—219).
<b>Fixed/variable expenses:</b>	Fixed expenses are regular in their timing and amount, and include such things as rent, mortgage, car payment, and insurance. Variable expenses are irregular in their timing and amount, and include such things as food, clothing, home and car maintenance, entertainment, and gifts.
<b>Global influences:</b>	Political and cultural changes, which impact the world and its economy.
<b>Gross pay:</b>	The amount earned before deductions, such as taxes, insurance, and retirement/pension plan.
<b>Industrial Resource Centers:</b>	Non-profit corporations, which provide assistance to improve the competitive position of small-to-medium sized manufacturers.
<b>Internship:</b>	A work experience with an employer for a specified period of time to learn about a particular industry or occupation, which may or may not include financial compensation. The workplace activities may include special projects, a sample of tasks from different jobs, or tasks from a single occupation.
<b>Job shadowing:</b>	Typically as part of career exploration activities in late middle and early high school, a student follows an employee for 1 or more days to learn about a particular occupation or industry. Job shadowing is intended to help students explore a range of career objectives and to possibly select a career pathway.
<b>Labor supply:</b>	The number of persons either working or unemployed and actively seeking work.
<b>Marketing:</b>	The process or technique of promoting, selling, and distributing a product or service.

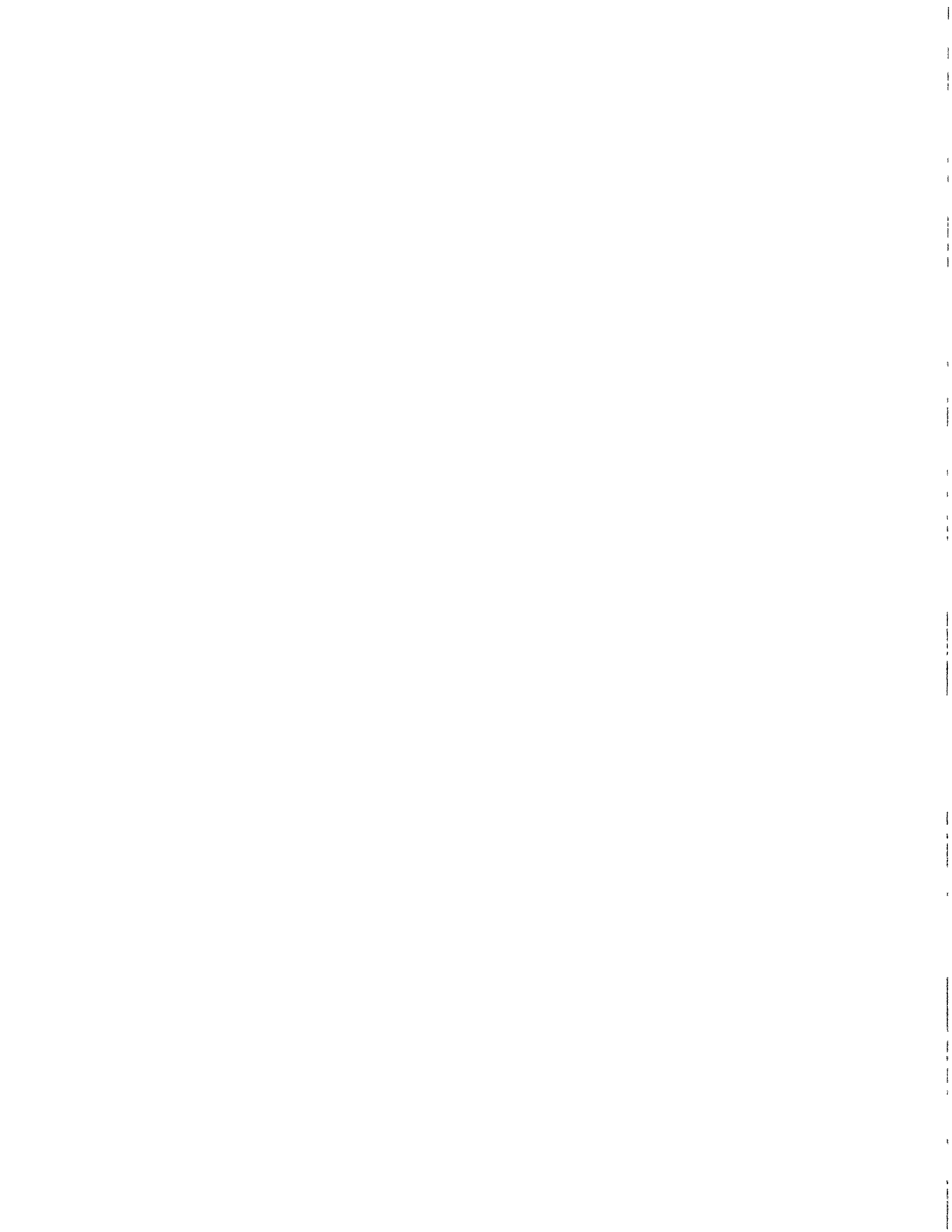




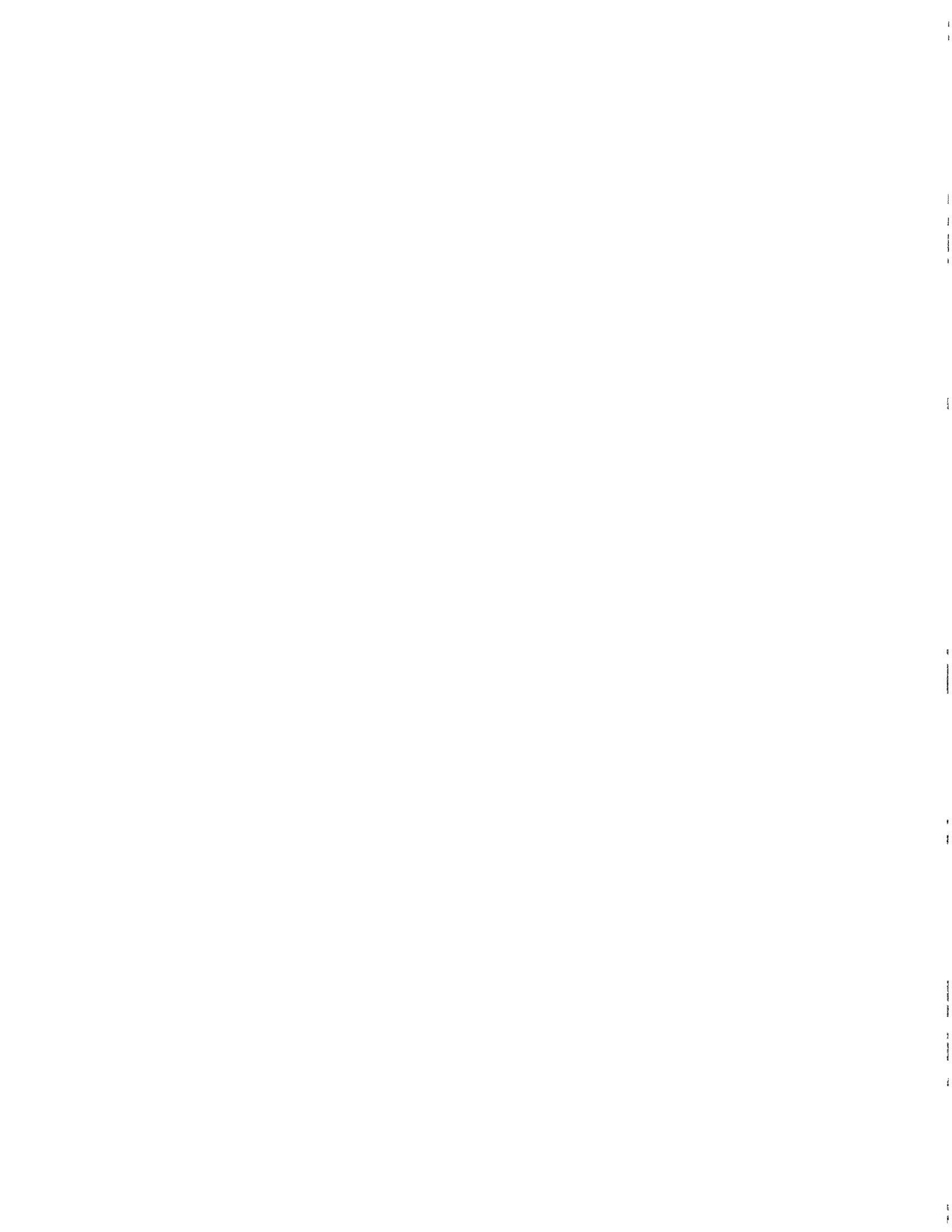
<b>Material Safety Data Sheets:</b>	Federally mandated listings of all hazardous materials that will impact the health and safety of the workers and that are required to be posted in the workplace.
<b>Mediation:</b>	Third-party intervention between conflicting parties to promote reconciliation, settlement, or compromise.
<b>Net pay:</b>	The amount remaining after deductions, such as taxes, insurance, and retirement/pension plan.
<b>Networking:</b>	The act of exchanging information, contacts, and services.
<b>Nontraditional careers:</b>	Fields of work for which individuals from one gender comprise less than 25% of the individuals employed in each such occupation or field of work.
<b>O*NET:</b>	Occupational Information Network-- is a free public access online web-based system provided by the United States Department of Labor, which includes comprehensive up-to-date occupational information including skills, knowledge, abilities and tasks for more than 950 occupations.
<b>Operating costs:</b>	The funds necessary to operate a business, not including the cost of goods sold. This is also referred to as overhead.
<b>OSHA:</b>	The Occupational Safety and Health Administration--A National agency with representatives in each state who monitor health and safety issues in the workplace.
<b>Professional associations:</b>	Organizations of people having common interests.
<b>Professional degree:</b>	A title conferred on students by a college, university or professional school upon completion of a program of study.
<b>Registered apprenticeship:</b>	A formal program registered with the United States Department of Labor's Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training and with the Pennsylvania Apprenticeship Council. This program must follow strict guidelines as to the types of training and amount of training time an apprentice receives and leads directly into occupations requiring such training for entry.



<b>Resume:</b>	A summary of one's personal qualifications, education/training and employment experience.
<b>Salaries/benefits:</b>	Financial compensation paid regularly for services (See "benefits" for definition).
<b>Sales forecasting:</b>	Predicting the number of services or units likely to be sold over a specified period of time.
<b>School-based career centers:</b>	Specialized areas in schools equipped with resources and materials used to research postsecondary and occupational opportunities.
<b>School-based enterprise:</b>	The production of goods or services as part of a school program.
<b>SCORE:</b>	Service Corps of Retired Executives--A Small Business Administration Federally-sponsored program to assist small-to-medium sized companies.
<b>Self inventories:</b>	Evaluations of an individual's strengths, weaknesses, and interests, as it relates to career planning.
<b>Tech Prep:</b>	The name given to programs that offer at least 4 years of sequential course work at the secondary and postsecondary levels to prepare students for technical careers. The curricula are designed to build student competency in academic subjects, as well as to provide broad technical preparation in a career area.
<b>Technical literacy:</b>	The ability of individuals to use existing and emerging technologies, equipment, language, materials, and manuals to participate intelligently in performing tasks related to everyday life, school or job.
<b>Time management strategies:</b>	Scheduling techniques used to effectively and efficiently direct or control activities.
<b>Traditional careers:</b>	Fields of work for which individuals from one gender comprise more than 25% of the individuals employed in each such occupation or field of work.
<b>Unemployment:</b>	Measurement of the number of people who are not working and who are actively seeking work.



<b>Venture capital:</b>	Public or private funds invested in a potentially profitable business enterprise despite risk of loss.
<b>Vocational rehabilitation centers:</b>	Educational facilities that provide life skills and occupational training services for individuals with special needs.
<b>Wages:</b>	Payments of money for labor or services according to contract and on an hourly, daily, or piecework basis.
<b>Web-based training:</b>	Instruction that is available online.
<b>Work habits:</b>	Acquired behaviors that individuals regularly perform in completing tasks related to chores, school or job.
<b>Working conditions:</b>	The environment in which an individual is employed.



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Testimony of  
V. Joseph James  
March 3, 2009  
Grove City, Pa.

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Thank you for this opportunity to present my experience with 4 children who went through the Pennsylvania educational System, in the context of my own professional experience during my work over the last 30 plus years.

I will try to avoid embarrassing anyone, unless it happens to be me. Any anecdotal information I present is not intended to point any fingers, but to point out flaws in the system that may be addressed and hopefully fixed.

With my testimony I am not siding with public or private schools-my children attended both, and I served both in my professional capacity.

I do not intent to criticize public or private universities-I have attended both, as have my children.

Some of you may know me from my recent work with certain schools and school districts, but I want to make it clear that the examples come from schools far and wide. As a consultant, I have worked with schools in 10 different counties; more school districts than I care to count.

I just want to emphasize, I am not here with any axes to grind, but in hopes that you can help provide a truly **free and appropriate** education.

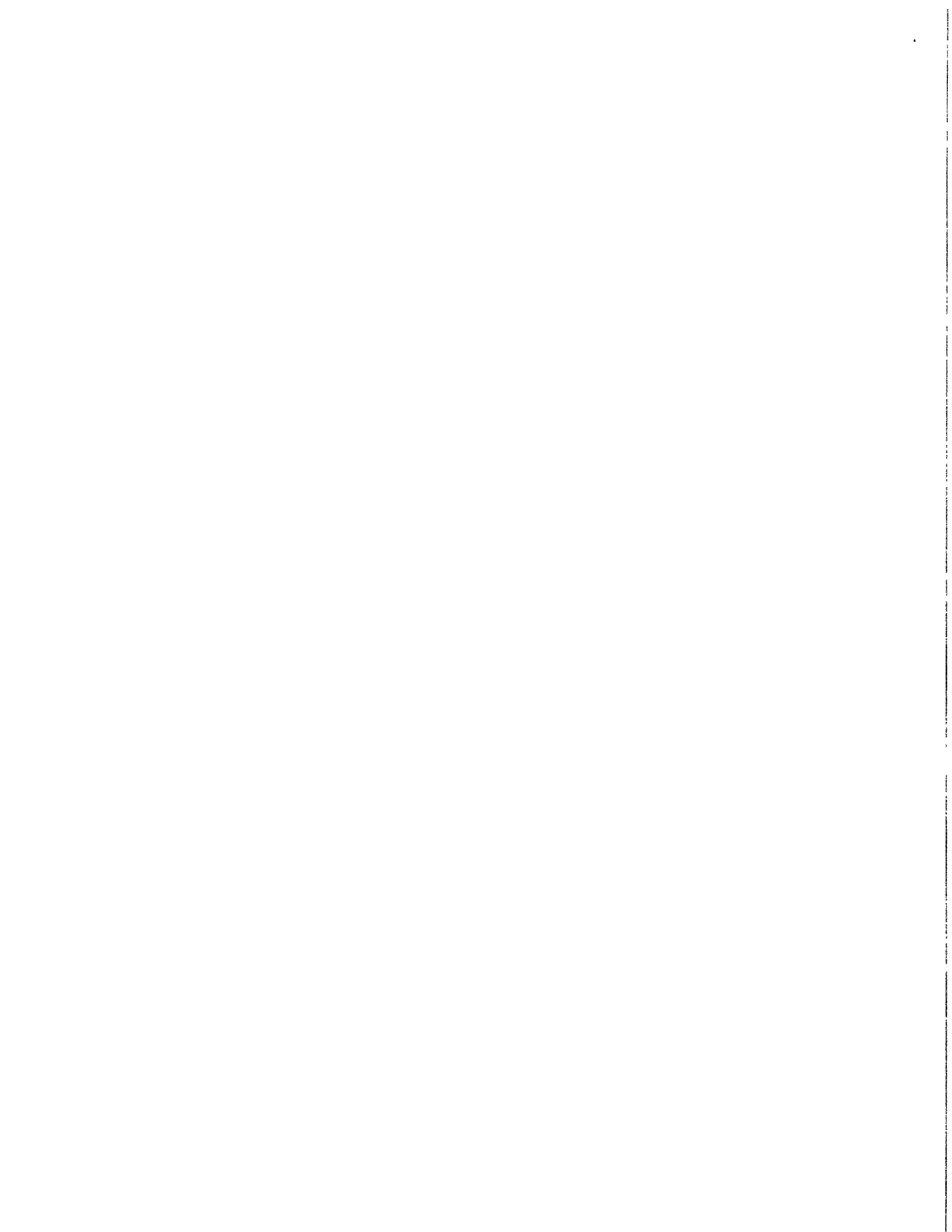
I also help provide the "free" part of that slogan- I have been a home owner for 35 years as well.

I hope I have established that my intent is to support the purpose for which you have come here – we are preparing our children for the rest of their lives and the future of our country – and as citizens of a country to which the world looks for leadership - for the future of our civilization.

From my neck down, I may look like a typical American professional, but English is still a foreign language to me and thus have a limited mastery of the language. So, I will use the oldest method of communicating - through stories.

Please forgive me in case I sound like I am bragging about my kids-I am not – mind you, I am very proud of them. When I use stories about them, I am merely making a point. Of course there are stories about their failures as well.

Imagine your child coming home with a poor grade in one test in one subject-much worse than the other subjects. I called the teacher to make an appointment. She told my wife,





with whom she taught, “No need to meet-her grades will be much better in the futur. It was – all “A” s from then on.

It took three years to discover – the only thing that changed was the grade-she knew no more than she did when she got the poor grade. In third grade, a teacher discovered my daughter had missed a series of tool-skills in Math. She was devastated again in high school, and again during the college admissions process-there was a 400-point discrepancy between Math and verbal scores. She had 100’s in certain Math subjects, but as low as 50 in others during high school. These deficits all showed up during the SAT’s. She plays 9 musical instruments proficiently, went to district, regional and state bands in three different instruments during her career, was the drum-major in High school when her band won the state championship in band competition – yet, she was considered a poor candidate for top schools – because the “A”s she earned in the elementary school as a result of her “big-mouth father” had sealed her fate.

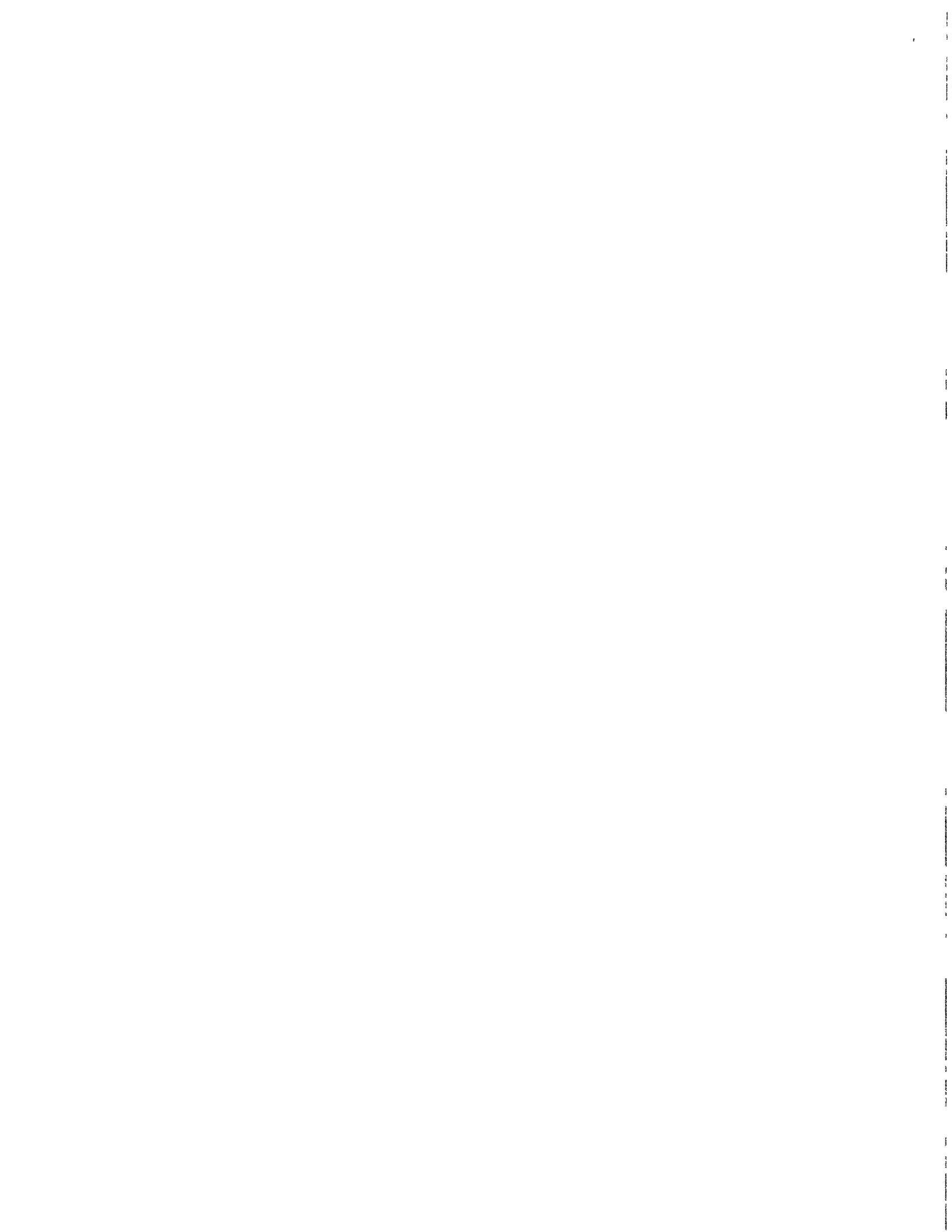
My son got 20 points less than his average in one math class. When the teacher would not meet with me, I went to the assistant principal. Her comment? Mr. James, you have wonderful children-there are parents who would love to have your problems-take them home, enjoy them”.

By the way, she is an educational consultant now, spreaing her philosophy beyond the school my children attended.

He also suffered from the system.. There was a 40-point difference between the verbal and performance parts of his IQ test. The school Psychologist’s explanation? “Both his parents have graduate degrees-they must spend a lot of time reading to them”. A year later he was retested by a Psychologist who was also college professor I did not even know. There still was a difference, but a negligible one. My son had misunderstood the instruction the first time.. This time, the school psychologist accused me of helping my son “cheat” on the IQ test!

He too suffered at the SAT’s. In hindsight, it was clear that he also had a learning difference that kept him from acquiring some Math tool/component skills that prevented him from doing well in the Math part of the SAT. He snuck into a top-5 Ivy League school on a waiting list, ( his big-mouth father couldn’t help him there) has had a successful career in the banking industry, even was asked to present at a conference for Federal regulators on the program he administered to train banking professionals. Right now he is trying to decide which offer for an MBA program to turn down – Georgetown, Virginia, Notre Dame, or Emery University.

My daughter was turned down for enrichment, though she had all “A’s in the high 90’s. When I called to enquire, I found out that the decision was based solely on the PSSA scores. She had an extremely low score in one area that brought her average just below the threshold. The Principal’s response? “Would you like me to put her in the program, Joe?” There goes the “Big-mouth effect” again. I told her, that only if she met criteria. Fortunately, the scores they used were two years old and there was a new test just



administered and she got scores high enough for the threshold. What happened, I wondered- the “Holy Spirit”? My daughter had a better explanation – the previous time, during one test, she recalls not being able to hear the instruction from the back of the class. This time she moved up and made sure she understood the instructions.

My other daughter flew through her classes getting all “A”s- I believe her high school average was 99.7 or something like that. She did well enough in the SAT’s and got into a top-5 IVY league school.

Two weeks after the beginning of school, she called home crying – initially she did fine in all classes. After two weeks of chemistry she felt like she “never had chemistry before”. Her almost 100’s did not prepare her as the other schools from which her classmates came. She worked and worked, got tutoring, went to some high school teachers from the local school to help her with Chemistry and got her first B in her life- a death knell if you are trying to get in to a good medical school. She wound up spending two years on a graduate program, re-took the MCAT and is doing exceptional –not at an off-shore medical school – I couldn’t afford it anyway- I have worked in the educational field for too long- but at Jefferson medical school in Philadelphia. She had to educate herself to learn what others were paid to teach- about the same as those who taught my daughters’ classmates who got A’s in college chemistry and didn’t have to waste two years like my daughter.

The scariest part?

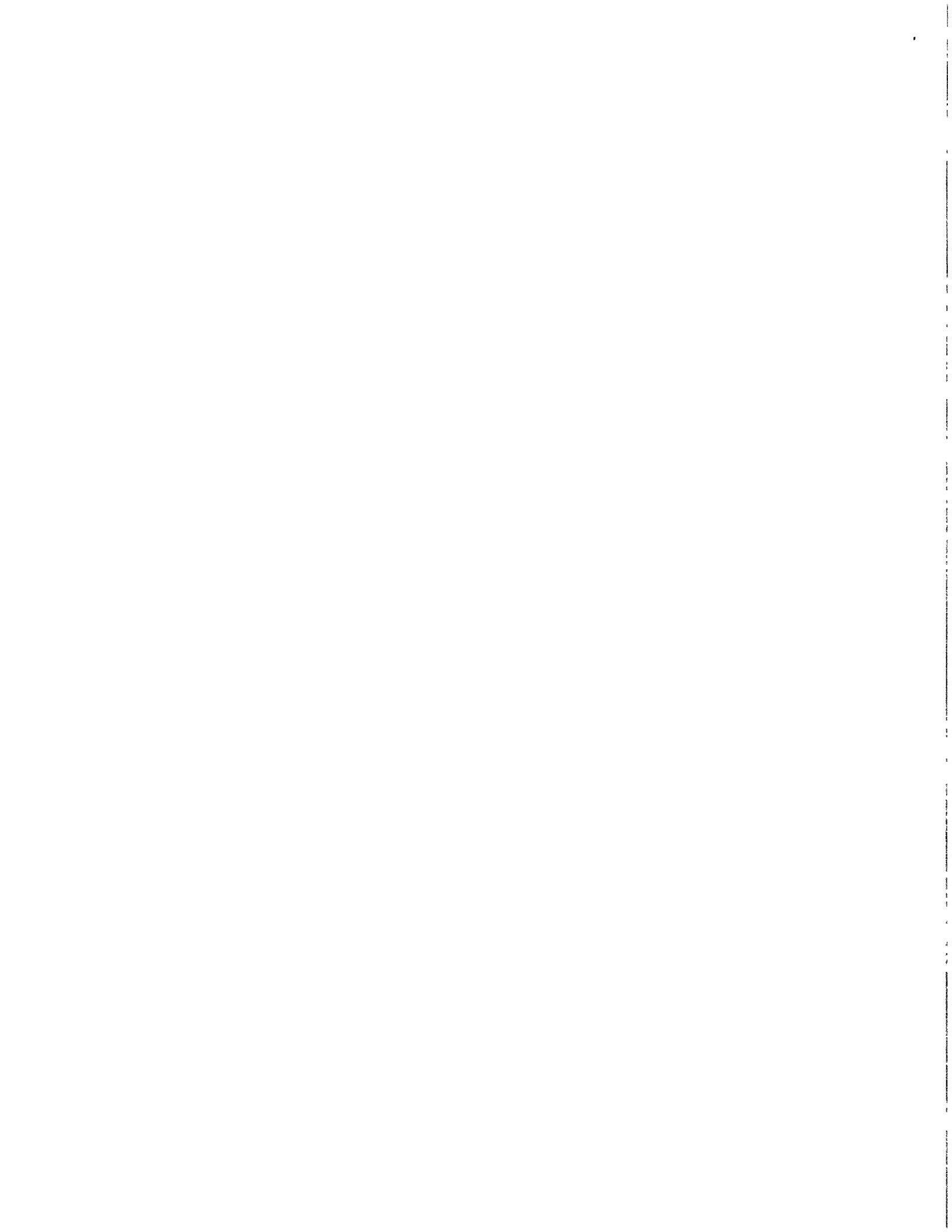
About 40 years ago, I came to this country to go to college. I had to convince the American Embassy that in India I did not have the opportunity to get the same quality of education as I would if I came to America.

A few years ago, I took my family to India for a visit and they had a chance to hang out with their cousins, one of them in the same grade – sixth grade-as my one daughter was. I half-jokingly suggested that she come back to India and enroll in the same school as her cousin. She had a scared look in her face when she said to me, “No way! I don’t know half the stuff they are covering in math and Science! She, by the way, was and is an upper 90’s student, who is in enrichment and is a top student in a private school in Pennsylvania.

What happened here in the last 30 plus years?

A few more stories.

I was in a classroom observing. My client was in regular classes, getting good grades, but had learning support in reading. He raised his hand for a math competition using flash cards for multiplication. After a few questions, he raised his hand. The teacher said, “Oh, I will get you special cards.”  $6 \times 0$ ? The student hesitated. The teacher asked, “What is Zero times anything? He added, “Zero”. Then he proceeded to ask 10 multiplication



questions with zero as one of the numbers and he got 10 out of 10. Remember the “A” my daughter got in Math class after I called to enquire? **“ADAPTATIONS!!!”**

Next week, the same student who was passing every subject in 6<sup>th</sup> grade, had to spend 1 hour to compose 4 lines of typed text about a topic he had to write about for a project.

In another school, I observed that if the student couldn't get the right answer from 4 or five choices, the number of choices kept decreasing – from 5 to 4 to three to 2 and then the teacher would read the two choices. **ADAPTATIONS, again!!!! They couldn't send a poor grade home!**

I walked in to the Special ed. Classroom. All the students were there taking their tests- they had a choice of coming to that class room to take the test-it was the “emotional support” class room. I could not believe the “support” they were getting. The teacher and the aids had the texts, and were helping the students take the test. The ES teacher should know the rules – the teacher's spouse was the director of Special Education for the district! More **ADAPTATIONS!!!!**

One of my clients was struggling, but the school refused services. He was doing well now according to his grades. In one area where he was struggling, the teacher routinely called the student the night before the exams and went over the questions and answers with him. Even more **ADAPTATIONS!!**

Why should it matter?

Two more stories:

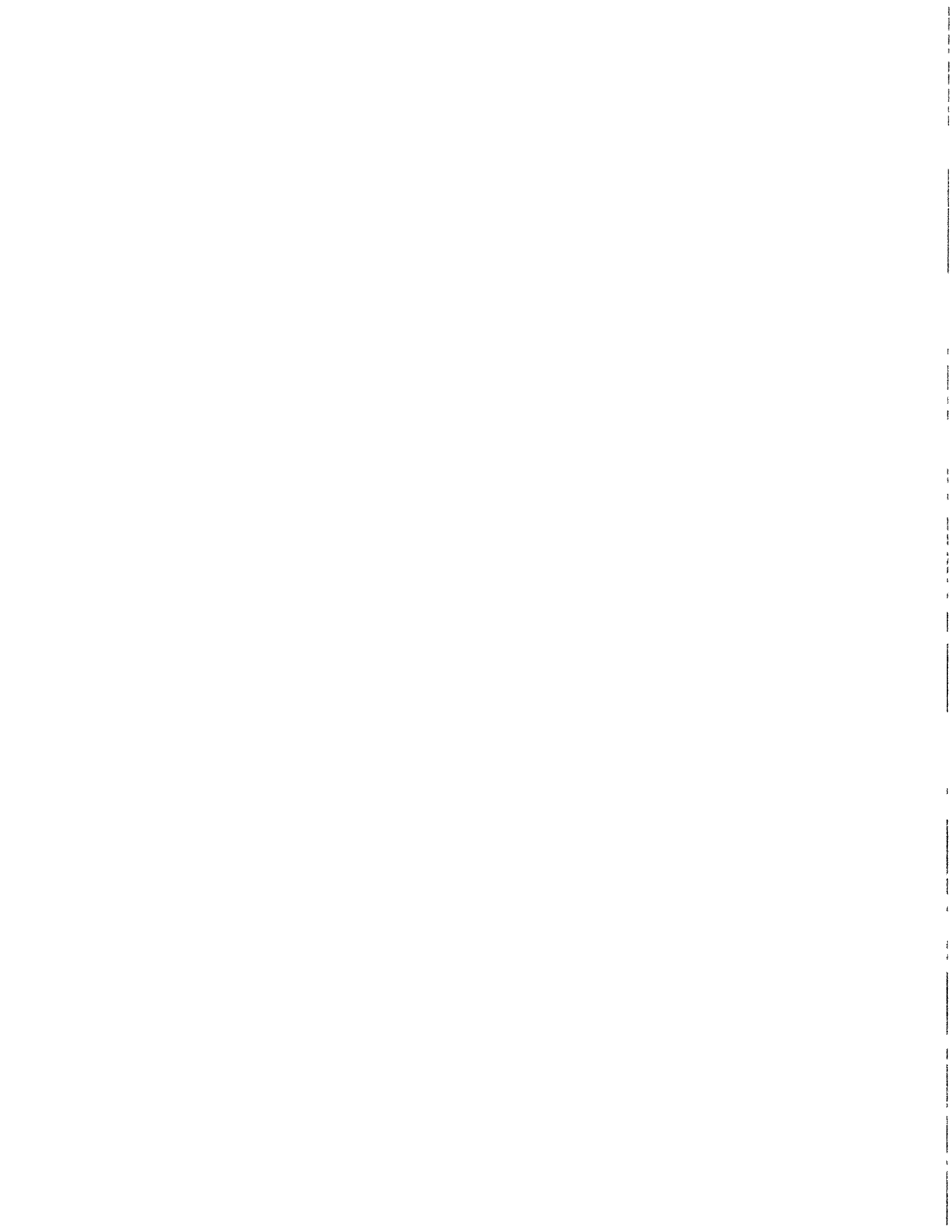
When I took my car for repairs to a garage, one of the mechanics recognized me and told me how he has a high school diploma, but he can't read or write-like the other mechanic he worked with. I had hoped they hadn't worked on my car. They must have. A few days later-I discovered that the horrible sound my breaks made was caused by the fact that they had failed to put in pads between the rotor and calipers! It cost me \$1100.00, but feel lucky to be alive! The garage had relied on the diploma they presented!

A Student was told by his teacher to have the writing assignment done that day, or he would get an “f” for the course. Last chance. An hour later, he came back with a very nice paragraph-in beautiful handwriting.

He can't write. He was in the “Learning Support” class for the hour. The teacher's aide had the beautiful handwriting and mastery of the language!

A personal Plea:

When I worked in the wrap-around filed, there was a huge argument about the division of labors- What is academic, what is behavioral. That is like the “Chicken or the Egg controversy-except the argument is taking place while we are trying to hatch the eggs!!

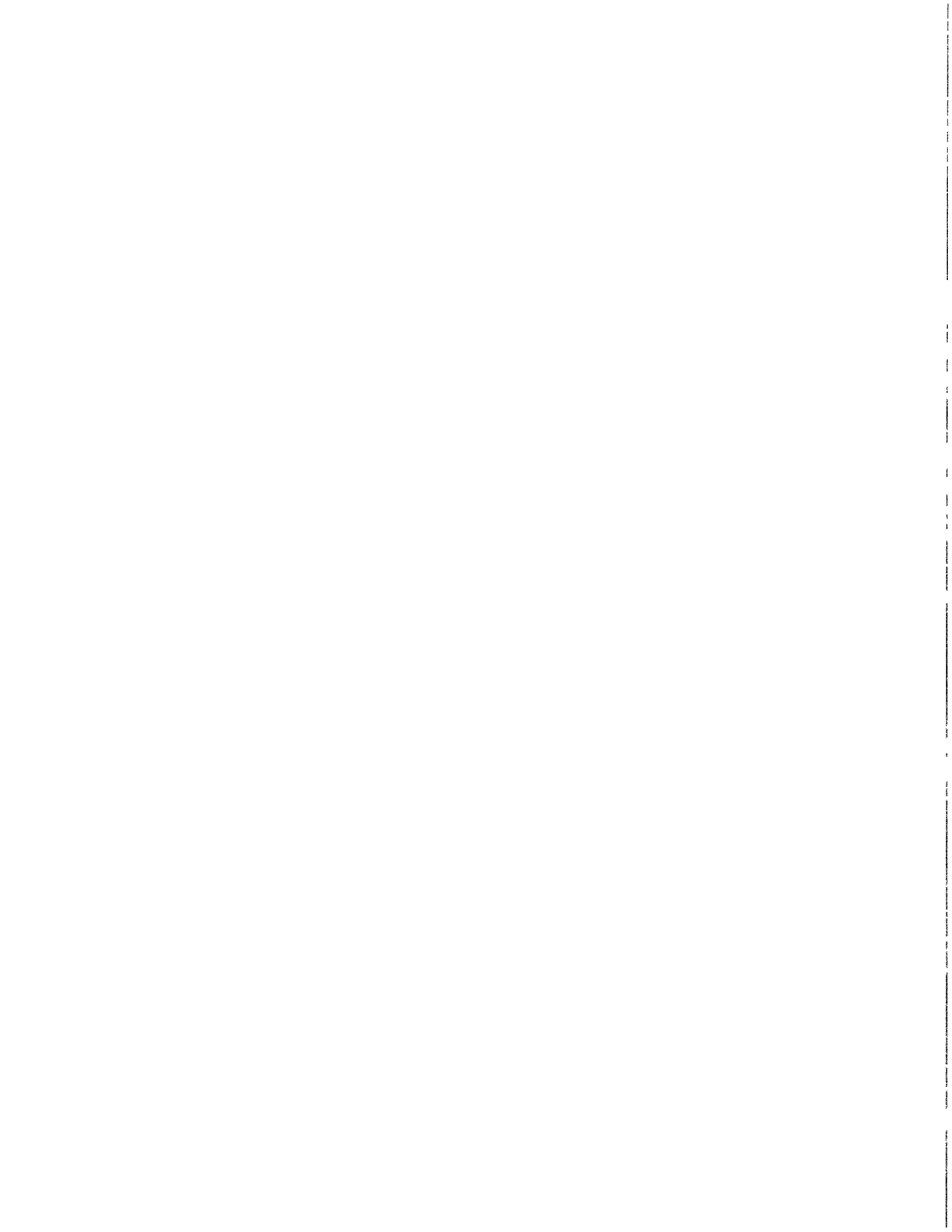


Learning is behavior, behaviors are taught and learned! We are spending millions on both sides, yet, not getting the job done for our students who learn differently while the turf-battles rage on.

For the sake of all the special children –all those who are special because they are mine or yours, or because they were created with learning differences that require special attention- let us provide them the **APPROPRIATE education which is not free- you and I and our neighbors are paying for it.**

**Please, I am not anti-union- at one time, I was the chief-steward at my place of employment for one of the largest labor unions in the state.**

**I am told that what makes America America is here you get what you pay for. Can you really say that my children got what we paid for? More critically, did the children who suffered all the adaptations – get what we paid for?**





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THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF THE CITY OF ERIE, PA.

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DR. JAMES E BARKER  
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SECRETARY

Pennsylvania State Board of Education

Public Hearing on High School Reform

March 3, 2009

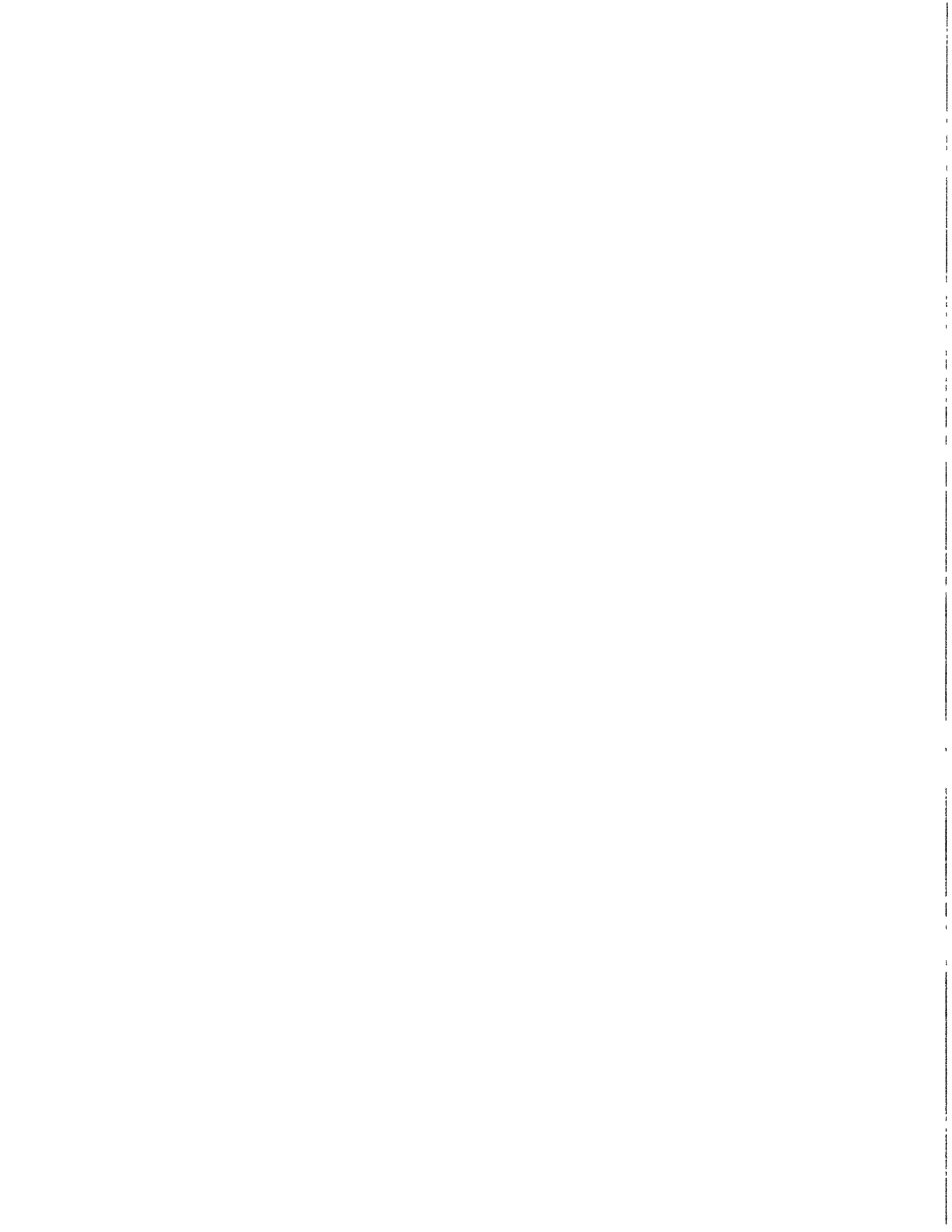
I would like to thank the State Board for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the Erie School District regarding the Board's proposed graduation requirements, and, in particular, Graduation Competency Assessments. My name is Jay Badams, and I entered my career in public education at about the same time that the State Board was crafting and refining the Pennsylvania Academic Standards and implementing a new testing program called the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment, or PSSA. I have served as an SAT tutor, a special education teacher, an assistant principal, an assessment specialist, a curriculum director, Superintendent of the Wattsburg Area School District, and currently, as Assistant Superintendent of the School District of the City of Erie. In my current role, I am charged with the supervision of K-12 curriculum, instruction and assessment. Having come to education with a background in the military and business, and having been educated in New York State's Regents system, the notion of establishing measurable benchmarks for student learning and corresponding accountability for school systems seemed logical and familiar.

At first, PSSA was designed to measure the performance of schools and districts by aggregating student scores and using group means to compare schools against state averages. This approach obviously ran counter to the purpose of a standards-based system, which should be designed to measure individual students' demonstration of proficiency on a relatively stable set of content or performance benchmarks. The Commonwealth corrected this situation in anticipation of the reauthorization of ESEA as the No Child Left Behind Act and has steadily revised both its assessment and accountability plans ever since. Graduation Competency Assessments represent substantial improvement of these linked processes and despite the objections of many interested parties will result in increased accountability for both educators and learners in the short run, and if accompanied by appropriate curriculum development, sustained academic achievement gains in the long run.

Opponents to the plan cite increased costs associated with the development and administration of the GCAs as a major argument against them. I would ask you to please consider the cumulative costs of "local control" when we consider all of the curriculum alignment projects that districts have undertaken since 1999 and the adoption of the PA Standards. Consider all of the teacher overtime, administrative hours, consultant fees, PSSA preparation efforts, tutoring, conferences, text adoptions and benchmarking sessions. These expenditures have been immense, and in the end, have amounted to districts using trial and error to ensure that their local curriculum "covers the standards" that are assessed in the PSSA. This has been an extraordinary amount of effort and expense for a great deal of

*An Equal Opportunity Employer*

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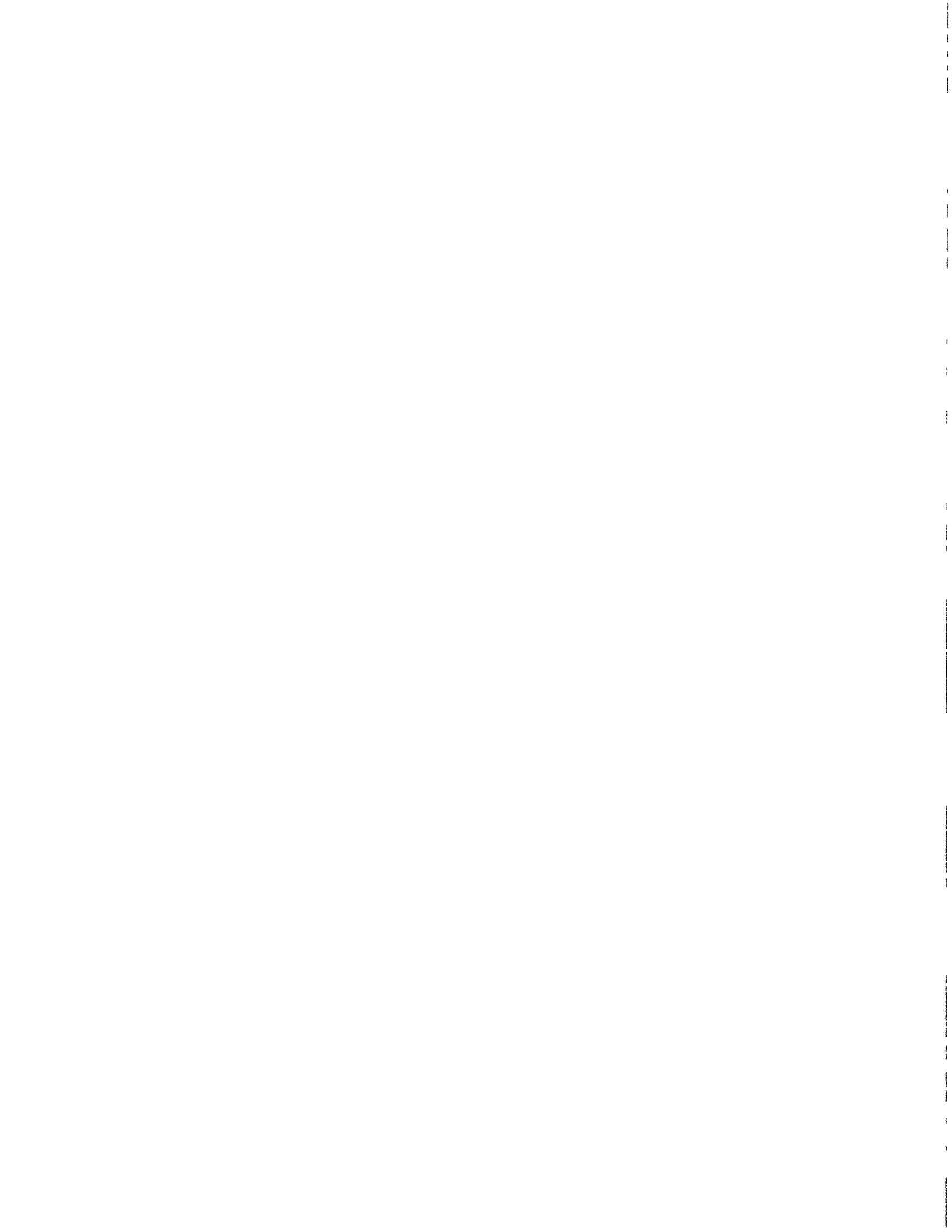


educated guessing and hoping for results. GCAs will focus the efforts of districts, which leads me to another common speculative criticism of the proposal. "GCAs will narrow the curriculum."

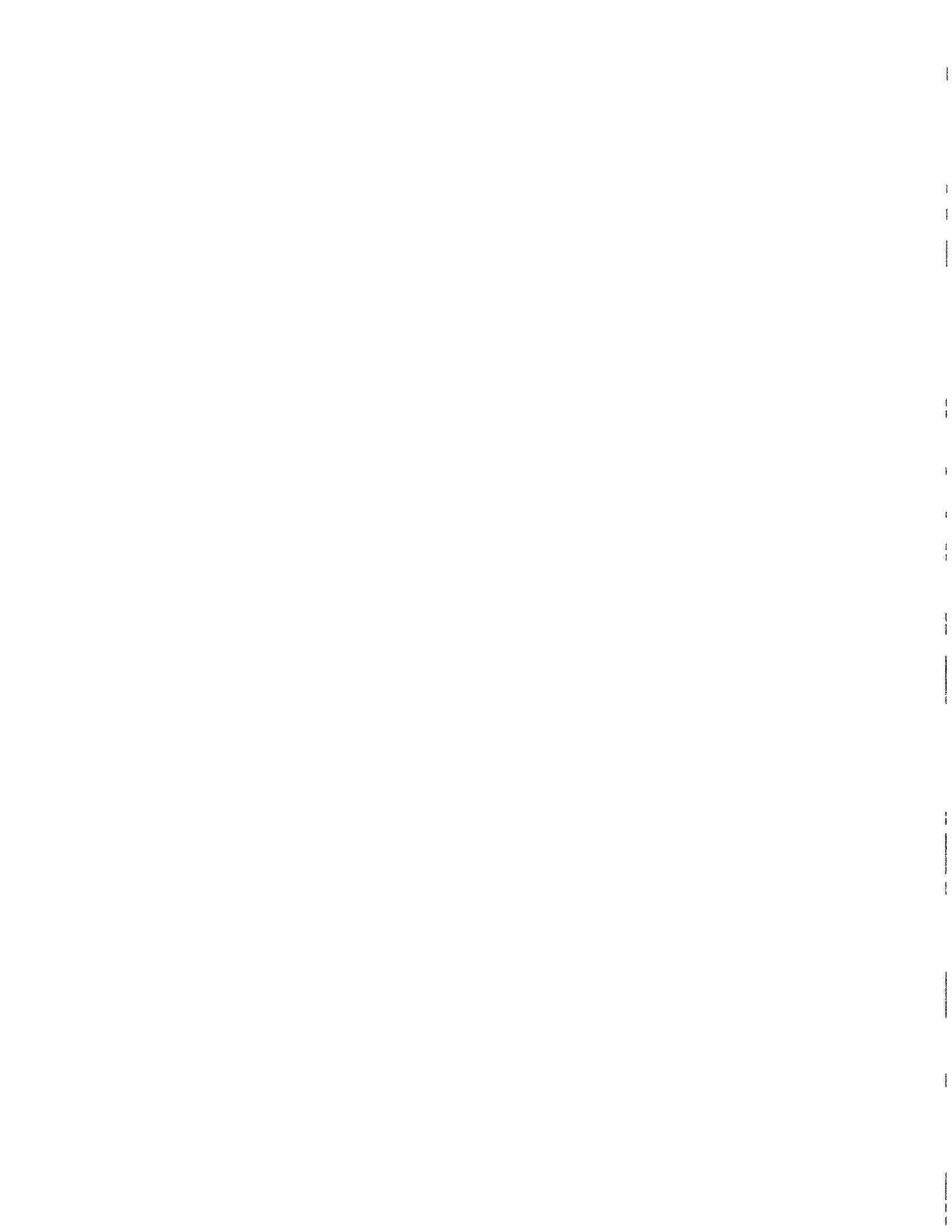
Nowhere more than in the area of mathematics could this be a more desirable outcome. PSSA is a broad assessment that measures attainment of math standards without regard to the strictures of traditional math courses. The attempt by most districts to align their curricula to the PA Standards has resulted in the adulteration of the courses that colleges and employers expect our students to master. Our algebra courses have been crossed with geometry. We are teaching gealgebra and probabometry. We can reassure ourselves that we are integrating, but our engineering programs in our universities are expecting graduates who have mastered Algebra II at a minimum, not some amalgam of non-sequential "assessment anchors". I am an administrator, taxpayer, and the father of four students in my district, and I am not afraid to leave the determination of what should be included in my Algebra II course to experts outside the boundaries of my school district. A recent study suggests that Pennsylvania's students have not learned Algebra II content at an impressive level of rigor. (That is an understatement.) Another indicates clearly that many districts have simply ignored existing state requirements to assess student proficiency.

The focus of our current accountability system on reading and math, while an important starting point, has devalued all other subjects. Even though it was not this Board's intent to narrow the curriculum, many districts have chosen to reduce or eliminate electives in order to maximize instructional time for reading and math. One strong dimension of the current graduation requirement proposal is the inclusion of all of the core subjects among the GCAs. To truly be college and career ready, and to take their place as educated citizens, our students need an understanding of history. To be wise consumers of both products and information, and to be wise stewards of our environment, they need to know science and technology. Are we as Pennsylvanians content with the awareness that most of our students graduate with a rather vague demonstration of reading and math competence? Or would we be more satisfied if 75% of Pennsylvania's graduates were proficient or advanced in geometry, or biology, or world history? Would specific end of course assessments such as the GCAs make students and teachers more or less sure of what is expected of them? Would specific end of course assessments factored into students' grades make their transcripts more or less comparable for prospective employers or college admissions offices? Would specific GCA results be more or less useful than PSSA data for guidance counselors, curriculum developers, and professional development planners? Would end of course assessments make our students more or less competitive in local, state, national and international job markets?

Why would we ignore the examples of other states like Indiana, Massachusetts, New York, and Virginia who have shown great improvement despite strong initial opposition to their assessment programs? More importantly, why would we cede to them a competitive advantage? I believe that there is room for compromise on how the GCAs will be created, administered and funded, but not on their necessity. We in urban education have plenty of problems to solve; please take one of them away by clearly defining learning expectations in key content areas and providing us with assessments that are aligned with the actual subjects we teach. Hold us accountable for a high school diploma that stands for a rigorous educational program and that gets us closer to being able to contend that an "A" earned in a



biology class in Erie measures up to an “A” earned in a biology class in Fox Chapel. On behalf of the School District of the City of Erie, I ask that you and our lawmakers authorize and implement the Graduation Competency Assessments. They will give teachers a clearer blueprint for instruction and students clearer expectations for learning. Accompanying curricular documents will eliminate months and even years of “best guess” curriculum development, especially for districts identified as needing improvement. I applaud the decisiveness of the Governor and the State Board of Education in advancing this agenda and inviting this important discussion. We need to work together to improve educational accountability as if the economic and social wellbeing of our children, our Commonwealth and our country depend on it.



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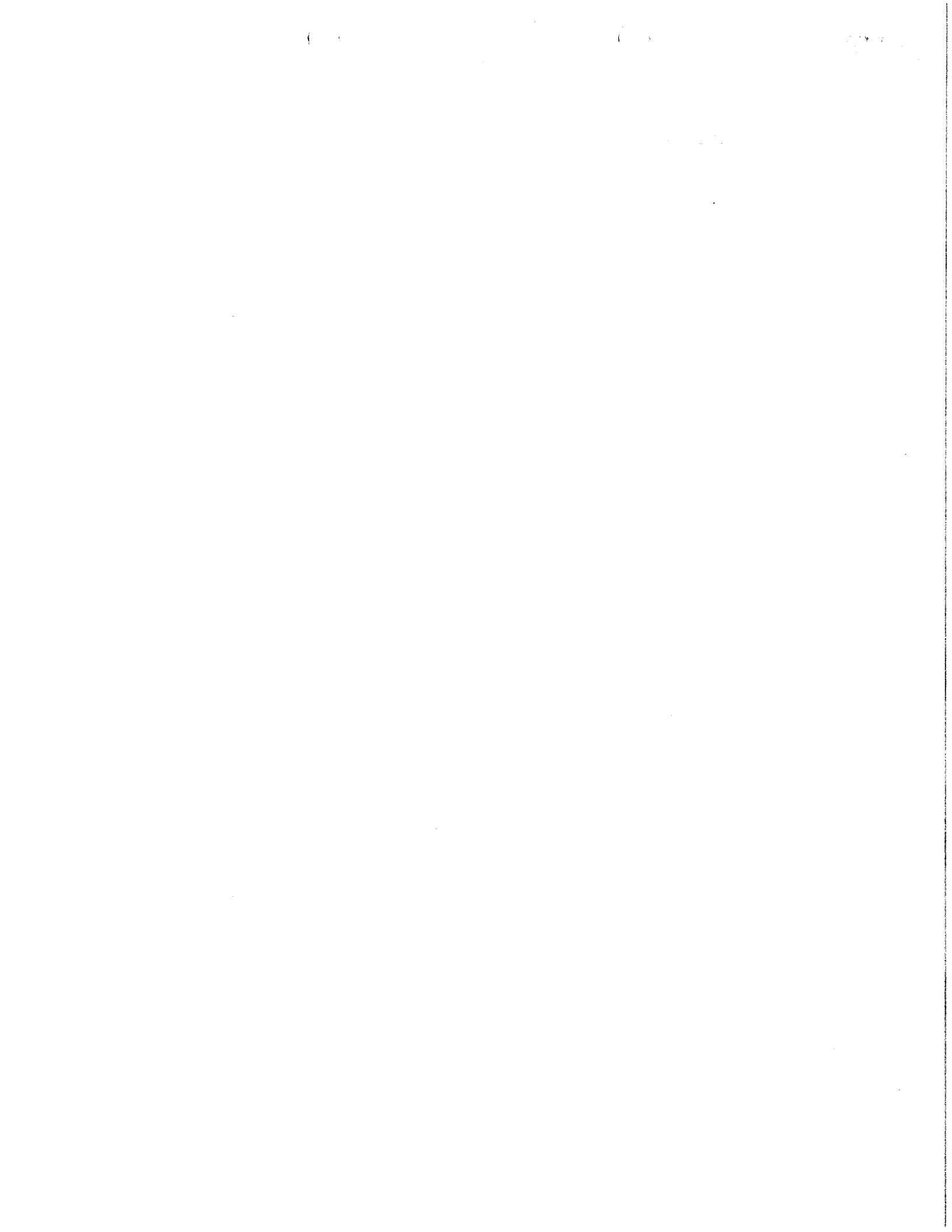
**Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
State Board of Education  
Public Hearing on High School Reform**

**Held in Grove City, Pennsylvania  
March 3, 2009**

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Testimony submitted by:

Jackie Syktich, President/CEO  
Mary Jones, Academic Dean  
DuBois Business College  
One Beaver Drive  
DuBois, PA 15801





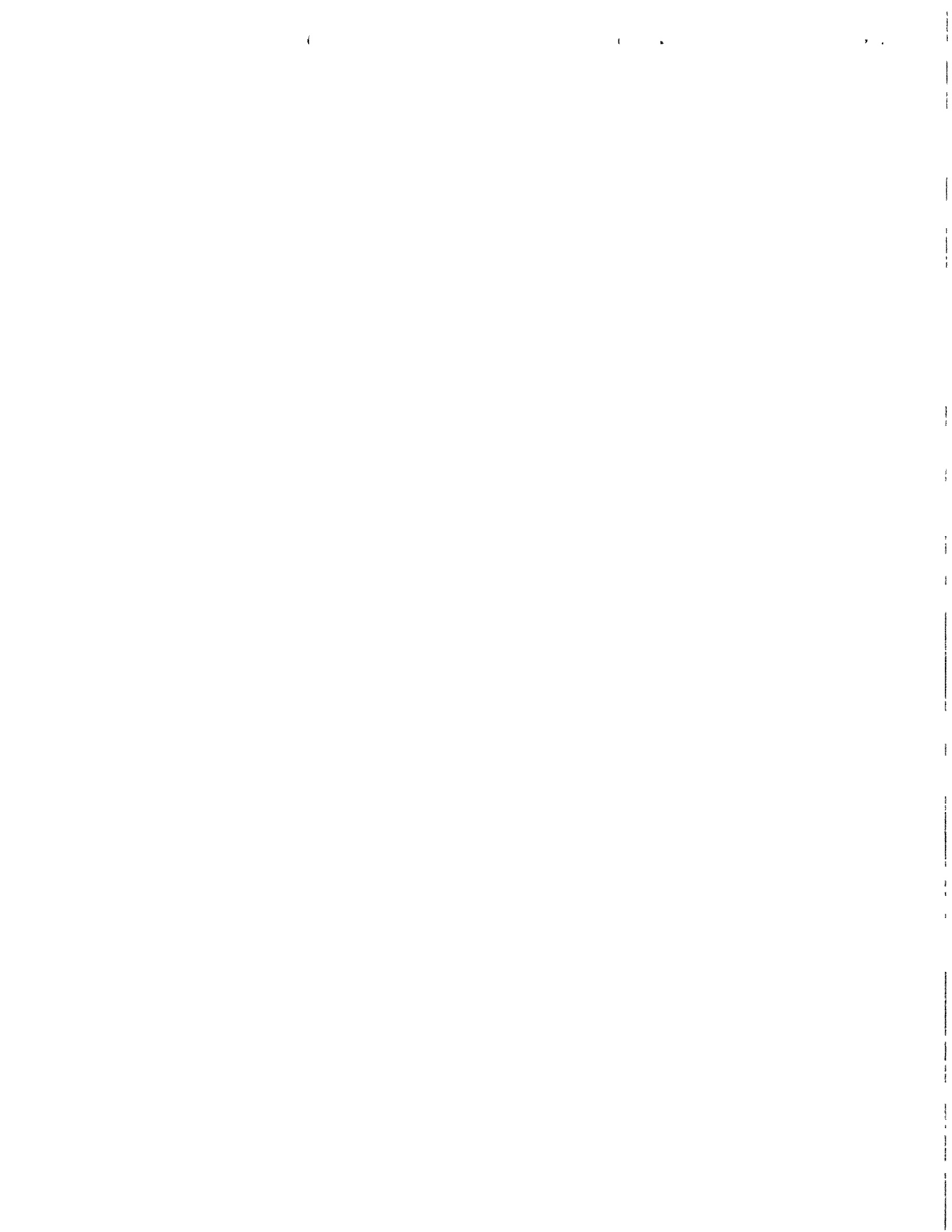
Good Afternoon! Thank you for this opportunity to offer comments on the proposed changes to the regulations on Pennsylvania's high school graduation requirements.

I am Jackie Syktich, President, DuBois Business College with campuses in DuBois, Huntingdon, and Oil City, Pennsylvania. I have worked in education administration for over 25 years.

I am Mary Jones, Academic Dean, DuBois Business College with oversight for all three campuses. I have worked in education for many years in areas such as: public high school education, parochial high school education, and vocational education. I have been with DuBois Business College for 25 years both as an instructor and in administration.

We are passionate about education and are fortunate to work in an environment where we get the privilege to help people change their lives through postsecondary education. With both our years of education experience, we would applaud any effort whereby students graduating from high school would all be given a better opportunity to succeed.

We endorse the proposed regulatory changes that the Pennsylvania Department of Education is proposing that would improve our high school graduation standards,

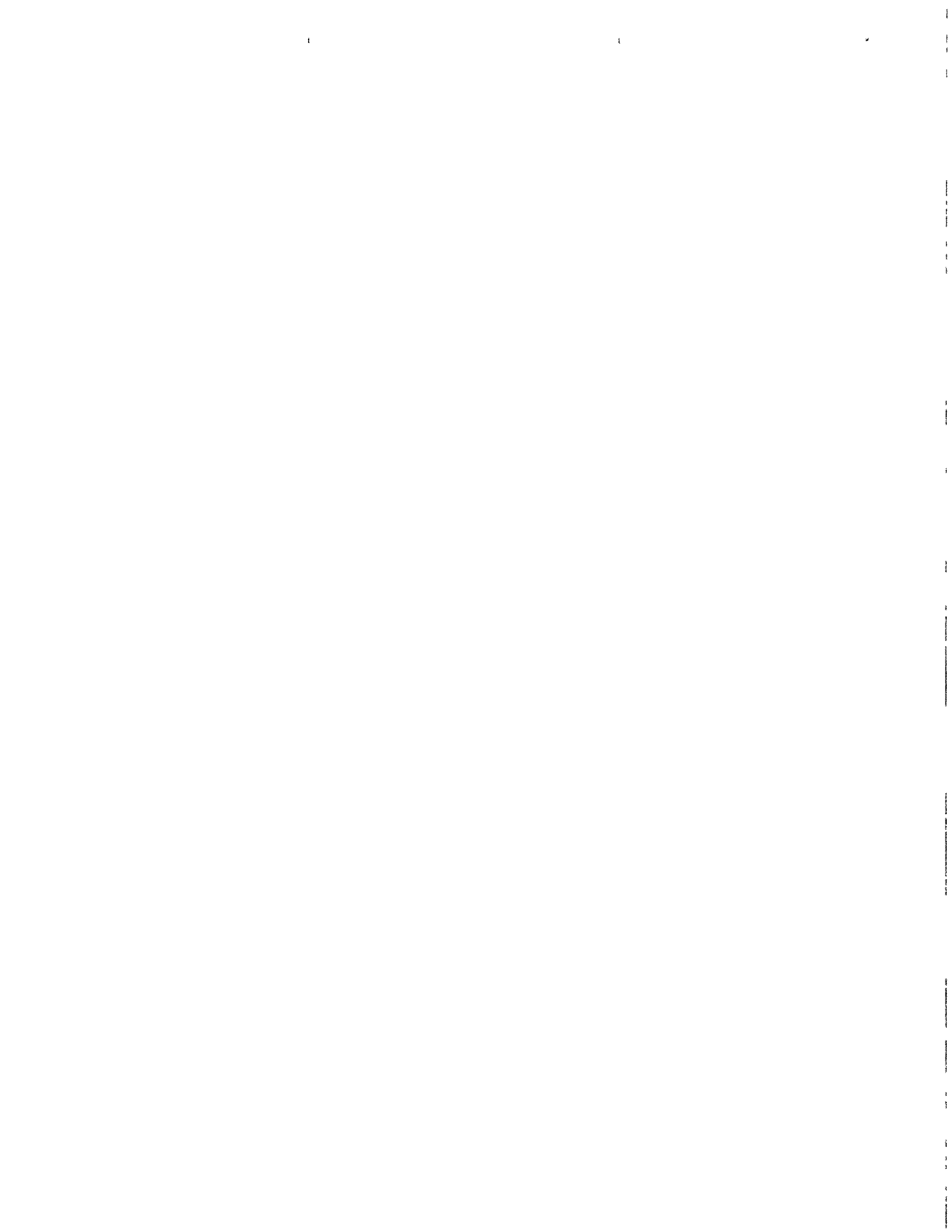


having one statewide standard so that all high school graduates are workforce ready and/or ready for further education upon graduation.

The reason we are all concerned and feel that this issue needs addressed is various employer surveys show that the workforce is changing rapidly and that 85 percent of newly created jobs between now and 2015 will require more than a high school education.

We have found that students graduating from high school in the past few years are having difficulty in the areas of reading, math, and English. To overcome this obstacle at our college, we have implemented more tutorial services in the last few years. These are some of the tutorial services we have had to add: we now have instructors available every class period for tutoring, DBC online assistance available 24/7 through the Internet, we have remedial software in the Library, and provide textbooks with CD tutorials and on-line website tutorials. We also provide Student Services support where an employee now monitors student progress throughout the term so that early detection can help provide necessary academic assistance. Increased equipment and materials are now available in the Learning Resource Center to aid students learning. If we did not have to spend money on these resources, we could provide more equipment, educational activities, etc.

In recent years, we have added more testing prior to a student's admission to the college rather than just using the high school diploma as one of the reasons for student



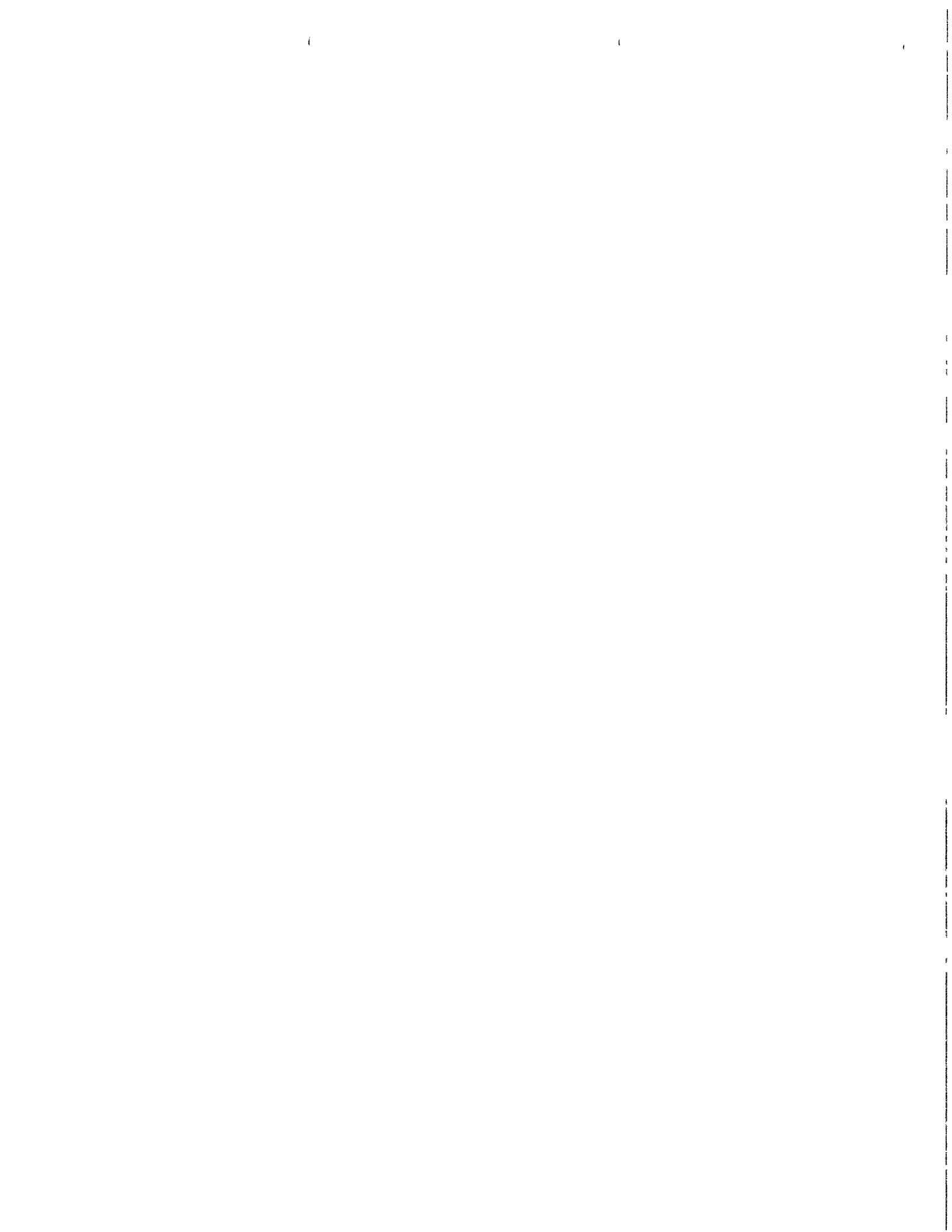
admission. We now do an entrance assessment with all prospective students during the admissions appointment in the areas of basic math, reading, and English. We have noted that the advanced placement examinations have seen a 25% decline in students passing the basic English and math areas of study.

We have also seen an increase in students dropping individual classes and opting to repeat those in another term in order to pass the class. This may cause them to come an additional term to meet the graduation requirements; therefore, causing them to spend more money on college than expected.

In addition, students sometimes choose to lighten their academic load by taking fewer classes rather than taking the standard full-time load. This also adds to the time and expense it takes for them to become a graduate. We have noticed that in the last two to three years there has been an increase in the number of students reducing their academic course load based on academic performance. We have seen a 10% increase in this area. This has caused some burden in scheduling classes.

Students who are not making academic progress suffer the consequences of lost eligibility for some forms of financial aid, funding agencies, scholarships, etc.

In conclusion, from reading the New High School Requirements that are being proposed, we agree that the implementation of the Department of Education's proposal

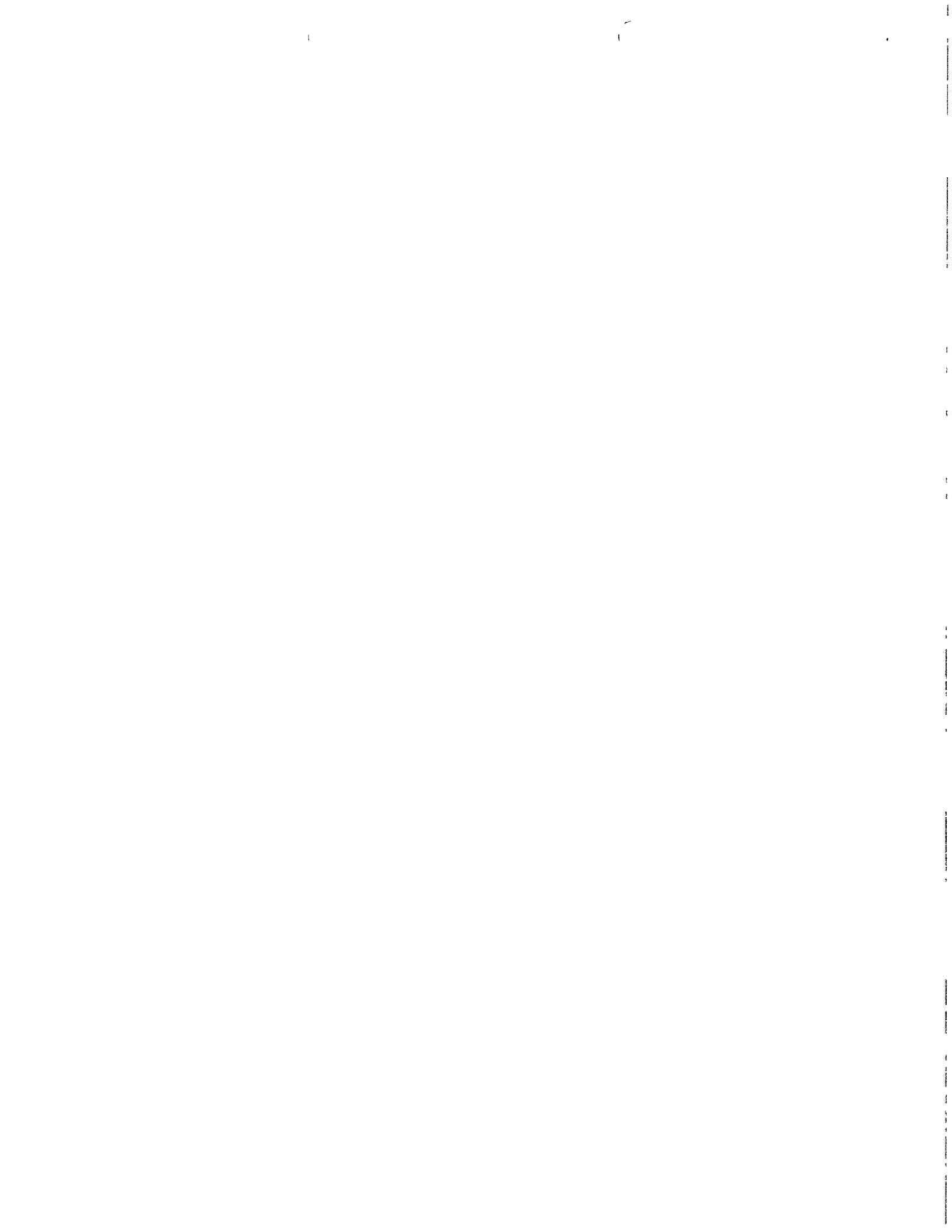


which will give students multiple ways to demonstrate proficiency in English, math, social studies, and science in order for them to succeed in college and the workforce by:

- Passing new Graduation Competency Assessments (GCAs) OR passing the PSSA OR
- Passing an Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate test OR
- Passing a local assessment that independent evaluators certify is equivalent to the state Graduation Competency Assessments.

We feel that it is more beneficial for instructors and students to receive timely feedback with regard to the tests and that they can implement instructional support where necessary. It is also a benefit that the GCAs would be a shorter testing time and could be used in place of finals. Students would also benefit because they take the test when they feel ready and they have the ability to take the test again until they pass. This should reduce test anxiety. We feel that this is more inline with workforce expectations because people at work are promoted based on their demonstrated competencies.

Thank you for your kind and gracious attention!





#2046

March 3, 2009  
Testimony before the Pennsylvania State Board of Education  
Lynn Foltz  
Wilmington Area School District, School Director

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Dear Sirs:

I am here today to express my opposition to the proposed establishment of a new set of criteria, the Graduation Competency Assessments, that would be imposed upon all students in the state of Pennsylvania, additional tests beyond those assessments made by educators in the classroom as part of their ongoing studies and multiple PSSA exams required by the state in accordance with current regulation.

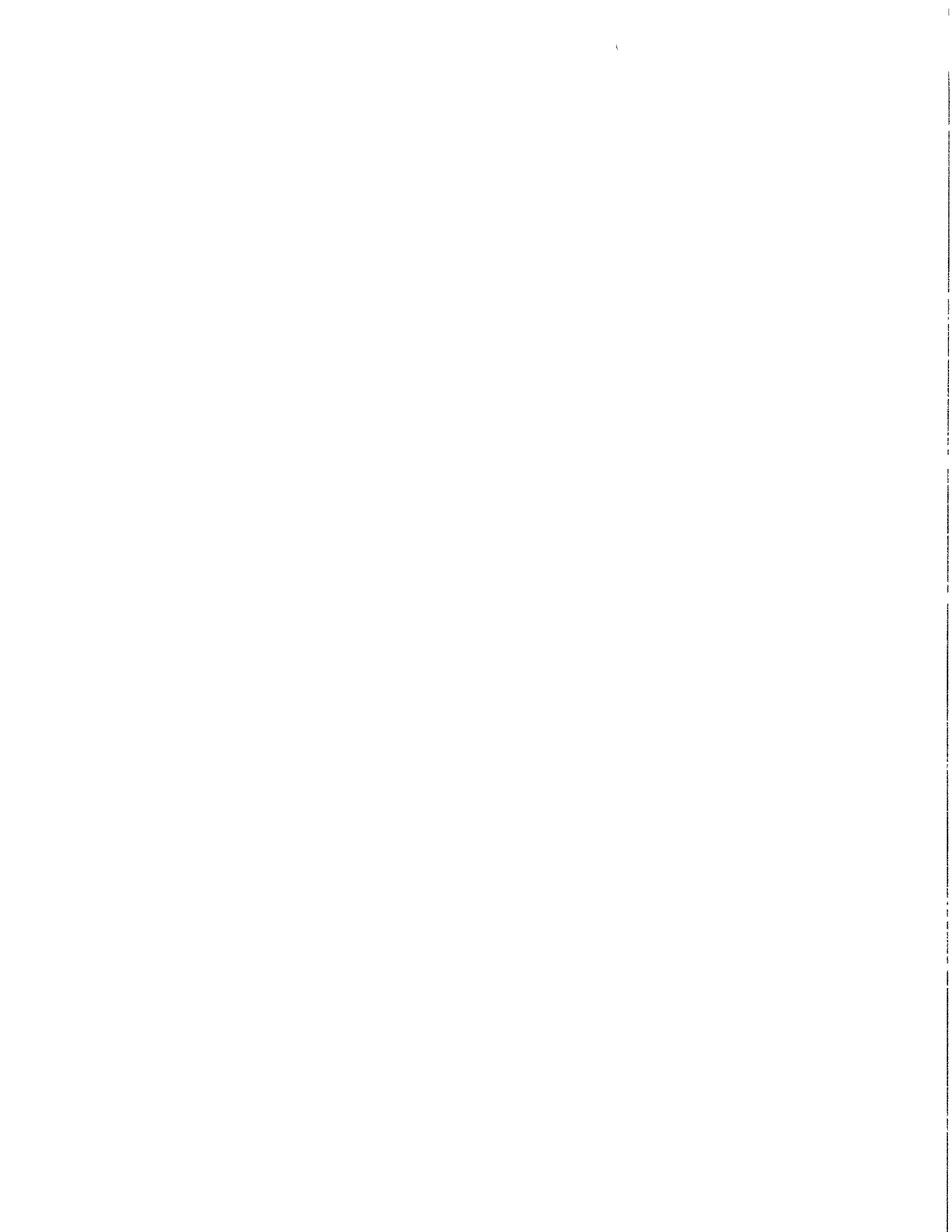
I believe that the State Board of Education has not offered any data to show that these exams will accomplish their intended purpose. On the contrary, I believe that instituting these exams will further narrow the curriculum; limit or altogether eliminate instruction in art (spatial relationships), music (creativity and math skills), foreign language(s), and other non-tested (business courses) and elective subjects; and continue to promote "teaching to the test" and test-taking skills, detracting from real learning.

The proposed GCA exams are discriminatory because they represent a single method to assess a student's proficiency. As proposed, the GCA exam is a single method of assessment, that being a pencil and paper standardized exam. This affects many students who can be, and are continually assessed by multiple methods. I believe that any one single standardized exam should not deny a diploma to a student who has demonstrated proficiency by other means. In a recent (June 2007 release) validity study by the University of California at Berkeley<sup>1</sup> high school grades were proven to be a better predictor of success in college beyond the freshman year as opposed to the scores received by students on a standardized exam. A key finding of this study was that the high school grade point average was consistently the strongest predictor of four-year college outcomes for all academic disciplines, campuses and freshman cohorts in the sample, not the standardized test.

The assumption that the GCA exams can be used as "end of course" exams is unrealistic. The GCA exams supposedly will substitute as course final exams, but which course structure? For example, mathematics can be taught as separate subjects, Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, etc. but also as integrated concepts (see Houghton Mifflin Integrated Math series) that require students to develop a more comprehensive approach to the study of mathematics. The GCA exams don't "fit" that concept. In my school district, Wilmington Area, this would cause us to replace all math textbooks from eighth grade through twelfth grade. This represents thousands of dollars in a single year and would be a significant budgetary item. Currently, new textbooks in all subjects are evaluated for content and replaced on a rotating basis to lessen the budgetary impact.

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<sup>1</sup> Research & Occasional Paper Series: CSHE.6.07  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY  
<http://cshe.berkeley.edu>



The Graduation Competency Assessment proposal does more to harm student development than it does to encourage student development. Making students take multiple exams under threat of no diploma, only serves to make them more anxious, more resistant to the actual process of learning, which is extremely counter-productive. Many of these students will opt to “drop out”. This is exactly the opposite effect of what is intended.

The GCA exams are a “one size fits all” approach and do not take into consideration the diversity of students in the educational system. There are students who choose to attend a career and technical school because they have other interests in other occupations. These students often have other abilities that are not measured by pencil and paper exams. The GCA exams are excessive for these students because they are pursuing a vocation that requires other licensing exams. Special education students, who, even now, are not given grade-level consideration and whose individual education plan (IEP) is ignored when administered the PSSA, will be unduly harmed by taking tests that will never assess their abilities at their level. Gifted students will be adversely affected because schools will make adjustments to teacher course load and reductions in course offerings. It will become increasingly difficult to offer Advanced Placement level courses, particularly in smaller districts because of the inability to adjust teaching load to offer those courses to smaller groups of students.

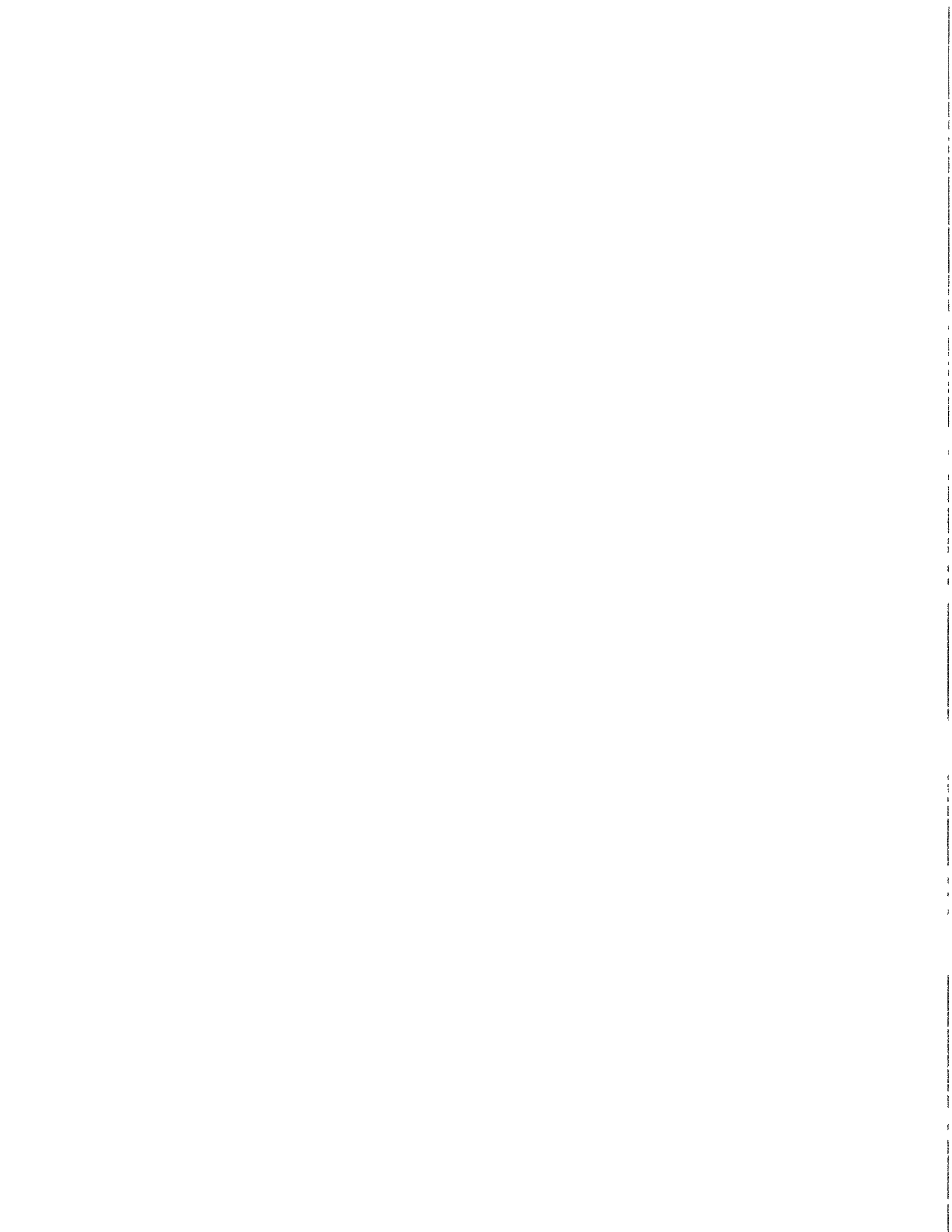
Another unintended effect of instituting the GCA exams is that high school courses will become “SAT” prep classes. We will teach; “how to take the test”, already being done for the PSSA, “when to take the test”; and only what will be required to “pass the test”. This will discourage the best of our educators, and it will dissuade students in becoming teachers because “teaching to the test” stifles creativity in the classroom. It is critical to attract the best and brightest to the teaching profession and if they believe that all they are doing is teaching their subject for a student to pass a single exam, then they will leave their profession.

I would like to cite a recent new policy report issued by Achieve, Inc., in November 2008 that reverses earlier guidance to states by supporting the use of multiple performance measures rather than a standardized exit exam as part of an effective assessment system to prepare students for college and careers. This report, *Measures that Matter*, emphasizes that the current “standards-test-accountability” model has failed to prove its effectiveness in promoting student growth and achievement. The report encourages states to work with their local school districts and provide necessary resources. Critical to the *assessment issue* and relevant to the GCA proposal are the following recommendations<sup>2</sup>:

**1. Proficiency on the state assessment should mean a student is prepared for college and the workplace.** States need to equate proficiency with readiness for credit-bearing coursework in college and ensure that high school tests measure what matters to employers and colleges.

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<sup>2</sup> PSBA Staff. "Achieve sets new approach for high school reform, assessment changes for ADP states." *PSBA Graduation Competency*. 2009. Pennsylvania School Boards Association. 3 Mar. 2009 <<http://www.psba.org>>.



**2. High school test results should open doors for students to higher education and good jobs.** As states establish more challenging assessments, postsecondary institutions and employers should value the results by tying incentives to examination results.

**3. Assess the full range of standards. Some of the essential skills that college faculty and employers value in high school graduates are difficult to measure via pencil-and-paper tests.** States should supplement their summative high school tests with performance assessments for such elements as engaging in teamwork or performing contextualized tasks that involve extended analysis, research or communication.

**4. Testing should support good teaching and become a tool for instructional improvement.** Supporting instruction should be a high priority of assessment systems. States need to strike a better balance between tests that are mostly useful for accountability and tests that are useful for improving teaching and learning.

**5. Testing should be streamlined. More testing is not the goal; smarter testing is.** States and districts must expand their vision of testing systems while being careful not to increase the amount of testing students and teachers experience in schools. Before adding new assessments, state leaders should take a hard look at how many tests students currently take, at both the state and local levels, and what those tests seek to measure.

In yet another report, “Multiple Measures Approaches to High School Graduation” issued by The School Redesign Network at Stanford University states, “In general, multiple measures approaches to high school graduation have helped to raise achievement without increasing dropout rates, thus improving education for more students and addressing one of the concerns about test-only approaches to determining eligibility for graduation.”<sup>3</sup> The School Redesign Network is funded by a generous grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

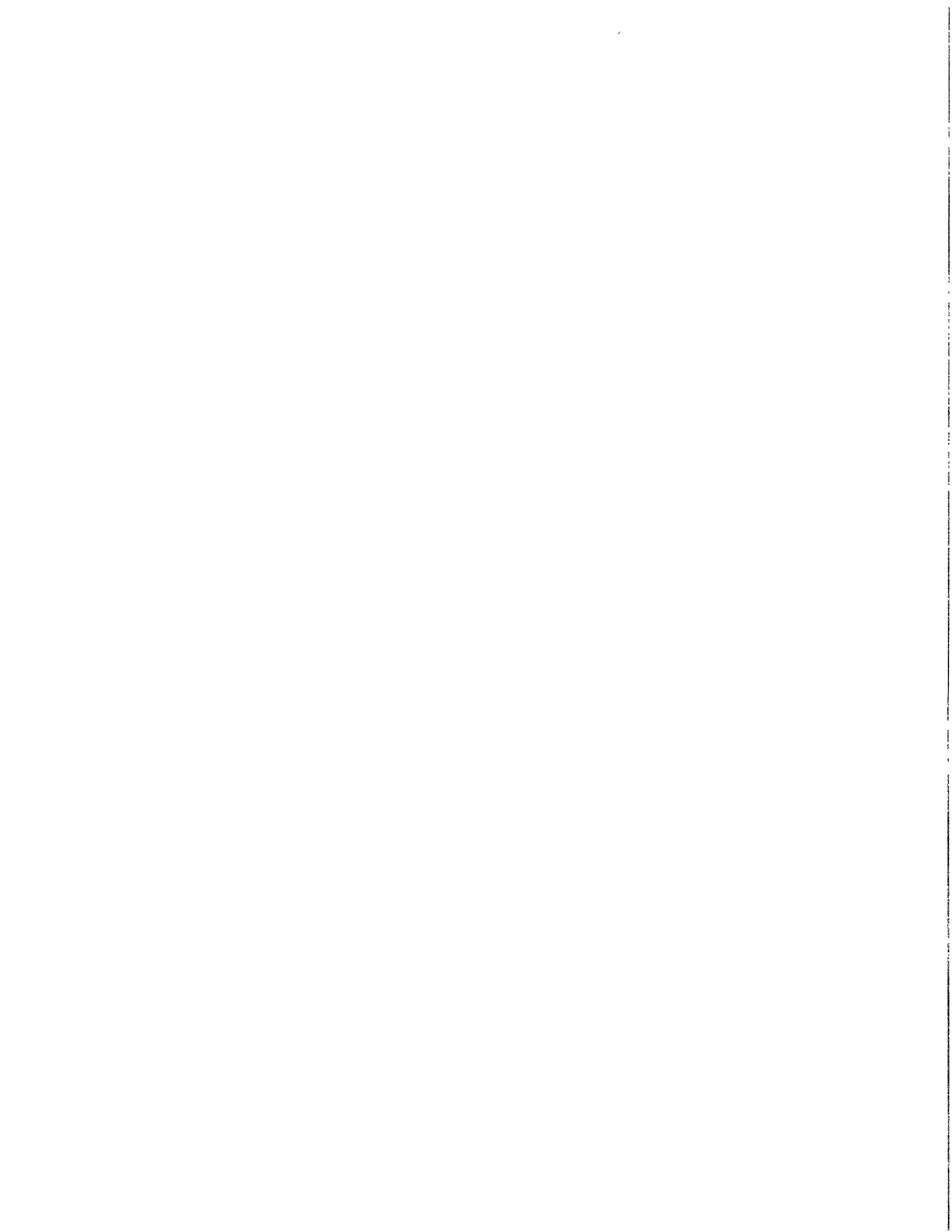
In conclusion, I believe that it will require much more **collaborative** effort between the state and the school districts to reach real solutions to real problems. We all want our children to succeed and we need to work together to make it happen. Listen to those on the “front lines”, the educators and administrators, the parents, and other stakeholders who have valid, innovative, constructive ideas on how to increase student achievement in a 21<sup>st</sup> century learning environment.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Lynn Foltz

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<sup>3</sup> Multiple Measures Approaches to High School Graduation. Rep. 2005. The School Redesign Network At Stanford University School of Education. 28 Feb. 2009 <<http://www.schoolredesign.net>>



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# 2696

**Testimony**

**Pennsylvania State Board of Education**

**Graduation Competency Assessments**

**March 3, 2009**

**Grove City**

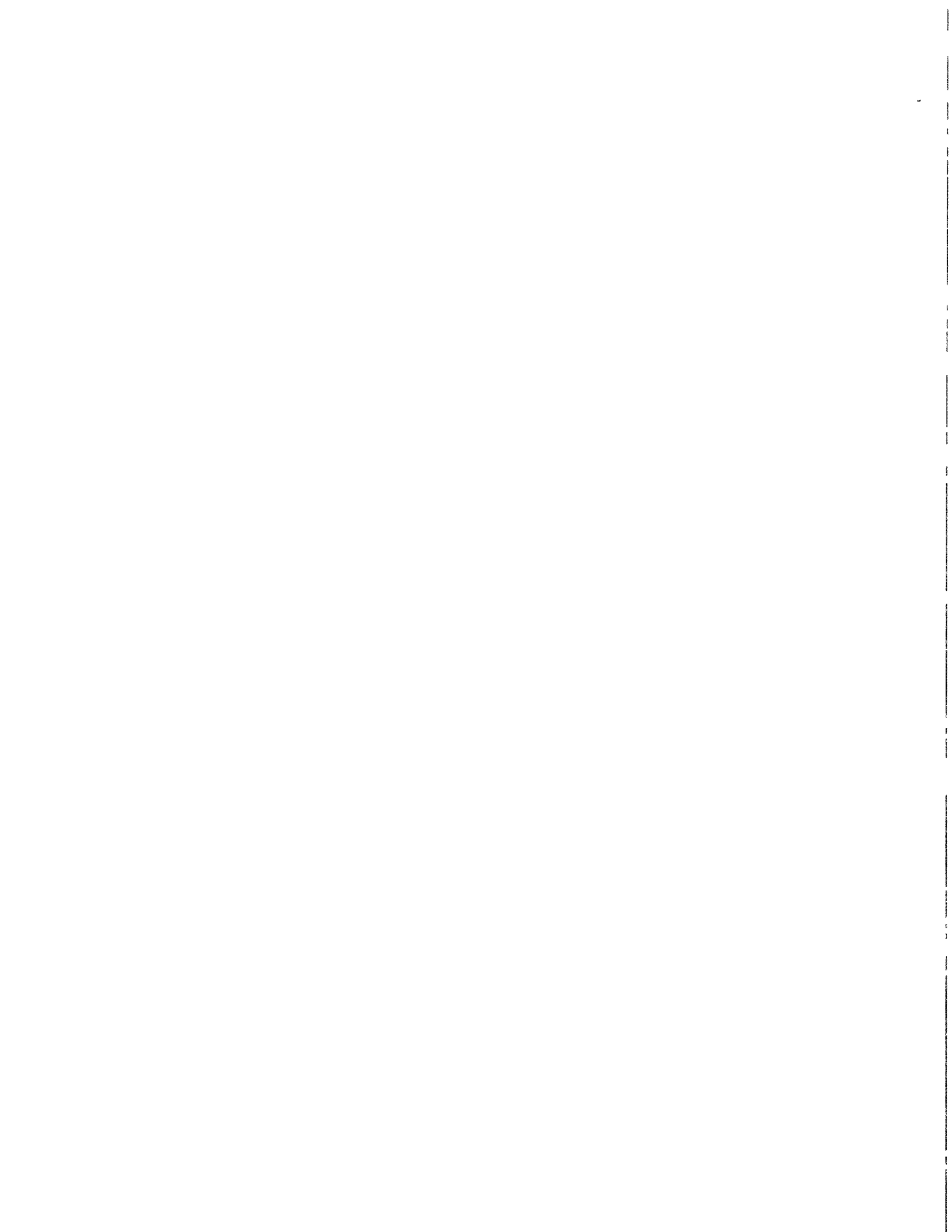
**Submitted**

**By**

**Sandra J. Romanowski**

**Superintendent**

**Bradford Area School District**





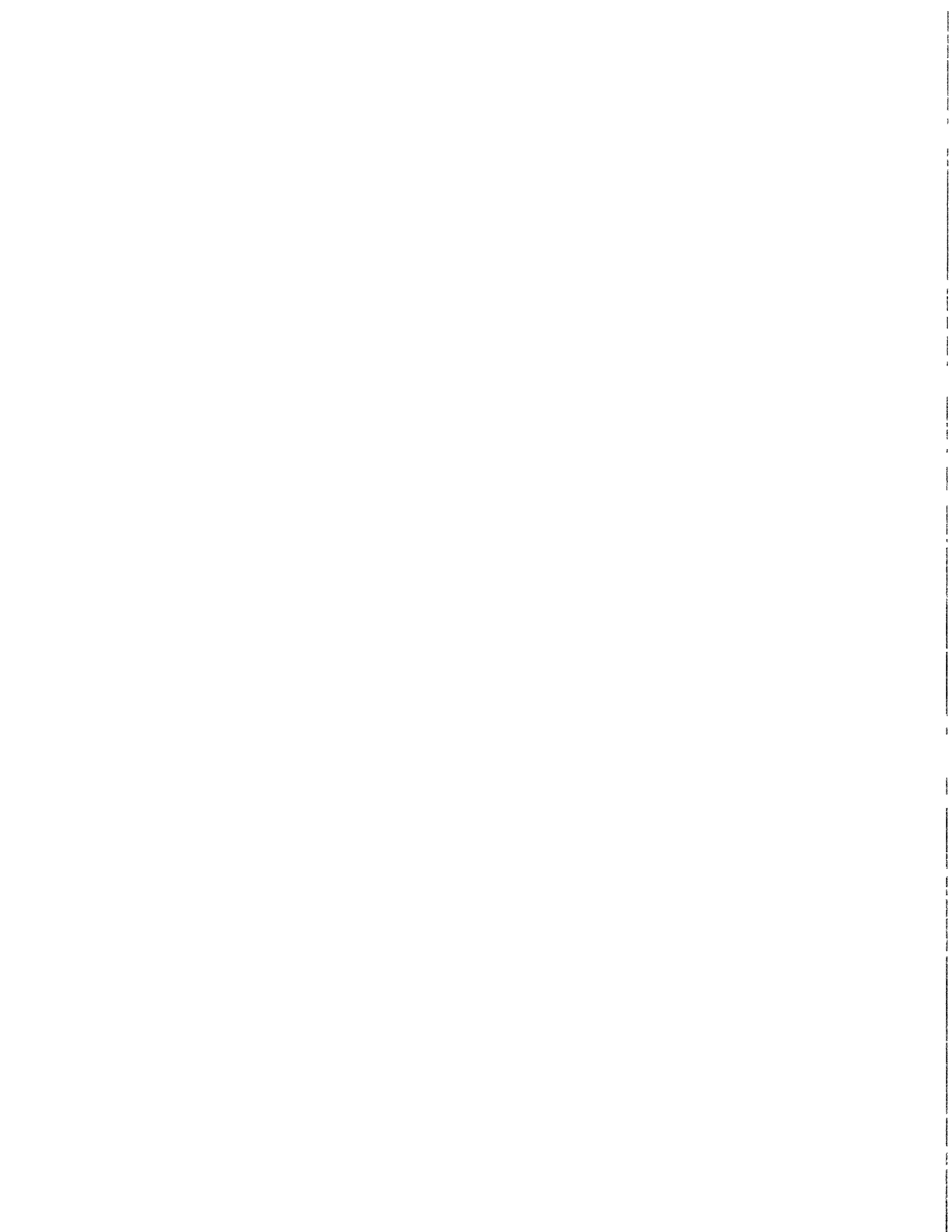
I would like to thank the State Board of Education for providing us with this forum to offer feedback regarding this most important topic. Although I will be presenting our position on Graduation Competency Assessments, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce our Assistant Superintendent, Katharine Pude and our High School Principal, Ken Coffman.

I would like to start by commending this administration for making education a priority. It is clear that your commitment to improve instruction for our children has been a cornerstone of not only your core beliefs but has also translated into your proposed budget. Our district has benefited greatly from your many competitive grants, the Accountability Block Grant and the Costing Out Study. On behalf of our administration, school board and students, I sincerely welcome this opportunity to thank you for your support.

I also understand and respect that this administration must be feeling a sense of urgency with regard to implementing the Graduation Competency Assessments prior to the end of this administration. I am not opposed to establishing standards for graduation. I am certainly not opposed to accountability. Our students deserve the very best we have to offer each and every day. **I am, however, adamantly opposed to having this be our focus at this point.**

No member of our team will argue that our high school is doing a good enough job at this point. We absolutely share your belief that instruction should be relevant and rigorous. Denial of the obvious is a waste of time. I am not here to waste your time. I can tell you, with great pride, that we are making a significant impact on the climate, culture and instructional program. We are moving from a content centered program to a student centered program.

The Bradford Area School District accepts that good teachers and administrators should be commended and those who are not willing to change and offer our students the best possible education should be counseled out of the field. During my tenure as Superintendent, we have been doing just that. We welcomed the new evaluation form developed by the Department of Education as a tool for providing a more comprehensive system of feedback and establishing a baseline for improvement. However, as you know, when a teacher is rated as unsatisfactory, it is our responsibility to develop a plan for improvement. It is also our responsibility to provide appropriate professional development opportunities so that teacher will have the chance to make the changes necessary to improve. Our school board has even developed a parallel system of evaluation for our administrative team. Unless a building reaches AYP for all students and all sub-groups, the administrators cannot be rated as Distinguished. The



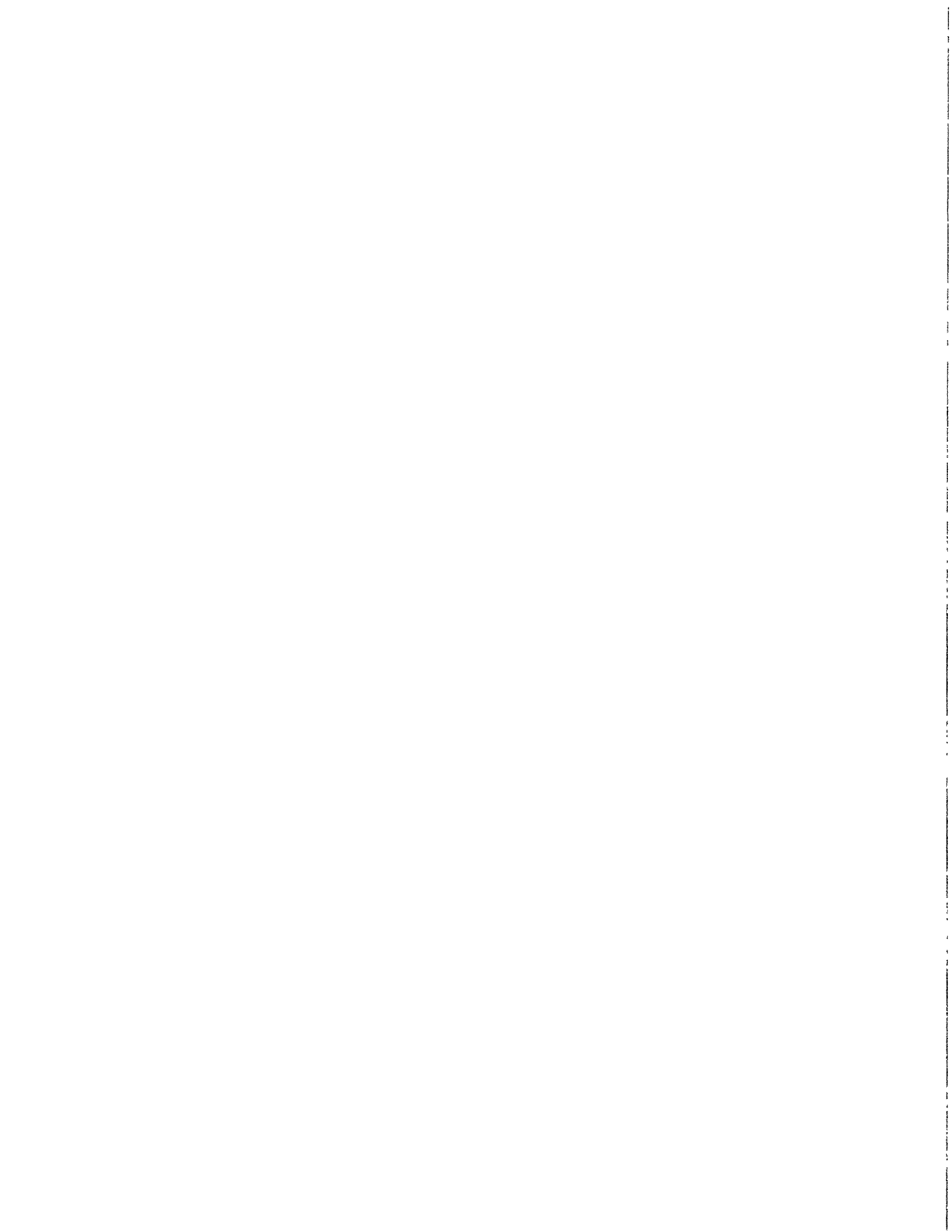
Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent can only be rated as Distinguished if all schools reach this level of proficiency.

Sharing a belief system is actually the easy part. Implementing the changes necessary to achieve this goal is the hard part. Please keep in mind that most secondary teachers and administrators in the field today had absolutely no formal training in the instructional practices that would lead to mastery learning such as the differentiation of instruction. The secondary model has historically been content specific. In order for us to give our students what they absolutely deserve, we must change the typical secondary school paradigm as well as retrain our staff. The resources necessary to achieve this goal are few and far between. Exemplary professional development opportunities are not readily accessible. Many times, these opportunities are out of state and/or very expensive.

We at the Bradford Area School District would implore you to consider dedicating your resources to providing state of the art conferences and professional development opportunities for our teachers, so that they can better understand how to make those changes. The Willard Daggett training was a good beginning. However, his message is one of inspiration. After the teachers are inspired, we need to be able to offer the specific nuts and bolts solutions for implementation. As I am sure you know, change of this magnitude is very complex. It is much easier to review curriculum maps, assessment tools and PSSA outcomes and determine that we are not doing well enough. It is much harder, and far more important, to partner with us in order for us to achieve this goal. We need your help. We need your leadership.

Our district was one of the very fortunate few that received the Project 720 grant which targeted high school reform. I would like to thank you for that opportunity. Nothing has assisted us more to make sustainable changes in our culture, as well as our instructional practices. However, this grant was discontinued the year after we got into the program. I would ask that you consider re-instating this initiative with some of the money budgeted to develop and implement the Graduation Competency Assessments.

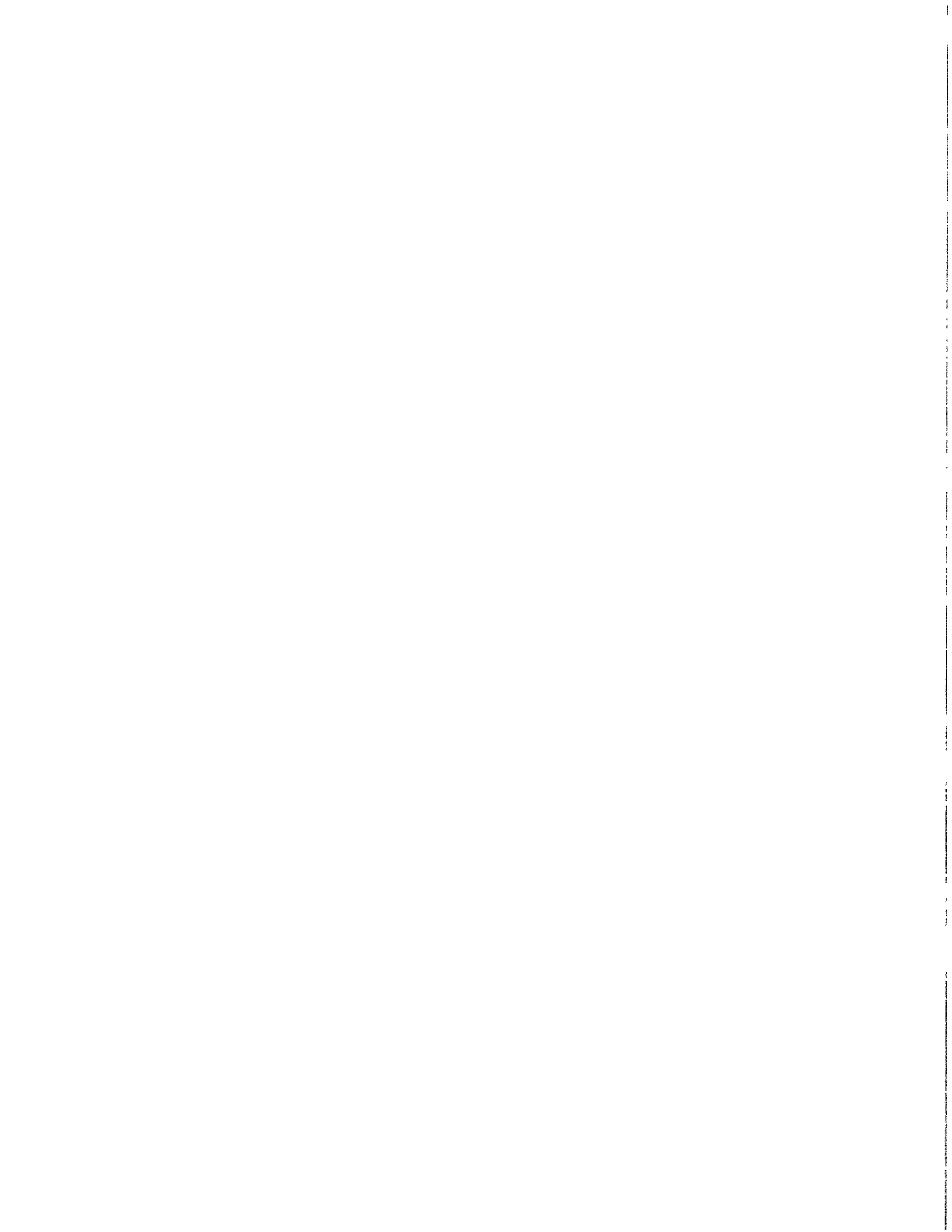
Another initiative that has the potential for making a great impact on instruction is the Classrooms for the Future initiative. Again, while the intent was exactly what was needed, it was not effectively administered. Instead of providing those districts already in the program with the resources promised, funds were used to expand. Unless the district has the funds and commitment to make up the difference, this initiative has very little impact on instruction or reform. Change must occur building-wide, not just in a few classrooms. In our district, we matched dollar for dollar what was allocated in the grant. When applying for the grant, we were not informed of the significant local match that would be necessary. Many of my peers were financially unable to add matching funds



and, therefore, were significantly limited in the potential impact that could have been seen with this initiative. I would also ask that you consider giving the current districts the resources necessary to implement the grant as was initially intended before expanding using the existing CFF budget. Additional funds to expand could be taken from the budget designated for the development of Graduation Competency Assessments..

In summary, if the Graduation Competency Assessments are developed now and implemented as scheduled, you will not realize the impact you had hoped. A great idea alone is not enough to effect change. We don't need another assessment to know our current system needs reformed. The only people who will lose will be our children. If our instructional system isn't doing what it should, we need to retrain our staff. Should we not afford our teachers the same courtesy we would to a student learning new strategies? We would suggest that you partner with our schools and build an instructional infrastructure that supports this shared goal of having an exemplary program for all our students. When that goal has been accomplished, I would be in absolute support of developing an assessment to determine how well we implement these best practices.

Although I believe you very much wish to positively impact the lives of our secondary school students, I feel this will not be the overall result. If a student does not pass these assessments or one approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, they will not receive a diploma. Should they really be held hostage for our mistakes? This would only seem appropriate if we gave them an exemplary program and they chose not to apply themselves. Can we really make that statement at this point? I think not!



Testimony to the  
Pennsylvania State Board of Education

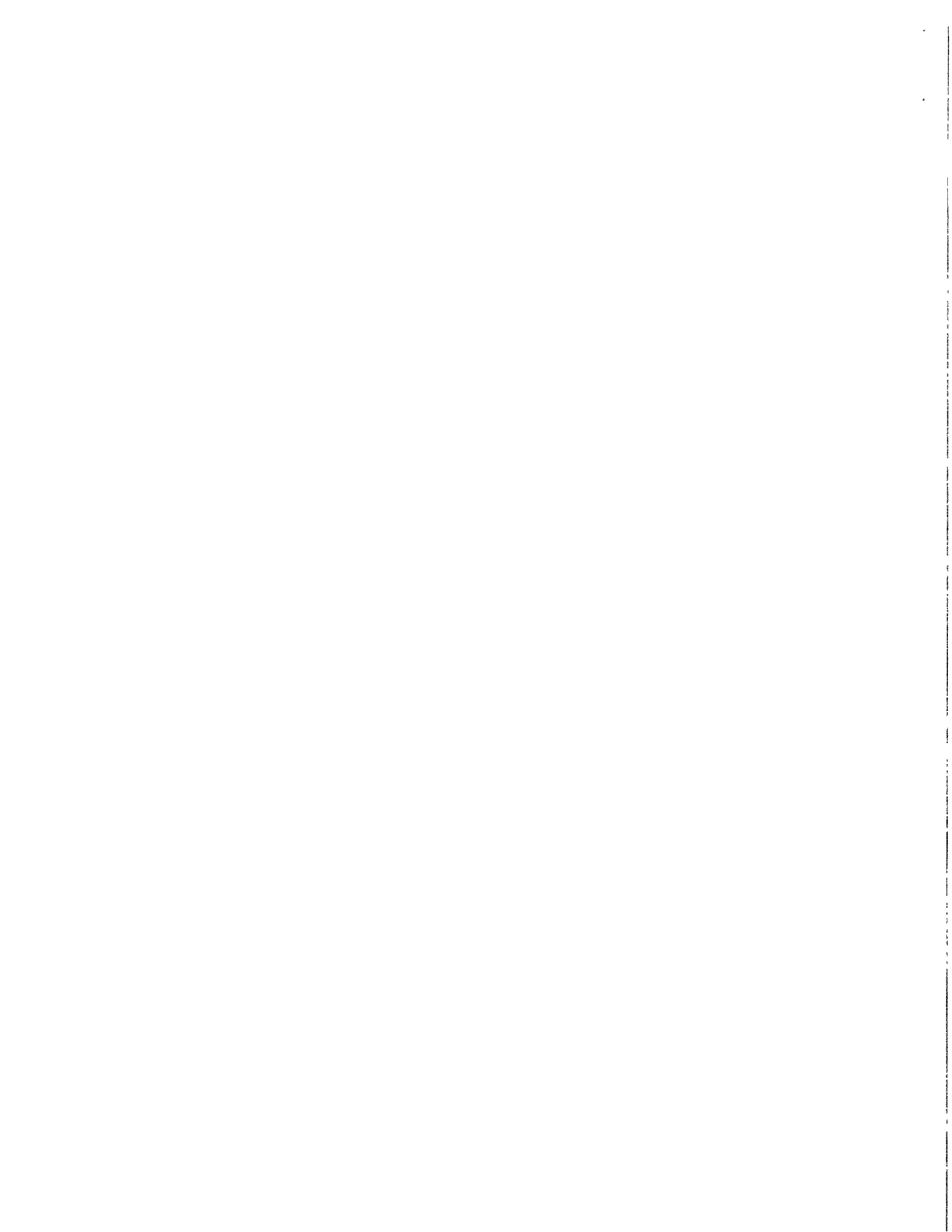
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MARCH 12 2009

March, 3, 2009  
Midwestern Intermediate Unit #4  
Grove City, PA

by

Richard Scaletta, Principal  
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email: [scaletta.r@generalmcclane.org](mailto:scaletta.r@generalmcclane.org)  
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Thank you for this opportunity to share my thoughts with you today. My name is Rick Scaletta. I am the principal of General McLane High School in Edinboro, PA, Erie County. I have been an educator for 29 years: the first eight as a teacher; five years as assistant principal; and the last 16 as a principal.

First, I want you to know I love my job. I enjoy working with teenagers. I have not been blessed to have children, therefore I treat each student in the school as if they were my own.

My job has become increasingly difficult over the years due to a number of social issues impacting our students and their parents, but mostly because of what I consider to be misguided government mandates. The many initiatives being implemented by PDE have actually taken me away from students and force me to spend more time as a bureaucrat than as an educational leader.

I feel that the Graduate Competency Assessment (GCA) proposal is another thing that will not yield benefit to students, but instead take time away from the things that matter. I believe in accountability, and I understand my duty to produce competent citizens. From the perspective of a practitioner, and based on an abundance of research on learning in the past two decades, I believe this proposal has little educational merit.

My first issue with the GCAs is logistics. I am sure the department of education will devise a plan to administer these tests in a similar manner in which the PSSA is administered. It is done with no regard to individual schools' schedules. Our school operates VERY SUCCESSFULLY on a 4 x 4 block schedule. We would need to have the flexibility to administer these assessments on the final two days of our courses, which would be two days in January and two days in late May or early June. Otherwise, a great deal of our curriculum would be left out. I am confident we would not have the flexibility to do that.

My second objection, and the most important, is that this effort is not worth the money. There is no evidence or data that shows testing students raises achievement on anything other than taking the tests. I understand why politicians and business leaders think testing is the answer. When my generation was in school, testing was primarily the only form of assessment used. So, if you only have a hammer in your toolbox, you tend to pound on every problem to fix it. But over the past two decades, we have learned so much about human learning and how the brain functions, and we have developed effective ways of measuring what we learn. There is also continuing research that helps us identify successful schools. None of this research uses testing as the only

indicator of school or student success.

While there is work from many researchers and organizations that would refute the use of GCAs as graduation requirements, I would like to share information from just one today that I feel will help visually depict the point I wish to make. Dr. Willard Daggett created an organization called the International Center for Leadership in Education. For two decades, Daggett's organization has worked to connect what schools are doing to what is necessary for colleges and the work place. He has developed the Rigor and Relevance framework, which is the last page of this testimony. I would ask that you reference it now.

On the vertical axis, the knowledge taxonomy developed by Benjamin Bloom serves as a measure of cognitive rigor. We, of course, want students engaged in the higher order thinking skills of analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Daggett's research has shown the majority will better engage in this higher order thinking if there is relevance to what they are being asked to do. Therefore, he developed the relevance scale on the horizontal axis. Four quadrants of learning are thus created.

For America to remain competitive, we must have students engaged in activities that will develop the real-life skills found in Quadrant D: rigorous thinking applied to real-world situations that are unpredictable. In his book, The World is Flat, Thomas Friedman argues the loss of low level jobs to foreign countries frees Americans to do the more creative, imaginative work as is described in Quadrant D. If you look at the quadrant closely, you must realize that paper/pencil testing will fall short in evaluating this kind of thinking. In fact, Daggett's organization has conducted research on proficiency tests in all states of the union. They found that 80% of test questions come from Quadrant A: basic acquisition of knowledge. If the gauge of school accountability is testing, schools will meet the target, and we will train a generation of Americans that are good at regurgitation of information and nothing else.

So, if we are not going to rely on standardized testing, what should we do? I offer two suggestions.

First, let's not reinvent the wheel. There are organizations that have solid research to determine how students learn and how schools can effectively assess learning. There is also research and data that helps us determine if a school is doing its job. For example, the Association of School Curriculum Development has developed a "growth model" that can be used to determine

if there is growth in student learning, not just growth in testing skills. Daggett's group has also researched what successful schools do. A body of research like this should be used as the basis for school reform initiatives.

I am pleased that Pennsylvania has been approved to move forward with a pilot of the growth model. I believe this model, unlike our current system to determine AYP, will benefit students and give schools better data for improvement. But instead of wasting millions on the development of GCAs, which just points out the problems we already know exist, let's use that money to help schools implement solutions. We know who the weaker students are; we don't need more tests to tell us that. What we need are the resources to provide the intensive remediation and help for these students.

The Classrooms for the Future program is very promising and by PDE's own data, is already a proven program. We are in our first year of the program at our school and already are realizing its benefits and wishing we had received increased funding to put technology into more classrooms. The money that will be spent on the development of GCAs, would be better used for the CFF project.

I am aware that PDE has trotted out a barrage of initiatives to "improve education." The problem is that we get bombarded with a host of programs not necessarily related to how we assess and require time beyond what we are capable of doing in a 60 hour work week. Indeed, our school was one of 10 pilot schools across the state last year that participated in the PDE pilot with Daggett's organization. It is an excellent program, probably the best I've encountered in my years in education, but there has been no follow up from the state. In addition, we keep getting distracted by new state initiatives, such as the GCAs, and struggle to implement the true educational reform we signed up to engage in.

Finally, I ask you to consider a new approach to educational reform in Pennsylvania. It seems to me the approach is a negative one. Everything seems oriented to look at the worst schools and create legislation, programs and rules to make schools conform. As an educator, I am delivering a state service, yet it feels the state sees me as an adversary rather than a partner. Could we start again, please?

There are many schools in Pennsylvania doing it right. PDE should study them to see what is working. Successful schools could network, share ideas and come along side of schools struggling to achieve. Coupling national research with successful schools in PA, we could come up with a total package of learning initiatives and assessment of student learning that is valid and effective.

I have hit on a number of issues today and that is my point. Pennsylvania needs to step back and roll out a well planned, comprehensive strategy that includes training before implementation. A plan that includes ALL learning initiatives and assessment methods needs to be fully delineated. In the early years of the plan, training for administrators and teachers should take place. I am all for quality change in schools, but the reality is that it takes time, and if not carefully implemented, it simply will not work. It cannot follow a timeline that coincides with political terms of office.

The state department has certainly initiated many programs over the past six years. You need to know from the perspective of a person in the field that deals with the day to day management of a comprehensive school, your approach appears disjunct and overwhelming. The accelerated implementation plan for GCAs will be true folly.

The present methodology seems to be to implement accountability measures and force schools to comply. I would like to see a new approach: plan with input from a broad base of educators, train all involved in a systematic manner and then implement assessment and accountability measures.

Again, I thank you for this opportunity to be heard.

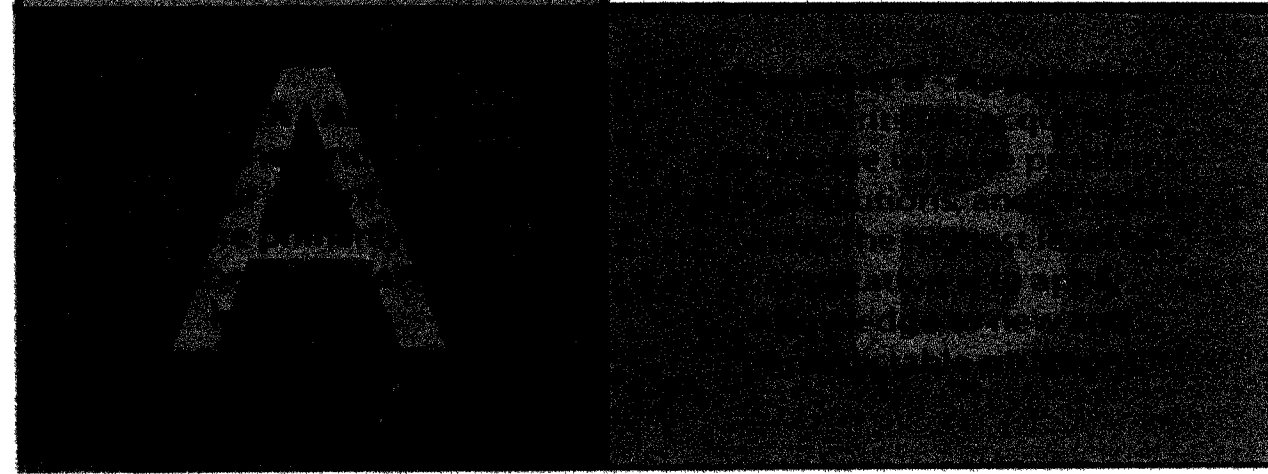
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**Evaluation 6**  
**Synthesis 5**  
**Analysis 4**  
**Application 3**  
**Comprehension 2**  
**Knowledge/  
Awareness 1**

**Quadrant C - Assimilation**  
Students extend and refine their acquired knowledge to be able to use that knowledge automatically and routinely to analyze and solve problems and create solutions.

**Quadrant D - Adaptation**

Students have the competence to think in complex ways and to apply their knowledge and skills. Even when confronted with perplexing unknowns, students are able to use extensive knowledge and skill to create solutions and take action that further develops their skills and knowledge.



**1**  
*Knowledge in one discipline*

**2**  
*Apply in discipline*

**3**  
*Apply across disciplines*

**4**  
*Apply to real-world predictable situations*

**5**  
*Apply to real-world unpredictable situations*

**Application Model**

