

Centennial School District

An Equal Opportunity Employer

Superintendent

433 Centennial Road
Warminster, PA 18974-5455



Phone: 215-441-6000 x 3049

www.centennialsd.org

March 13, 2008

Ms. Kim Kaufman
Executive Director
Independent Regulatory Review Commission
333 Market Street
14th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101

RECEIVED
2008 MAR 17 AM 9:51
INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

Dear Ms. Kaufman,

At the February 26, 2008 meeting of the Centennial School District Board of School Directors, the attached resolution was approved unanimously. This resolution "opposes the State Board of Education's proposal to enact Graduation Competency Assessments and any other regulation or legislation that usurps the authority of local school districts to determine whether their students have earned a high school diploma" for the reasons stated within the resolution.

For more than 10 years, the Centennial School Board has been an advocate for standards-based curriculum and instruction, and rigorous local assessment of student proficiency. On behalf of our students, we urge you to critically question any proposal that lessens the importance of local assessments of proficiency.

Sincerely,



Michael J. Masko, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

MJM/caj
Attachment
pc: Mr. Monaghan

Centennial School District

An Equal Opportunity Employer

Superintendent

433 Centennial Road
Warminster, PA 18974-5455



Phone: 215-441-6000 x 3049

www.centennialsd.org

CENTENNIAL BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS WORK/REGULAR SESSION MEETING – FEBRUARY 26, 2008

BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE CENTENNIAL SCHOOL BOARD APPROVES THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION OPPOSING PROPOSED HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION COMPETENCY ASSESSMENTS:

WHEREAS, the State Board of Education has approved a proposal to revise the current high school graduation requirements under the Chapter 4 regulations to require students to pass a series of standardized high stakes Graduation Competency Assessments in order to get a diploma; and

WHEREAS, these new requirements and exams will be the same for all students, whether they are taking college prep or vocational courses, are English language learners or participating in individualized programs, and all students effectively will be required to take the same courses in order to pass this new battery of state tests; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 4 currently allows districts to use either the PSSA or rigorous local assessments for their students to demonstrate proficiency of the state academic standards; and it is misleading and incorrect to make the assumption that because students demonstrate their achievements on local assessments rather than the PSSA that there is a disconnect between proficiency and graduation; and

WHEREAS, although the GCA proposal permits schools to use a local assessment option, it establishes numerous limitations, including the elimination of the ability to use various assessment strategies now available to local entities and requires local tests to be closely modeled to the GCAs; and

WHEREAS, decades of research shows many reasons why standardized pencil and paper test scores should never be the determining factor in making major decisions about students, and that a diploma should be granted based on the coursework, tests and quizzes, presentations, projects and papers throughout the student's career; and

WHEREAS, the State Board of Education has not prepared a cost analysis or fiscal note, even though this will create a large financial impact on state and local budgets, and the State Board's own costing-out study did not include the costs for this new system and found that the state already is \$4.4 billion short in helping school districts prepare students to meet the academic standards by 2014; and