

Susan Longo  
80 Donna Drive  
Pittsburgh, PA 15237

RECEIVED

2008 APR 16 AM 9:19

Date April 10, 2008

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
REVIEW COMMISSION

Mr. Kim Kaufman, Executive Director  
The Independent Regulatory Review Commission  
333 Market Street, 14<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17101

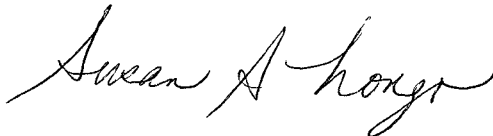
Dear Mr. Kaufman:

I have recently become aware of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education's proposal to create mandatory Graduation Competency Assessments in ten subject areas for all students in Pennsylvania. I am writing to tell you that I oppose the use of additional mandatory testing in order for a student to receive their high school diploma. I believe that a student should be judged worthy of a graduation diploma based on the entire body of a student's academic career, not a single test, or a series of tests. I am concerned that this kind of approach to graduation will lead to higher drop-out rates for students who struggle academically, or for those who have test phobias, and will lead teachers to teach to a particular test.

As a parent and a taxpayer of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, I hope that you will carefully consider these concerns, oppose the adoption of these tests, and encourage your colleagues to do the same.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



## Hoffman, Stephen F.

---

**From:** Kaufman, Kim  
**Sent:** Monday, March 17, 2008 9:18 AM  
**To:** 'Roslyn Munsch'; musto@pasenate.com; mturzai@pahousegop.com; jorie@pasen.gov; jroebuck@pahousegop.com; jrhoades@pasen.gov; jstairs@pahousegop.com  
**Cc:** Outreach; Wilmarth, Fiona E.; Johnson, Leslie A. Lewis; Emery, Heather  
**Subject:** RE: Graduation Competency Assessments - PLEASE VOTE NO

Ms. Munch,

Thank you for your comments. At this point I don't believe that IRRC has received the proposed regulation.

Once the regulation is published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin, you may wish to resubmit your comments during the public comment period. I encourage you to make sure that you direct your comments to both the promulgating agency as well as us at IRRC.

Once we at IRRC receive the regulation for review you may also follow developments on our website at "[www.irrc.state.pa.us](http://www.irrc.state.pa.us)". Through our website you will be able to monitor the regulation and view any comments on the regulation from the legislature, the general public and IRRC.

If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me or any of the staff at IRRC.

Best regards,

Kim Kaufman  
Executive Director  
IRRC

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Roslyn Munsch [mailto:[roslynmunsch@verizon.net](mailto:roslynmunsch@verizon.net)]  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 16, 2008 10:34 PM  
**To:** musto@pasenate.com; mturzai@pahousegop.com; jorie@pasen.gov; jroebuck@pahousegop.com; jrhoades@pasen.gov; jstairs@pahousegop.com; Kaufman, Kim  
**Subject:** Graduation Competency Assessments - PLEASE VOTE NO

I have recently become aware of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education's proposal to create mandatory Graduation Competency Assessments in ten subject areas for all students in Pennsylvania. I am writing to tell you that I oppose the use of additional mandatory testing in order for a student to receive their high school diploma. I believe that a student should be judged worthy of a graduation diploma based on the entire body of a student's academic career, not a single test, or a series of tests. I am concerned that this kind of approach to graduation will lead to higher drop-out rates for students who struggle academically, or for those who have test phobias, and will lead teachers to teach to a particular test.

As a parent and a taxpayer of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, I hope that you will carefully consider these concerns, oppose the adoption of these tests, and encourage your colleagues to do the same.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Roslyn M Munsch

Vice-President  
Support Technology Inc  
1622 Country Club Drive  
Pittsburgh, PA 15237  
Office: 412-630-9404

Fax: 412-630-9405

RECEIVED

2002 MAR 17 AM 9:23

INVEST. ...  
FEB 11

## Hoffman, Stephen F.

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**From:** Kaufman, Kim  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 15, 2008 4:03 PM  
**To:** 'jfineschmidt@aol.com'; 'mturzai@pahousegop.com'; 'jorie@pasen.gov';  
'musto@pasenate.com'; 'jrhoades@pasen.gov'; 'jroebuck@pahousegop.com';  
'jstairs@pahousegop.com'  
**Cc:** Outreach; Wilmarth, Fiona E.  
**Subject:** Re: Graduation Competency Assessments

Ms. Fine-Schmidt,  
Thank you for your comments. At this point I don't believe that IRRC has received the proposed regulation.

Once the regulation is published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin, you may wish to resubmit your comments during the public comment period. I encourage you to make sure that you direct your comments to both the promulgating agency as well as us at IRRC.

Once we at IRRC receive the regulation for review you may also follow developments on our website at "www.irrc.state.pa.us" . Through our website you will be able to monitor the regulation and view any comments on the regulation from the legislature, the general public and IRRC.

If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me or any of the staff at IRRC.

Best regards,

Kim Kaufman  
Executive Director  
IRRC

----- Original Message -----

From: jfineschmidt@aol.com <jfineschmidt@aol.com>  
To: mturzai@pahousegop.com <mturzai@pahousegop.com>; jorie@pasen.gov <jorie@pasen.gov>;  
musto@pasenate.com <musto@pasenate.com>; jrhoades@pasen.gov <jrhoades@pasen.gov>;  
jroebuck@pahousegop.com <jroebuck@pahousegop.com>; jstairs@pahousegop.com  
<jstairs@pahousegop.com>; Kaufman, Kim  
Sent: Sat Mar 15 15:46:11 2008  
Subject: Graduation Competency Assessments

Jennifer A. Fine-Schmidt, RN  
10057 Old Perry Highway  
Wexford, PA 15090

March 15, 2008

Dear Sirs and Madam:

I have recently become aware of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education's proposal to create mandatory Graduation Competency Assessments in ten subject areas for all students in Pennsylvania. I am writing to inform you that I strongly oppose the use of additional mandatory testing in order for a student to receive a high school diploma. The granting of a diploma to a student should be based on the individual's academic achievement though out the course of his or her education and successfully attaining passing grades in the classes required by the school districts for graduation. The current requirements for graduation are based on directives from the Pennsylvania Board of Education. By requiring a student to pass a test or series of tests to graduate only adds unnecessary stress and will impede many students, particularly those who are struggling academically or have difficulty with standardized testing, from graduating.

As the parent of a child with Asperger's Syndrome, which is a high functioning form of autism, my son spends several hours daily to complete homework and projects that would take a child without a disability much less time. He is, however, graded on the same

criteria and is achieving high grades due to his effort and the encouragement of his teachers and parents. My son is not in any special education classes and receives only minimal services, such as taking his tests in a quiet atmosphere to allow him to concentrate. He does not test well on the PSSA tests or other standardized tests, including IQ tests. Yet he achieves grades and has knowledge that would not be expected from someone with the IQ scores he receives on those tests.

As a parent and taxpayer, as well as a health care provider, in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, I hope that you will carefully consider my concerns and oppose the adoption of these tests, and encourage your colleagues to do the same. Please feel free to contact me at [jfineschmidt@aol.com](mailto:jfineschmidt@aol.com) <<mailto:jfineschmidt@aol.com>> regarding any questions, comments, or updates regarding this matter. I appreciate you time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Jennifer A. Fine-Schmidt, RN

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Supercharge your AIM. Get the AIM toolbar <<http://download.aim.com/client/aimtoolbar?NCID=aolcmp00300000002586>> for your browser.

RECEIVED

2003 MAR 17 AM 9:23

MOBILE  
EBCN

**Hoffman, Stephen F.**

**From:** Kaufman, Kim  
**Sent:** Monday, March 17, 2008 11:47 AM  
**To:** 'BobbieReed16@aol.com'  
**Cc:** Outreach; Wilmarth, Fiona E.; Johnson, Leslie A. Lewis; Emery, Heather  
**Subject:** RE: Graduation Competency Assessment Proposal

Ms. Reed,

Thank you for your comments. At this point I don't believe that IRRC has received the proposed regulation.

Once the regulation is published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin, you may wish to resubmit your comments during the public comment period. I encourage you to make sure that you direct your comments to both the promulgating agency as well as us at IRRC.

Once we at IRRC receive the regulation for review you may also follow developments on our website at "[www.irrc.state.pa.us](http://www.irrc.state.pa.us)". Through our website you will be able to monitor the regulation and view any comments on the regulation from the legislature, the general public and IRRC.

If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me or any of the staff at IRRC.

Best regards,  
Kim Kaufman  
Executive Director  
IRRC

-----Original Message-----

**From:** BobbieReed16@aol.com [mailto:BobbieReed16@aol.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 17, 2008 10:08 AM  
**To:** Kaufman, Kim  
**Subject:** Graduation Competency Assessment Proposal

March 17, 2008

Roberta Reed  
9913 LeGrand Drive  
Wexford, PA 15090

RECEIVED  
2008 MAR 17 AM 11:54  
INDEPENDENT REGULATORY REVIEW COMMISSION

Mr. Kim Kaufman, Executive Director  
The Independent Regulatory Review Commission  
333 Market Street, 14<sup>th</sup> floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Dear Mr. Kaufman:

I have recently become aware of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education's proposal to create mandatory Graduation Competency Assessments in ten subject areas for all students in Pennsylvania. I am writing to tell you that I oppose the use of additional mandatory testing in order for a student to receive their high school diploma. I believe that a student should be judged worthy of a graduation diploma based on the entire body of a student's academic career, not a single test, or a series of tests. I am concerned that this kind of approach to graduation will lead to higher drop-out rates for students who struggle academically, or for those who have test phobias, and will lead teachers to teach to a particular

test.

As a parent and a taxpayer of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, I hope that you will carefully consider these concerns, oppose the adoption of these tests, and encourage your colleagues to do the same.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Roberta S. Reed

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It's Tax Time! [Get tips, forms and advice on AOL Money & Finance.](#)

## Hoffman, Stephen F.

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**From:** Kaufman, Kim  
**Sent:** Monday, March 17, 2008 11:45 AM  
**To:** 'Cottone, Jim'; mturzai@pahousegop.com; jorie@pasen.gov; musto@pasenate.com; jroebuck@pahousegop.com; jrhoades@pasen.gov; jstairs@pahousegop.com  
**Cc:** Outreach; Wilmarth, Fiona E.; Johnson, Leslie A. Lewis; Emery, Heather  
**Subject:** RE: Graduation Competency Assessments - GCA

Mr. Cottone,

Thank you for your comments. At this point I don't believe that IRRC has received the proposed regulation.

Once the regulation is published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin, you may wish to resubmit your comments during the public comment period. I encourage you to make sure that you direct your comments to both the promulgating agency as well as us at IRRC.

Once we at IRRC receive the regulation for review you may also follow developments on our website at "[www.irc.state.pa.us](http://www.irc.state.pa.us)". Through our website you will be able to monitor the regulation and view any comments on the regulation from the legislature, the general public and IRRC.

If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me or any of the staff at IRRC.

Best regards,

Kim Kaufman  
Executive Director  
IRRC

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Cottone, Jim [mailto:Cottone\_Ji@willis.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 17, 2008 10:04 AM  
**To:** mturzai@pahousegop.com; jorie@pasen.gov; musto@pasenate.com; jroebuck@pahousegop.com; jrhoades@pasen.gov; jstairs@pahousegop.com; Kaufman, Kim  
**Subject:** Graduation Competency Assessments - GCA

Please see attached

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For information pertaining to Willis' email confidentiality and monitoring policy, usage restrictions, or for specific company registration and regulatory status information, please visit [http://www.willis.com/email\\_trailer.aspx](http://www.willis.com/email_trailer.aspx)

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March 17, 2008

To:

The Honorable Mike Turzai – [mturzai@pahousegop.com](mailto:mturzai@pahousegop.com)

The Honorable Jane Claire Orié – [jorie@pasen.gov](mailto:jorie@pasen.gov)

The Honorable Raphael Musto – [musto@pasenate.com](mailto:musto@pasenate.com)

The Honorable James R. Roebuck, Jr. – [jroebuck@pahousegop.com](mailto:jroebuck@pahousegop.com)

The Honorable James J. Rhodes – [jrhodes@pasen.gov](mailto:jrhodes@pasen.gov)

The Honorable Jess M. Stairs – [jstairs@pahousegop.com](mailto:jstairs@pahousegop.com)

Mr. Kim Kaufman – Independent Regulatory Review Commission – [kkaufman@irrc.state.pa.us](mailto:kkaufman@irrc.state.pa.us)

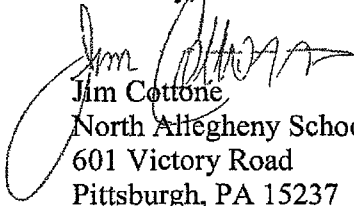
All,

I have recently become aware of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education's proposal to create mandatory Graduation Competency Assessments in ten subject areas for all students in Pennsylvania. I am writing to tell you that I oppose the use of additional mandatory testing in order for a student to receive their high school diploma. I believe that a student should be judged worthy of a graduation diploma based on the entire body of a student's academic career, not a single test, or a series of tests. I am concerned that this kind of approach to graduation will lead to higher drop-out rates for students who struggle academically, or for those who have test phobias, and will lead teachers to teach to a particular test.

As a parent and a taxpayer of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, I hope that you will carefully consider these concerns, oppose the adoption of these tests, and encourage your colleagues to do the same.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



Jim Cottone  
North Allegheny School District  
601 Victory Road  
Pittsburgh, PA 15237

RECEIVED  
2PM MAR 17 PM 1:26  
INDEPT  
PERM  
JTCM  
2008

**Hoffman, Stephen F.**

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**From:** Kaufman, Kim  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 18, 2008 10:58 AM  
**To:** 'youkers'  
**Cc:** Wilmarth, Fiona E.; Outreach; Johnson, Leslie A. Lewis; Emery, Heather  
**Subject:** RE: Graduation Competency Assessments

Ms. Youkers,

Thank you for your comments. At this point I don't believe that IRRC has received the proposed regulation.

Once the regulation is published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin, you may wish to resubmit your comments during the public comment period. I encourage you to make sure that you direct your comments to both the promulgating agency as well as us at IRRC.

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If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me or any of the staff at IRRC.

Best regards,

Kim Kaufman  
Executive Director  
IRRC

-----Original Message-----

**From:** youkers [mailto:youkers@connecttime.net]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 17, 2008 8:54 PM  
**To:** Kaufman, Kim  
**Subject:**

Date: 3/17/08

The Honorable Mr. Kim Kaufman  
Address (see reverse side)

Dear Kim:

I have recently become aware of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education's proposal to create mandatory Graduation Competency Assessments in ten subject areas for all students in Pennsylvania. I am writing to tell you that I oppose the use of additional mandatory testing in order for a student to receive their high school diploma. I believe that a student should be judged worthy of a graduation diploma based on the entire body of a student's academic career, not a single test, or a series of tests. I am concerned that this kind of approach to graduation will lead to higher drop-out rates for students who struggle academically, or for those who have test phobias, and will lead teachers to teach to a particular test.

As a parent and a taxpayer of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, I hope that you will carefully consider these concerns, oppose the adoption of these tests, and encourage your colleagues to do the same.

3/18/2008

Thank you very much for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Carol Youkers

**Hoffman, Stephen F.**

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**From:** Kaufman, Kim  
**Sent:** Monday, March 24, 2008 8:44 AM  
**To:** 'dougmeredith@comcast.net'  
**Cc:** Wilmarth, Fiona E.; Johnson, Leslie A. Lewis; Outreach  
**Subject:** RE: Mandatory Graduation Competency Assessments

Mr. and Ms. Meredith,

Thank you for your comments. At this point I don't believe that IRRC has received the proposed regulation.

Once the regulation is published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin, you may wish to resubmit your comments during the public comment period. I encourage you to make sure that you direct your comments to both the promulgating agency as well as us at IRRC.

Once we at IRRC receive the regulation for review you may also follow developments on our website at "[www.irrc.state.pa.us](http://www.irrc.state.pa.us)". Through our website you will be able to monitor the regulation and view any comments on the regulation from the legislature, the general public and IRRC.

If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me or any of the staff at IRRC.

Best regards,

Kim Kaufman  
Executive Director  
IRRC

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Meredith, Doug [mailto:dougmeredith@comcast.net]  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 23, 2008 12:12 PM  
**To:** Kaufman, Kim  
**Subject:** Mandatory Graduation Competency Assessments

March 23, 2008

Mr. Kim Kaufman, Executive Director  
The Independent Regulatory Review Commission  
333 Market Street, 14<sup>th</sup> floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Dear Mr. Kaufman,

I have recently become aware of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education's proposal to create mandatory Graduation Competency Assessments in ten subject areas for all students in Pennsylvania. I am writing to tell you that I oppose the use of additional mandatory testing in order for a student to receive their high school diploma. I believe that a student should be judged worthy of a graduation diploma based on the entire body of a student's academic career, not a single test, or a series of tests. I am concerned that this kind of approach to

graduation will lead to higher drop-out rates for students who struggle academically, or for those who have test phobias, and will lead teachers to teach to a particular test.

As a parent and a taxpayer of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, I hope that you will carefully consider these concerns, oppose the adoption of these tests, and encourage your colleagues to do the same.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Doug & Cindy Meredith

**Hoffman, Stephen F.**

---

**From:** Kaufman, Kim  
**Sent:** Monday, March 24, 2008 4:47 PM  
**To:** 'Missy Glass'  
**Cc:** Wilmarth, Fiona E.; Johnson, Leslie A. Lewis; Outreach  
**Subject:** RE: State Board of Education's GCA proposal

Ms. Glass,

Thank you for your comments. At this point I don't believe that IRRC has received the proposed regulation.

Once the regulation is published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin, you may wish to resubmit your comments during the public comment period. I encourage you to make sure that you direct your comments to both the promulgating agency as well as us at IRRC.

Once we at IRRC receive the regulation for review you may also follow developments on our website at "[www.irrc.state.pa.us](http://www.irrc.state.pa.us)". Through our website you will be able to monitor the regulation and view any comments on the regulation from the legislature, the general public and IRRC.

If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me or any of the staff at IRRC.

Best regards,

Kim Kaufman  
Executive Director  
IRRC

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Missy Glass [mailto:mm.glass@verizon.net]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 24, 2008 3:49 PM  
**To:** Kaufman, Kim  
**Subject:** State Board of Education's GCA proposal

March 24, 2008

Mr. Kim Kaufman, Executive Director  
The Independent Regulatory Review Commission  
333 Market Street, 14<sup>th</sup> floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Dear Mr. Kim Kaufman:

I have recently become aware of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education's proposal to create mandatory Graduation Competency Assessments in ten subject areas for all students in Pennsylvania. I am writing to tell you that I oppose the use of additional mandatory testing in order for a student to receive their high school diploma. I believe that a student should be judged worthy of a graduation diploma based on the entire body of a student's academic career, not a single test, or a series of tests. I am concerned that this kind of approach to graduation will lead to higher drop-out rates for students who struggle academically, or for those who have test phobias, and will lead teachers to teach to a particular test.

3/26/2008

As a parent and a taxpayer of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, I hope that you will carefully consider these concerns, oppose the adoption of these tests, and encourage your colleagues to do the same.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Melissa M. Glass  
Parent North Allegheny School District  
Pittsburgh PA 15237

**Hoffman, Stephen F.**

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**From:** Kaufman, Kim  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 26, 2008 12:33 PM  
**To:** 'Karl and Bernadette Schwartz'  
**Cc:** Outreach; Wilmarth, Fiona E.; Johnson, Leslie A. Lewis; Emery, Heather  
**Subject:** RE: Graduation Competency Assessments

Ms. Schwartz,

Thank you for your comments. At this point I don't believe that IRRC has received the proposed regulation.

Once the regulation is published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin, you may wish to resubmit your comments during the public comment period. I encourage you to make sure that you direct your comments to both the promulgating agency as well as us at IRRC.

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If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me or any of the staff at IRRC.

Best regards,

Kim Kaufman  
Executive Director  
IRRC

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Karl and Bernadette Schwartz [mailto:kandbschwartz@zoominternet.net]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 26, 2008 11:36 AM  
**To:** Kaufman, Kim  
**Subject:** Graduation Competency Assessments  
**Importance:** High

March 26, 2008

Mr. Kim Kaufman, Executive Director  
The Independent Regulatory Review Commission  
333 Market Street, 14<sup>th</sup> floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Dear Mr. Kaufman:

3/26/2008

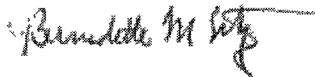


I have recently become aware of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education's proposal to create mandatory Graduation Competency Assessments in ten subject areas for all students in Pennsylvania. I am writing to tell you that I oppose the use of additional mandatory testing in order for a student to receive their high school diploma. I believe that a student should be judged worthy of a graduation diploma based on the entire body of a student's academic career, not a single test, or a series of tests. I am concerned that this kind of approach to graduation will lead to higher drop-out rates for students who struggle academically, or for those who have test phobias, and will lead teachers to teach to a particular test.

As a parent of two children who will be affected by this and a taxpayer of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, I hope that you will carefully consider these concerns, oppose the adoption of these tests, and encourage your colleagues to do the same.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bernadette M. Schwartz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line extending from the end.

Bernadette M. Schwartz  
278 Seasons Dr.  
Wexford, PA 15090

**Hoffman, Stephen F.**

---

**From:** Kaufman, Kim  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 27, 2008 11:59 AM  
**To:** 'The Aiken Family'  
**Cc:** Outreach; Wilmarth, Fiona E.; Johnson, Leslie A. Lewis; Emery, Heather  
**Subject:** RE: No more Tests

Dear Ms. Aiken,

Thank you for your comments. At this point I don't believe that IRRC has received the proposed regulation.

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If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me or any of the staff at IRRC.

Best regards,

Kim Kaufman  
Executive Director  
IRRC

-----Original Message-----

**From:** The Aiken Family [mailto:Aikenfamily@comcast.net]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 27, 2008 10:45 AM  
**To:** Kaufman, Kim  
**Subject:** No more Tests

3/21/08

Mr. Kim Kaufman  
The Independent Regulatory Review Commission  
333 Market Street, 14<sup>th</sup> floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Dear Mr. Kim Kaufman:

I have recently become aware of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education's proposal to create mandatory Graduation Competency Assessments in ten subject areas for all students in Pennsylvania. I am writing to tell you that I oppose the use of additional mandatory testing in order for a student to receive their high school diploma. I believe that a student should be judged worthy of a graduation diploma based on the entire body of a student's academic career, not a single test, or a series of tests. I am concerned that this kind of approach to graduation will lead to higher drop-out rates for students who struggle academically, or for those who have test phobias, and will lead teachers to teach to a particular test.

As a parent and a taxpayer of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, I hope that you will carefully consider these concerns, oppose the adoption of these tests, and encourage your colleagues to do the same.

3/27/2008

Thank you very much for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,  
**Adrienne Aiken**

**Hoffman, Stephen F.**

---

**From:** Kaufman, Kim  
**Sent:** Monday, March 31, 2008 8:44 AM  
**To:** 'ashawma@aol.com'  
**Cc:** Outreach; Wilmarth, Fiona E.; Johnson, Leslie A. Lewis; Emery, Heather  
**Subject:** RE: PA Mandatory Graduation Competency Assessments

Ms. Shaw,

Thank you for your comments. At this point I don't believe that IRRC has received the proposed regulation.

Once the regulation is published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin, you may wish to resubmit your comments during the public comment period. I encourage you to make sure that you direct your comments to both the promulgating agency as well as us at IRRC.

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If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me or any of the staff at IRRC.

Best regards,

Kim Kaufman  
Executive Director  
IRRC

-----Original Message-----

**From:** ashawma@aol.com [mailto:ashawma@aol.com]  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 29, 2008 4:28 PM  
**To:** Kaufman, Kim  
**Subject:** PA Mandatory Graduation Competency Assessments

Please find attached a letter regarding my concern over the P Mandatory Graduation Competency Assessments.  
Sincerely,  
Mary N. Shaw

---

Planning your summer road trip? Check out [AOL Travel Guides](#).

March 27, 2008

Mr. Kim Kaufman, Executive Director  
The Independent Regulatory Review Commission  
333 Market Street, 14<sup>th</sup> floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Dear Mr. Kaufman:

I have recently become aware of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education's proposal to create mandatory Graduation Competency Assessments in ten subject areas for all students in Pennsylvania. I am writing to tell you that I oppose the use of additional mandatory testing in order for a student to receive their high school diploma. I believe that a student should be judged worthy of a graduation diploma based on the entire body of a student's academic career, not a single test, or a series of tests. I am concerned that this kind of approach to graduation will lead to higher drop-out rates for students who struggle academically, or for those who have test phobias, and will lead teachers to teach to a particular test.

As a parent and a taxpayer of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, I hope that you will carefully consider these concerns, oppose the adoption of these tests, and encourage your colleagues to do the same.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,  
Mary N. Shaw  
1885 Dolphin Drive  
Allison Park, PA 15101  
March 27, 2008

## Hoffman, Stephen F.

---

**From:** Kaufman, Kim  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 02, 2008 3:15 PM  
**To:** 'Olga Pizov'  
**Cc:** Wilmarth, Fiona E.; Outreach; Johnson, Leslie A. Lewis; Emery, Heather  
**Subject:** RE: Graduation Competency Assessments

Ms. Pizov,

Thank you for your comments. At this point I don't believe that IRRC has received the proposed regulation.

Once the regulation is published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin, you may wish to resubmit your comments during the public comment period. I encourage you to make sure that you direct your comments to both the promulgating agency as well as us at IRRC.

Once we at IRRC receive the regulation for review you may also follow developments on our website at "[www.irrc.state.pa.us](http://www.irrc.state.pa.us)". Through our website you will be able to monitor the regulation and view any comments on the regulation from the legislature, the general public and IRRC.

If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me or any of the staff at IRRC.

Best regards,

Kim Kaufman  
Executive Director  
IRRC

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Olga Pizov [mailto:[oroberman@yahoo.com](mailto:oroberman@yahoo.com)]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 02, 2008 2:02 PM  
**To:** Kaufman, Kim  
**Subject:** Graduation Competency Assessments

To Mr. Kim Kaufman:

I have recently become aware of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education's proposal to create mandatory Graduation Competency Assessments in ten subject areas for all students in Pennsylvania. I am writing to tell you that I oppose the use of additional mandatory testing in order for a student to receive their high school diploma. I feel that there are many ongoing problems with the current PSSA testing that must first be ironed out. Since funding is limited let's focus on perfecting the current programs. I have two sons ages 4 and 6. My husband and I both came from the former Soviet Union, and many times we compare the education in Europe to the US. Unfortunately we feel that the increased mandatory testing has not improved the public education. I feel it must start with the education of our teachers. We have many excellent teachers, however, at the same time we have many that have burnt out and are not offering the enthusiasm and effort to our children.

As a parent and a taxpayer of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, I hope that you will carefully consider these concerns, oppose the adoption of these tests, and encourage your colleagues to do the same.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,  
Olga Pizov, RN, MSN, CRNP

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<http://tc.deals.yahoo.com/tc/blockbuster/text5.com>

**Hoffman, Stephen F.**

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**From:** Kaufman, Kim  
**Sent:** Friday, April 04, 2008 12:13 PM  
**To:** 'Sekeres Lynn'  
**Cc:** Wilmarth, Fiona E.; Outreach; Johnson, Leslie A. Lewis; Emery, Heather  
**Subject:** RE: GCA

Ms. Sekeres,

Thank you for your comments. At this point I don't believe that IRRC has received the proposed regulation.

Once the regulation is published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin, you may wish to resubmit your comments during the public comment period. I encourage you to make sure that you direct your comments to both the promulgating agency as well as us at IRRC.

Once we at IRRC receive the regulation for review you may also follow developments on our website at "[www.irrc.state.pa.us](http://www.irrc.state.pa.us)". Through our website you will be able to monitor the regulation and view any comments on the regulation from the legislature, the general public and IRRC.

If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me or any of the staff at IRRC.

Best regards,

Kim Kaufman  
Executive Director  
IRRC

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Sekeres Lynn [mailto:lynnsoso@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 03, 2008 7:02 PM  
**To:** Kaufman, Kim  
**Subject:** GCA

Lynn A. Sekeres  
9242 Highmeadow Road  
Allison Park, PA 15101

Mr. Kim Kaufman, Executive Director  
The Independent Regulatory Review Commission  
333 Market Street, 14<sup>th</sup> floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17101

April 3, 2008

Dear Mr. Kaufman,

I have recently become aware of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education's proposal to create mandatory Graduation Competency Assessments in ten subject areas for all students in Pennsylvania. I am writing to tell you that I oppose the use of additional mandatory testing in order for a student to receive their high school diploma. I believe that a student should be judged worthy of a graduation diploma based on the entire body of a student's academic career, not a single test, or a series of tests. I am concerned that this kind of approach to graduation will lead to higher drop-out

4/4/2008



rates for students who struggle academically, or for those who have test phobias, and will lead teachers to teach to a particular test.

As a parent and a taxpayer of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, I hope that you will carefully consider these concerns, oppose the adoption of these tests, and encourage your colleagues to do the same.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Lynn A. Sekeres

RECEIVED

2008 MAR 24 AM 10:40

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
REVIEW COMMISSION

March 18, 2008

Mr. Kim Kaufman, Executive Director  
The Independent Regulatory Review Commission  
333 Market Street, 14<sup>th</sup> floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Dear Mr. Kim Kaufman,

I have recently become aware of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education's proposal to create mandatory Graduation Competency Assessments in ten subject areas for all students in Pennsylvania. I am writing to tell you that I oppose the use of additional mandatory testing in order for a student to receive their high school diploma. I believe that a student should be judged worthy of a graduation diploma based on the entire body of a student's academic career, not a single test, or a series of tests. I am concerned that this kind of approach to graduation will lead to higher drop-out rates for students who struggle academically, or for those who have test phobias, and will lead teachers to teach to a particular test.

As a parent and a taxpayer of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, I hope that you will carefully consider these concerns, oppose the adoption of these tests, and encourage your colleagues to do the same.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Lisa Motta  
8037 Patricia Drive  
Pittsburgh, PA 15237

---

RECEIVED

Jennifer A. Fine-Schmidt, RN  
10057 Old Perry Highway  
Wexford, PA 15090

2008 MAR 24 AM 10:41

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
REVIEW COMMISSION

March 17, 2008

Mr. Kim Kaufman, Executive Director  
The Independent Regulatory Review Commission  
333 Market Street, 14<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Dear Mr. Kaufman

I have recently become aware of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education's proposal to create mandatory Graduation Competency Assessments in ten subject areas for all students in Pennsylvania. I am writing to inform you that I strongly oppose the use of additional mandatory testing in order for a student to receive a high school diploma. The granting of a diploma to a student should be based on the individual's academic achievement though out the course of his or her education and successfully attaining passing grades in the classes required by the school districts for graduation. The current requirements for graduation are based on directives from the Pennsylvania Board of Education. By requiring a student to pass a test or series of tests to graduate only adds unnecessary stress and will impede many students, particularly those who are struggling academically or have difficulty with standardized testing, from graduating.

As the parent of a child with Asperger's Syndrome, which is a high functioning form of autism, my son spends several hours daily to complete homework and projects that would take a child without a disability much less time. He is, however, graded on the same criteria and is achieving high grades due to his effort and the encouragement of his teachers and parents. My son is not in any special education classes and receives only minimal services, such as taking his tests in a quiet atmosphere to allow him to concentrate. He does not test well on the PSSA tests or other standardized tests, including IQ tests. Yet he achieves grades and has knowledge that would not be expected from someone with the IQ scores he receives on those tests.

As a parent and taxpayer, as well as a health care provider, in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, I hope that you will carefully consider my concerns and oppose the adoption of these tests, and encourage your colleagues to do the same. Please feel free to contact me at [jfineschmidt@aol.com](mailto:jfineschmidt@aol.com) regarding any questions, comments, or updates regarding this matter. I appreciate you time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Jennifer A. Fine-Schmidt, RN

**Maureen Berry Plichta**  
231 Crestmont Road  
Pittsburgh, Pa 15237

RECEIVED

2008 MAR 24 AM 10:40

March 17, 2008

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
REVIEW COMMISSION

**Mr. Kim Kaufman, Executive Director**  
The Independent Regulatory Review Commission  
333 Market Street, 14<sup>th</sup> floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Mr. Kaufman,

***I have recently become aware of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education's proposal to create mandatory Graduation Competency Assessments in ten subject areas for all students in Pennsylvania. I am not comfortable with the use of mandatory testing in order for a student to receive their high school diploma and oppose this. Isn't life a test in itself?***

***Perhaps intervention needs to take place at the elementary level so that a child is not moved on when they are unable to read or write. Perhaps the class room environment is not a healthy one. Perhaps there is a school district that does not have the revenue to provide these services. Perhaps there are not good teachers who are willing to go into a certain area. Perhaps there are teachers who are just not able to teach. There are far more reaching variables out there than what one can judge from a test score. You may be fortunate enough to live in an area where there are good schools.***

***I find it incomprehensible that the government is so focused on making mandates in education, yet they are not making accommodations for the municipalities that need to pay for this. Where will the money come from?***

***There may possibly be a higher drop-out rate for students who struggle academically, is that what we want for our society? You can't pass a test therefore, you are not worthy of a high school diploma.***

***We have all studied for many different things in life and there will always be a question we may not have the answer to. We are individuals with elements that function at different levels, which make us all unique.***

***As a parent and a taxpayer of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, please continue to think outside the box and oppose the adoption of these tests.***

***I appreciate your time and energy and hope that you will do what's right for the students of Pennsylvania.***

Sincerely,



**Maureen Berry Plichta**

RECEIVED

2008 APR 16 AM 9:19

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
REVIEW COMMISSION

April 10, 2008

Mr. Kim Kaufman, Executive Director  
The Independent Regulatory Review Commission  
333 Market Street, 14<sup>th</sup> floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Dear Director Kaufman:

I have recently become aware of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education's proposal to create mandatory Graduation Competency Assessments in ten subject areas for all students in Pennsylvania. I am writing to tell you that I oppose the use of additional mandatory testing in order for a student to receive their high school diploma. I believe that a student should be judged worthy of a graduation diploma based on the entire body of a student's academic career, not a single test, or a series of tests. I am concerned that this kind of approach to graduation will lead to higher drop-out rates for students who struggle academically, or for those who have test phobias, and will lead teachers to teach to a particular test.

As a parent and a taxpayer of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, I hope that you will carefully consider these concerns, oppose the adoption of these tests, and encourage your colleagues to do the same.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

*Helen D. Stiles*

Helen D. Stiles  
10053 Oakridge Drive  
Wexford, PA 15090  
jhstiles@nauticom.net

7030 Bennington Woods Drive  
Pittsburgh, PA 15237  
April 8, 2008

Mr. Kim Kaufman, Executive Director  
The Independent Regulatory Review Commission  
333 Market Street, 14<sup>th</sup> floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Dear Mr. Kaufman:

I have recently become aware of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education's proposal to create mandatory Graduation Competency Assessments in ten subject areas for all students in Pennsylvania. I am writing to tell you that I oppose the use of additional mandatory testing in order for a student to receive their high school diploma. I believe that a student should be judged worthy of a graduation diploma based on the entire body of a student's academic career, not a single test, or a series of tests. I am concerned that this kind of approach to graduation will lead to higher drop-out rates for students who struggle academically, or for those who have test phobias, and will lead teachers to teach to a particular test.

As a parent and a taxpayer of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, I hope that you will carefully consider these concerns, oppose the adoption of these tests, and encourage your colleagues to do the same.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



Michael and Deanna Tomera

RECEIVED  
2009 APR 11 AM 9:11  
INDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
REVIEW COMMISSION

RECEIVED

2008 APR -8 AM 9: 53

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
REVIEW COMMISSION

Lynn A. Sekeres  
9242 Highmeadow Road  
Allison Park, PA 15101

Mr. Kim Kaufman, Executive Director  
The Independent Regulatory Review Commission  
333 Market Street, 14<sup>th</sup> floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17101

April 4, 2008

Dear Mr. Kaufman,

I have recently become aware of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education's proposal to create mandatory Graduation Competency Assessments in ten subject areas for all students in Pennsylvania. I am writing to tell you that I oppose the use of additional mandatory testing in order for a student to receive their high school diploma. I believe that a student should be judged worthy of a graduation diploma based on the entire body of a student's academic career, not a single test, or a series of tests. I am concerned that this kind of approach to graduation will lead to higher drop-out rates for students who struggle academically, or for those who have test phobias, and will lead teachers to teach to a particular test.

As a parent and a taxpayer of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, I hope that you will carefully consider these concerns, oppose the adoption of these tests, and encourage your colleagues to do the same.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



Lynn A. Sekeres

RECEIVED

2008 APR -3 AM 9: 57

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
REVIEW COMMISSION

March 19, 2008

Mr. Kim Kaufman, Executive Director \_\_\_\_\_

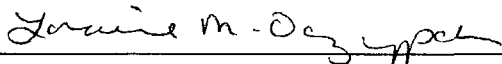
Dear Mr. Kaufman \_\_\_\_\_:

I have recently become aware of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education's proposal to create mandatory Graduation Competency Assessments in ten subject areas for all students in Pennsylvania. I am writing to tell you that I oppose the use of additional mandatory testing in order for a student to receive their high school diploma. I believe that a student should be judged worthy of a graduation diploma based on the entire body of a student's academic career, not a single test, or a series of tests. I am concerned that this kind of approach to graduation will lead to higher drop-out rates for students who struggle academically, or for those who have test phobias, and will lead teachers to teach to a particular test.

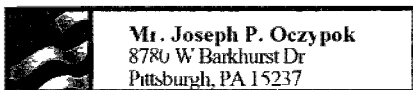
As a parent and a taxpayer of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, I hope that you will carefully consider these concerns, oppose the adoption of these tests, and encourage your colleagues to do the same.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

 \_\_\_\_\_

Loraine M. Oczypok





**Hoffman, Stephen F.**

---

**From:** Kaufman, Kim  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 15, 2008 10:52 AM  
**To:** 'D. Marie Graphics'; mturzai@pahousegop.com; jorie@pasen.gov; musto@pasenate.com; jrhoades@pasen.gov; jroebuck@pahousegop.com; jstairs@pahousegop.com  
**Cc:** Wilmarth, Fiona E.; Outreach; Johnson, Leslie A. Lewis; Emery, Heather  
**Subject:** RE: Mandatory Graduation Competency Assessment

Ms. Kruck,

Thank you for your comments. At this point I don't believe that IRRC has received the proposed regulation.

Once the regulation is published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin, you may wish to resubmit your comments during the public comment period. I encourage you to make sure that you direct your comments to both the promulgating agency as well as us at IRRC.

IRRC is not in a position to explain the promulgating agency's rationale for the regulation; however, we will review the regulation upon its receipt here and we appreciate any comments you may wish to make.

Once we at IRRC receive the regulation for review you may also follow developments on our website at "[www.irrc.state.pa.us](http://www.irrc.state.pa.us)". Through our website you will be able to monitor the regulation and view any comments on the regulation from the legislature, the general public and IRRC.

If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me or any of the staff at IRRC.

Best regards,

Kim Kaufman  
Executive Director  
IRRC

-----Original Message-----

**From:** D. Marie Graphics [mailto:deanna.kruck@city-net.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, April 14, 2008 10:46 AM  
**To:** mturzai@pahousegop.com; jorie@pasen.gov; musto@pasenate.com; jrhoades@pasen.gov; jroebuck@pahousegop.com; jstairs@pahousegop.com; Kaufman, Kim  
**Cc:** D. Marie Graphics  
**Subject:** Mandatory Graduation Competency Assessment

It has recently been brought to my attention that there may be plans for PA Board of Education to institute a mandatory assessment for all students which will ultimately decide whether they graduate or not.

I would like for someone to explain to me, without the governmental propaganda ie beating around the bush attitudes as to why this course of action would benefit our children.

What would be the point of the schools grades? Technically could passing the test could qualify them for graduation what if the grades are not there? What would this do to the children with problems taking tests due to fears/phobias? or to the pressure that this one test would create on "this decides your entire future?"

4/15/2008

Is this not just teaching our kids to pass tests instead of teaching our children to learn (not learning how to pass a certain test)  
SAT case in point, there are classes cliff notes etc designed to teach children how to do well on the test. What does that really measure. Will this test be a hinderance to those children who do not have the designs to follow a college prep course making it difficult for those children to succeed? What type of drop our rate will this create? Shouldn't the child's academic career prove their worthiness to graduate instead of a single test?

As a parent of children that this decision will directly effect, and as a taxpayer, I do expect that not only my concerns be considered as you decide the path....fate of my and other children, but you address my concerns by emailing me a response.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Deanna Kruck

**Cooper, Kathy**

**From:** skpsu@aol.com  
**Sent:** Friday, January 18, 2008 12:34 AM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Cc:** caroline.allen@verizon.net  
**Subject:** Comment on Chapter 4 Regulations from PA PTA

RECEIVED

2008 JAN 18 AM 11:00

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
COMMISSION

To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Suzy Gerst and I am the Treasurer for Pennsylvania Parent Teacher Association (PTA). The attached is my testimony that I presented to the State Board of Education at the Chapter 4 hearing on January 9, 2008. I am submitting it to the Commission for consideration during the public comment period for Chapter 4. If you have any questions please contact me. On behalf of PA PTA and our approximately 90 thousand members, thank you for considering our position on Chapter 4.

Sincerely,  
Suzy Gerst  
Pennsylvania PTA Treasurer  
1048 Teal Drive  
Pittsburgh, PA 15236  
412-882-8426  
skpsu@aol.com

---

... e new features than ever. Check out the new [AOL Mail!](#)

Good Afternoon. My name is Suzy Gerst, I am the treasurer for the Pennsylvania Parent Teacher Association. I am honored to provide testimony today on behalf of approximately ninety thousand members within the Commonwealth on the proposed revision to State High School Graduation requirements as provided in Chapter 4.

Graduation from high school is the foundation for future success in college and the workplace. Therefore, decisions about whether or not a student will graduate should be made in the most thoughtful way. Pennsylvania PTA applauds The Pennsylvania State Board of Education's commitment to high school reform, making the high school diploma more meaningful, and increasing rigor. Pennsylvania PTA supports high school curriculum that is rigorous and includes optional advance placement courses in the core subject areas, as well as preserves and improves quality education in all public schools for every child.

Over the past decade, high school exit exams have grown in popularity stemming from the standards-based reform movement to reinvent the American high school restoring value to the high school diploma, as well as ensuring students succeed in the global world. The Pennsylvania State Board of Education's new Chapter 4 proposal follows this current trend. While the trend is commendable it is not without flaws. Pennsylvania PTA supports the concept of taking final exams/exit exams in core subjects in place of the PSSA exam, but not in addition. Under the new Chapter 4 proposal, students would be taking multiple high stakes tests within the same school year to be deemed proficient in the state standards. Pennsylvania PTA does not support multiple mandated test/assessments given within the same school year and does not support the idea of exit exams or standardized tests as a means to securing a diploma. Furthermore, PTA supports the concept of taking the final exams/exit exams upon completion of the course instead of in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade year. For example, many students take Algebra 1 in their 8<sup>th</sup> grade year, it makes sense to take the final exam at the end of the course while the material is fresh instead of three years later in 11<sup>th</sup> grade.

PTA believes that valid assessment does not consist of only a single test score, and that at no time should a single test be considered the sole determinant of a student's academic or work future, e.g. high school graduation, scholarships, honors programs, or college admissions. PTA opposes the use of a single test as the sole determination of a student graduation. Tests, such as exit exams, are only one factor of a sound assessment program. A test score is not an exact measure of a student's knowledge or skills. Not all students test well, that does mean that they are not proficient. An assessment system built solely on tests and what can be easily measured has the potential of misleading parents and students.

During the past several years, assessment has been expanded to include other variables, called indicators that have an impact on student learning, but are not easily identified or measured. The PTA supports the development of indicators, in addition to student testing, to provide a more balanced representation about educational quality in a particular school district. Indicators such as equity, competency of teaching staff, physical infrastructure, curriculum, class size, instructional methods, existence of

tracking, number of higher cost students, dropout rates, and parental involvement are important in holding schools accountable and monitoring the quality of education.

PTA understands that in the era of NCLB, local measurement alone is no longer an option. The Commonwealth should be requiring some form of evaluation which can be benchmarked across the state. At the same time, the state should be allowing for multiple measures for graduation, taking into account socio-economic, cultural and equity factors.

There are strong indicators that a lack of resources plays a role in the degree to which schools feel compelled to “teach to the test,” especially in high poverty schools. Research has shown that standardized tests have led to negative academic outcomes for students and schools, particularly for those in low-income and minority communities. As the Costing-Out Study has recently confirmed Pennsylvania has an inadequacy problem. High-stakes tests are not fair for children who have been denied the opportunity to learn the material covered on the test. Without significant and adequate investments in educational resources, all children will not have the tools they need to succeed in school, and will not be afforded the opportunity to learn the material covered on assessments. Exit exams will punish students for public schools’ failure to educate them and poor and minority students will particularly be at a disadvantage. Exit exams cannot be implemented in a state that is inadequately funded.

PTA believes that Graduation Competency Assessments (GCAs) must have alternatives in place to allow for different learning styles, particularly struggling learners who may be brilliant but cannot take a test. Other relevant information for all students is also necessary and may include alternative assessments that examine performance in different ways, samples of school work and other elements of students’ school records.

GCAs lead to less depth in curriculum, a decrease in teaching higher-level thinking skills, and a decrease in flexibility in the core curriculum. Standardized tests lead to locked-in teaching. Research indicates that narrowing of the curriculum to focus only on the objectives tested arise as a negative consequence of GCAs. High stakes graduation assessments lead to teachers including more test-preparation strategies in the instructional curriculum. These strategies include practicing sample test questions during class, using old exit exams questions on classroom tests, and spending class time reviewing test-taking skills. Pennsylvania PTA supports broader curriculum and subject matter that does not teach to the test.

According to a 2000 Rand survey, a significant shift in instruction time away from untested subjects including the arts, social studies and health and fitness exists when GCAs are required. Pennsylvania PTA supports an increase emphasis on the teaching of core content areas of English, math, reading/language arts, science, foreign language, arts (art and music) and social studies (economics, history, civics/government and geography) at the elementary, middle and high school levels. Furthermore, Pennsylvania PTA supports an increased number of required physical education courses and physical activity in schools to combat the childhood obesity epidemic.

**Cooper, Kathy**

**From:** Tracey O [tuddie@innernet.net]  
**Sent:** Sunday, January 20, 2008 9:45 PM  
**To:** IRRRC  
**Subject:** NO to Chapter 4 Proposal  
**Importance:** High

RECEIVED

2008 JAN 22 AM 11:21

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
REVENUE

**I do not support the Chapter 4 proposal and I think this proposed change is wrong. Here are some reasons why I feel this way.**

- Valid assessment does not consist of only a single test score.
- Tests, such as exit exams, are only one factor of a sound assessment program.
- A test score is not an exact measure of a student's knowledge or skills.
- Not all students test well, that does not mean that they are not proficient.
- Multiple measurers should be used for graduation.
- Standardized tests lead to negative academic outcomes for students and schools, particularly for those in low-income and minority communities.
- Many struggling learners may be brilliant but cannot take a test.
- GCAs lead to less depth in curriculum, a decrease in teaching higher-level thinking skills, and a decrease in flexibility in the core curriculum.
- Narrowing of the curriculum to focus on the objectives tested arise as a negative consequence of GCAs.
- High stakes graduation assessment leads to teachers including more test-preparation, drilling and pre-testing in the instructional curriculum to ensure success on either the PSSA or the GCAs.
- There is a significant shift in instruction time away from untested subjects including the arts and health and fitness when GCAs are required.
- Diplomas should not be withheld from students based on a single test.
- Under the current Chapter 4 Regulations local assessment consists of 9 different ways that a school district could determine a student's graduation. The new Chapter 4 proposal offers 1.
- There is a cost to develop the new GCA examinations, model curriculum and training. One would have to question where the money will come from given that the costing-out study has recently revealed that the state's public schools are being under funded to the tune of \$4.4 billion dollars. GCAs cannot be implemented in a state that is inadequately funded.

**Thank you,**

Tracey Overcash  
Guilford Hills Elem PTA President  
10 GreenLea Way  
Chambersburg PA 17202-4461  
(717) 352-8006  
mtdovercash@innernet.net  
www.chambersburg.k12.pa.us/guilfordhills

**Cooper, Kathy**

RECEIVED

**From:** Lisa Mandell [dondell@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 29, 2008 9:40 AM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** proposed Chapter 4 graduation requirements

2008 JAN 29 AM 9:41

INCREASING

I would like to express my opposition to requiring testing as a graduation requirement as specified in the proposed Chapter 4 regulations.

I have a child in public elementary school, and I have been a college professor. I am keenly aware that standardized tests do not always provide an accurate assessment of students' knowledge or ability. To use a standardized test as the only requirement for graduation will serve our students and our state poorly. There are many issues I have with this approach:

- \*One test (even if taken multiple times) does not always provide a valid assessment.
- \*Students' learning should be measured in many ways, not just by a single test.
- \*Increasing the stakes tied to testing increases teachers' need to "teach to the test," losing opportunity for teachers to be creative, seize local opportunities for learning, and best meet the needs of their students
- \*Adding testing into the school year reduces the time available for learning, especially where teachers spend additional time on test preparation.
- \*Increased reliance on tests such as this draw resources away from other critically important areas of learning for our students, such as art, music, physical education, and more.
- \*Increased testing requires increased funding to the school districts to cover the financial costs of testing -- is the legislature also providing necessary funding?

I hope you will reevaluate this proposal for changing the graduation requirements in Chapter 4.

Thank you.

Lisa Mandell  
2459 Wynnefield Drive  
Havertown, PA 19083  
[dondell@gmail.com](mailto:dondell@gmail.com)

**Cooper, Kathy**

om: tallalg@comcast.net  
 sent: Tuesday, February 26, 2008 1:56 PM  
 To: IRRC  
 Cc: jpippy@pasen.gov  
 Subject: Chapter 4 Action

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2008 FEB 26 PM 2:13

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FILE

*As a concerned Parent, I would like to state a comment regarding the C.4.A. Hopefully, this will help, I will make it brief.*

*With the the No Child Left Behind Act, I have found this has left my child behind. The curriculum from 5 years ago is well advanced and very difficult to get through without a tutor or an enormous amount of overwhelming homework. You can add tests and advance the curriculum our children are still the same age with age appropriate brain capacity. All these changes only create undo stress and tears on these young children. I remember loving and looking forward to school and to come home. Now they come home in fear of more testing, homework, projects, etc.*

*I DO NOT SUPPORT THE C.4.A. You cannot administer one test to determine a student's academic future. That would not be a fair or valid assessment. Unfair to children who are capable but have been forced to be apprehensive to continue their hard work due to the current curriculum and homework load. Also, there is enough testing, our children are not numbers to be counted with they are beautiful, growing "human beings".*

*Lorena Golias*



Mr. and Mrs. Donald J. Huber, Jr.  
2181 Ben Franklin Drive  
Pittsburgh, PA 15237  
March 14, 2008

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INDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
REVIEW COMMISSION

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

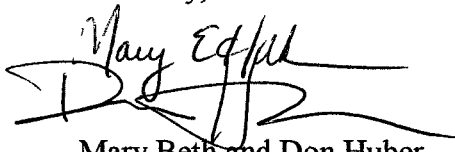
Dear Ms. Kaufman:

We are writing to express our opposition to the current proposal to mandate Graduation Competency Assessments (GCA) in Pennsylvania. We are the parents of four wonderful kids who are already required to take and pass many, many tests including the PSSA series of evaluations required by the No Child Left Behind legislation.

The PA Board of Education's proposal to add ten more competency test is unrealistic, unnecessary, and unwise. We worry that requiring these new tests will dilute our children's rich educational experience because schools will "teach to the tests" rather than offer a curriculum based on best educational practices. These new tests may also lead to higher drop-out rates for at risk students. It would be a mistake to tie the earning of a high school diploma to performance on one series of tests.

As taxpayers and parents we can not afford to allow these new tests to be adopted. Please consider opposing the Board of Education's GCA proposal and be a voice of reason for our state and for our children.

Sincerely,



Mary Beth and Don Huber  
McCandless Township, PA

**From:** thunder3@comcast.net  
**Sent:** Friday, January 18, 2008 12:51 PM  
**To:** IRRC  
**Subject:** Chapter 4 Academic Standards and Assessment

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2008 JAN 18 PM 3: 48

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
REVENUE COMMISSION

- To Whom It May Concern,

I do not agree with the Chapter 4 Academic Standards and Assessment which will impose the passing of a test which will determine if my children deserve a diploma.

I agree with the Pennsylvania's PTA position which does not support Chapter 4 Academic Standards and Assessment for the following reasons:

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- Valid assessment does not consist of only a single test score.
- Tests, such as exit exams, are only one factor of a sound assessment program.
- A test score is not an exact measure of a student's knowledge or skills.
- Not all students test well, that does not mean that they are not proficient.
- Multiple measurers should be used for graduation.
- Standardized tests lead to negative academic outcomes for students and schools, particularly for those in low-income and minority communities.
- Many struggling learners may be brilliant but cannot take a test.
- GCAs lead to less depth in curriculum, a decrease in teaching higher-level thinking skills, and a decrease in flexibility in the core curriculum.
- Narrowing of the curriculum to focus on the objectives tested arise as a negative consequence of GCAs.
- High stakes graduation assessment leads to teachers including more test-preparation, drilling and pre-testing in the instructional curriculum to ensure success on either the PSSA or the GCAs.
- There is a significant shift in instruction time away from untested subjects including the arts and health and fitness when GCAs are required.
- Diplomas should not be withheld from students based on a single test.
- Under the current Chapter 4 Regulations local assessment consists of 9 different ways that a school district could determine a student's graduation. The new Chapter 4 proposal offers 1.
- There is a cost to develop the new GCA examinations, model curriculum and training. One would have to question where the money will come from given that the costing-out study has recently revealed that the state's public schools are being under funded to the tune of \$4.4 billion dollars. GCAs cannot be implemented in a state that is inadequately funded.

Thank you,  
 K. C.