

**RESOLUTION OPPOSING PROPOSED HIGH SCHOOL
GRADUATION COMPETENCY ASSESSMENTS BY
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE MT. LEBANON SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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 proposal infringes upon the local control of public school districts vested in locally elected school boards. The Pennsylvania School Code supports the statutorily defined autonomy of local school boards to determine curriculum and graduation requirements. The "implied right" as vested in the General Assembly will be stripped as this proposal forces curriculum to a statewide, one-size-fits-all approach. This narrowing of the curriculum reduces educational opportunities for students in areas such as music, arts, forensics and foreign languages, 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

WHEREAS, the proposal requires school districts to absorb many new costs related to revising curriculum, professional development, test development and validation, test preparation and administration, remediation and other costs. Given the state's funding shortfall and the Act 1 limitations on tax increases, school districts have limited ability to fund these potential new costs.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of School Directors of Mt. Lebanon School District, a member of the South Hills Area School District Association (SHASDA), **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. This resolution will be shared with the State Board of Education, state legislators including local legislators and members of the Senate and House Education Committees, and the Independent Regulatory Review Commission.

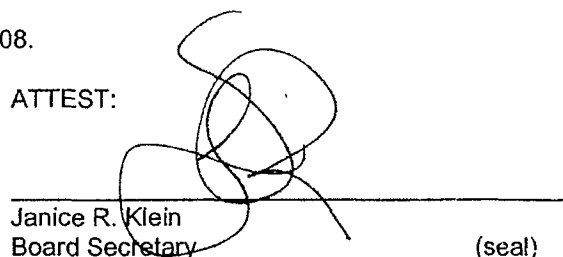
Adopted this 18 day of February, 2008.

Signed



Mark S. Hart
School Board President

ATTEST:



Janice R. Klein
Board Secretary

(seal)

Kraus, Mary Ann

From: Jeanine Szalinski [JSzalinski@mtlisd.net]
Sent: Wednesday, March 05, 2008 9:46 AM
To: Kraus, Mary Ann; cindy.eckerd@psba.org
Subject: Resolution
Attachments: Graduation Requirement Resolution 2-18-08.pdf

Attached please find a copy of the GCA resolution passed by the Mt. Lebanon Board of School Directors on February 18, 2008. The following board members approved the resolution:

Mark A. Hart, President
Alan R. Silhol, Vice President
Elaine L. Cappucci
James M. Fraasch
Edward L. Kubit
Josephine C. Posti
Daniel L. Remely
Susan M. Rose
Faith Ann Stipanovich

Jeanine Szalinski
Administrative Assistant
Superintendent's Office
Mt. Lebanon School District
7 Horsman Drive
Pittsburgh PA 15228
412.344.2077
412.344.2047 (fax)

CC: [Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]