

#2696

A RESOLUTION  
OF THE  
BUTLER COUNTY AREA VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SCHOOL  
OPPOSING MANDATE OF  
PA SYSTEM OF SCHOOL ASSESSMENT (PSSA) /  
GRADUATION COMPETENCY ASSESSMENTS (GCA's)  
AS A STATE GRADUATION REQUIREMENT

RECEIVED

MAY - 8 REC'D

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
REVIEW COMMISSION

**WHEREAS**, the Joint Operating Committee of the Butler County Area Vocational-Technical School District, recognize the significance of accountability, the need for high academic standards, and assessment of such for providing Adequate Yearly Progress as per The No Child Left Behind Act. We wish to affirm our opposition to the newly proposed concept of mandating the PSSA/GCA's as a high school graduation requirement.

9:33 AM

The PSSA throughout the years has been shown to contain significant irregularities and serious flaws in scoring and processing that invalidate the test to be utilized as a high stakes exam for the purposes of students demonstrating proficiency of the academic standards as well as for graduation purposes. Past experiences, as well as, the multiple uses of PSSA scores and consequence established throughout the years have raised considerable concerns over the high stakes nature of the test.

**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 GCA's 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**, 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 GCA's; 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 ever-expanding requirements placed on the seven Butler County Area Vocational-Technical School participating school districts greatly reduces the ability for career and technical education students to meet graduation requirements at the home school district and thereby requires students to eliminate career and technical education curriculum from their schedule; and

**WHEREAS**, the increase in graduation requirements greatly reduces the ability to participate in career and technical education programs and greatly diminishes the opportunity for students to enter the workforce with appropriate training and skills; and

**WHEREAS**, the provisions established by Act 1 force school districts to ignore career and technical school improvements in order to meet budgeting restraints; and

**WHEREAS**, career and technical education is greatly responsible for enabling students to remain in school thereby reducing the drop out rate; and

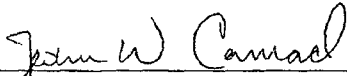
**WHEREAS**, career and technical education at the high school level helps meet workforce demands for a competitive economy; and

**WHEREAS**, career and technical education is required to assess completers after a minimum of two years of training using National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) or alternative assessments that demonstrate workforce readiness. These requirements continue to go unfunded.

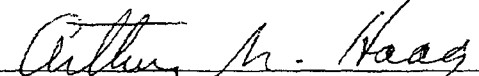
**Now THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Butler County Area Vocational-Technical School Joint Operating Committee **opposes the State Board of Education's proposal to enact Graduation Competency Assessments** and any other regulation or legislation that usurps the authority of local school districts 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.

Resolution adopted by the Butler County Area Vocational-Technical School Joint Operating Committee at its public meeting on May 1, 2008.

SIGNED:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
John Conrad, Vice-Chairperson  
Joint Operating Committee

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Arthur Haag, Secretary  
Joint Operating Committee



JTC

**Butler County Area Vocational-Technical School**  
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