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Buckheit, James

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From: toma4321 [toma4321@peoplepc.com]
Sent: Tuesday, June 17, 2008 10:41 AM
To: j buckheit@state.pa.us
Subject: **2696** High Stake Exit Exams

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INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

Dear Mr. Buckheit;

I am a vocational teacher in a Pennsylvania Career and Technology school. I am amazed that the State Board of Education would even consider the 10 exit exams. We all are aware of how the Federal Mandate of No Child Left Behind has worked. The one size fits all concept is inconceivable. Pa. educational system does not need new testing methods, what it needs is people from within our public schools to have more input in education policy and not Board making these decisions on their own. In my experience as a vocational teacher I encounter a high number of at risk students. I work with these students and not only teach them the skills of the trade but also life skills that will enable them to become self sustaining citizens. Many of these students do not test well when it comes to written exams but they do well otherwise. I can not begin to tell you how many parents have come to me through the years and thanked me, when their child graduated. They have told me that their child had struggled all through school and wanted to drop out when he/she came of age. Because of the vocational opportunity, I am proud to say these students graduated and now are gainfully employed. If the state places new hurdles such as these additional test before students, I believe you will see the drop out rate increase ten fold. I know that many of the students that I have had the pleasure of educating through the years would have never passed these exams.

Former Secretary Zogby was instrumental in the idea of NCLB which is a disaster and I believe if Pennsylvania follows this testing path the outcome will be the same.

If this is something the Governor has embraced, based solely on Secretary Zahorchak and Policy Advisor Donna Cooper's recommendation, I suggest public hearings be held throughout the state for input from the citizens.

The other question I must ask is this another way to line the pockets of companies who develop and market the tests such as ETS or NOCTI.

I fully agree that if we want to promote economic development in this state we must invest in training a skilled workforce but there are better ways to do it than this proposed testing.

I would have to say that at least 50% of the information that I was required to learn in High School has been totally useless. Pennsylvania Public schools have a terrible track record and society often blames it on teachers, when the fault equally lies with the Administration of Education at the state level. Do not interpret that I am unhappy with Governor Rendell because the problems existed long before he took office. In my opinion every single detail or change in education regulation, policies and law should be debated in the open on the House and the Senate floors so that the masses listen and have a voice. Decisions should not be made by a few hand picked people serving on the Board of Education. Sincerely Dave Wilson

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