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INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

Joan M. Thomas
2716 Pine Valley Lane
Ardmore, PA 19003-1719

June 11, 2008

Jim Buckheit
1st Floor, Harristown 2
333 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17126

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JUN 18 2008

**PA. STATE BOARD
OF EDUCATION**

Re: Oppose Graduation Regulations

Dear Mr. Buckheit:

As an advocate for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities, I want you to know that I oppose the proposed "graduation competency assessment" regulations.

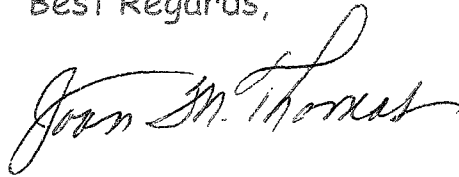
For students with IEPs, the regulations require them to take the test, but the regs exempt them from having to earn a "proficient" grade in order to graduate. I believe that students in special education would be harmed because school resources would likely be diverted to prepare general education students for the tests. In addition, I fear the regulation would likely cause a flood of students attempting to get into special education as a way to avoid having to score a "proficient" on the test so that they could graduate. With the increased number of new special education students, time and resources would be diverted from the students who truly need special education services.

Instead of forcing the education system to dedicate more resources to more standardized testing, I believe some leadership ought to be exhibited by the State Board of Education to reverse Pennsylvania's

dismal ranking of 48th when it comes to integrating students with disabilities with their peers without disabilities in general education in their neighborhood schools. Segregating children with disabilities more than almost every other state in the nation should not be a reality that is acceptable to the Board.

Thank you for listening.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joan M. Thomas". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a large initial 'J' and 'T'.

Joan M. Thomas
610-896-7519