

Buckheit, James

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From: Charles Murslack [murslack@zoominternet.net] 2008 JUN 30 AM 9: 44
Sent: Monday, June 16, 2008 9:18 PM
To: j buckheit@state.pa.us
Subject: Graduation Competency Assessments

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

Mr. Buckheit,

My husband and I have 4 children in the Pine-Richland School District in the northern suburbs of Pittsburgh. I wish to express my **OPPOSITION** to the adoption of Graduation Competency Assessments.

My oldest child, soon to be a sophomore, has several learning disabilities which qualify him for support from our district. He has difficulty with memory and the storage of information, he requires significant repetition to learn new material, and often struggles to retrieve information that he has learned. With appropriate studying, he is quite successful in the assessments given in his classes. Coursework which also includes presentations, projects and papers allow him to display mastery of the material without relying solely on tests.

My son does not test well on standardized tests. Implementation of this competency assessment does not take into consideration his learning disabilities and is inappropriate to administer to those students with documented disabilities. If our state demands a proficiency grade on a final exam to qualify for a high school diploma, what will happen to students with learning disabilities? Will you increase the failure rate? Will you see the high school drop-out rate increase? This graduation competency assessment will only harm students with learning difficulties.

For all of my children, Pine-Richland offers a multitude of academic opportunities which enable them to customize their learning. I fear that their ability to pursue their strengths and interests will be eliminated if our district must conform to covering material which is included in this assessment. Teaching to the test to meet state standards will narrow the course offerings and eliminate customization.

Please do not allow the Graduation Competency Assessments program to become law in Pennsylvania.

Lisa