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**Buckheit, James**

**From:** Veronica.Wade@bnymellon.com  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 13, 2009 2:33 PM  
**To:** 00statbd@psupen.psu.edu  
**Subject:** Test Requirements for High School Graduation

RECEIVED  
 AUG 13 2009  
 PA. STATE BOARD  
 OF EDUCATION

Hello,

I am not a current parent of any children that are at the age of high school yet, but I am very concerned regarding the new requirements to complete high school graduation. I think this will put too much pressure on our children if this is passed. Why do you think this will better prepare students for jobs or college? When I graduated from high school the only thing that helped me obtain employment is experience from other employment. We learn everything again in college, so why would it be mandatory to pass this exam to get a high school diploma? Our children work to get this diploma for the entire 12 years of education that they receive. I do not think you should let a test determine whether or not a child should be able to receive a diploma.

I graduated from high school in the year 2000 and did very well in school. I don't know if I would have earned the grade point average that I did if I had been required to take a test before I graduated. One reason is because I am not a good test taker and like most other students I didn't like to take tests. I never received any failing grades for exams, but that was because we had just learned everything that I needed to know before we took the test. If you require students to memorize so many things for one exam, you may put too much pressure on them. They already have the PSSA's and then they have to take the SAT's. What kid do you know that would really want to take another exam to prove they know enough to get a diploma? Was all the other accomplishments achieved through high school not good enough? They already have to look forward to the extra work in college to prove themselves.

I didn't go to college right after I graduated from high school, so I had to relearn everything when I did eventually go to college. Math was one of my strongest subjects in high school, but when I got to college I still needed to relearn all of those things over again. Many high school graduates will not be able to get an office job after they graduate without going to college, so I do not understand what employers this is supposed to benefit. Do you think that an employer is going to hire a high school graduate because of their score on this test? The test score may actually bring a grade down for a student that usually performs well.

I know from personal experience that these tests do not mean anything. I always got frustrated when exam time came around in any class. Mostly just final exams, because there was a lot of material in it that I had to remember. I can also recall taking the PSSA's for days at a time for several hours a day; I'm not sure if this was the same name for them, but I hated when those days came in school. Most of the time I would not complete the exam to the best of my ability because I got so tired of taking it. The first couple hours or days, I might read through some of the material and complete it to the best of my knowledge, then I would just randomly answer questions just to get it over with. Even when I didn't randomly mark answers, my score wasn't so great and that made me not want to try so hard at all. It didn't matter what the test meant for the school board, it didn't mean anything to me because it didn't reflect the actual way that I performed as a student. I felt the same way when I took my SAT's.

I know that no high school student is going to say they want to take an exam to graduate, but I really think this should be discussed with our high school students more. Decisions are always made thinking that the person who made them has someone else's best interest in mind, when this is not always the case. I believe the student's already achieve enough to determine if they should earn a diploma. This test could turn out to be just another thing that prevents our student's from receiving a diploma. The harder you make it the more student's are going to be discouraged from even trying to graduate.

I think you should look into teaching our student's more at an earlier age. We should be teaching our children more about ethics, and right from wrong; maybe even having students volunteer to help others. There are many other things that need to be looked at in our school systems and I do not believe taking an extra exam to get a diploma is one of them. Our children are tested in different ways all their lives, so do we really need to test them some more?

I appreciate you taking the time to hear my opinion.

8/17/2009

Thank you,

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