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COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

November 10, 2005

Dr. Peggy Hines, Director
National Center for Transforming School Counseling
The Education Trust
1250 H Street, NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Dr. Hines:

Thank you for your letter on proposed 22 Pa. Code, Chapter 4, Academic Standards (Career Education and Work).

Your letter is considered as official public comment and is being shared with all members of the Board. Pursuant to the provisions of the Regulatory Review Act, copies of your comments are also being provided to the Independent Regulatory Review Commission (IRRC) and the Chairpersons of the House and Senate Education Committees.

The regulatory Review Act provides that information on proposed and final regulations be mailed to public commentators at their request. If you would like to receive the final-form of these regulations when they are finalized, please make your request to me in writing at the address printed below.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Buckheit".

Jim Buckheit
Executive Director

cc: Members of the State Board
Senator Rhoades
Senator Musto
Representatives Stairs
Representatives Roebuck
IRRC



REC'D NOV 10 2005

1250 H Street, NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20005
202-293-1217

September 20, 2005

Mr. Jim Buckheit, Executive Director
State Board of Education
333 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

Dear Mr. Buckheit,

It was with great pleasure that I reviewed the proposed Pennsylvania Department of Education Academic Standards for Career Education and Work. Only a handful of states have understood the importance of career development and thus require the mastery of specific career standards and indicators. It is obvious that the standards writing committee was composed of thoughtful, well-versed individuals who were knowledgeable in career development, as well as, the nuances of creating clearly articulated and appropriately sequenced standards and indicators. In each standard a sound scope and sequence is noticeably present.

The wonderful opportunity that comes when asked to review a document as an outside reader is the chance to push the edge of the envelope a bit. There is one standard in particular that I believe could be ratcheted up a notch. Thus, from within the context described above, I offer the following observations and recommendations concerning Standard 13.1 Career Awareness and Preparation:

One of the byproducts of effective career development is that students understand how the content they are learning in school is relevant to both their present and future. The realization that they can use what they are learning to help them pursue something in which they have an interest, naturally spurs curiosity, excitement and intrinsic motivation. For this to happen, it is critical that students see the connection among career development in general, their own unique career growth process, the curriculum being taught, and the academic development decisions that they make. In its current form, Standard 13.1 does not clearly require this synthesis.

Personalizing Knowledge: I realize that standards and indicators are often written using a very structured, impersonal format. At the same time, true mastery of most academic standards and indicators, comes from the ability to appropriately personalize and apply knowledge and skill. It is important for students to understand that what they are learning actually applies to them, not just to others. I would suggest that this standard incorporate more specific indicators at each grade level which require students to demonstrate the ability to personalize the various career awareness and preparation concepts. For example, instead of just recognizing that individuals have unique interests, 13.1.3.A might read: Recognize that individuals have unique interests and identify current personal interests. Another option would be to insert an additional indicator after the first one at each grade level that would require the personalization of the career awareness concept.

Linking Career Interests with Academic Development: The ability to understand the connection between individual career interest, awareness and planning, and academic development is of the utmost importance if students are to make sound decisions related to career preparation. I would suggest that an indicator be added after 13.1.3.E. or 13.1.3.F. (or else reword E. or F.) at each grade level that would require the student to recognize how current and future academic instruction provides the knowledge and skills necessary to be prepared for a job in an area in which they are personally interested.

Demonstrating Career Knowledge: The final measure of standard mastery is performance. In the end, instruction has not been successful if students are unable to appropriate incorporate the knowledge and skill into their daily life. I would suggest that performance indicators be added (or else indicators be reworded to include specific performance actions) that would require students to demonstrate through their behavior (not just a portfolio) the connection between their personal interests and career and academic preparation decision-making. For example, when designing their 5 or 6 year academic plan, 8th grade students should choose their electives and extra-curricular activities based upon their current career interests. Students in the 11th grade should not only continue to review their high school plan against their current career goals, but they should also be choosing post-secondary educational opportunities based upon these interests.

The fact that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is implementing career development standards is indeed noteworthy. I greatly appreciate the opportunity to participate in this important process and commend the writers on a job well done.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Peggy Hines". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Peggy Hines, Ed.D., Director
National Center for Transforming School Counseling