

# 2520

25TH DISTRICT  
**JOE SCARNATI**

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FAX: 717-772-2755

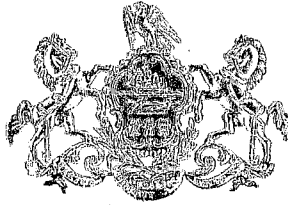
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**DISTRICT OFFICES**

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WARREN, PA 16365  
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FAX: 814-726-7012

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BROCKWAY, PA 15824  
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WELLSBORO OFFICE:  
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PO BOX 76  
WELLSBORO, PA 16901  
570-724-5231  
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March 3, 2006

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GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Dr. Gerald L. Zahorchak, Secretary  
Pennsylvania Department of Education  
333 Market Street  
10<sup>th</sup> Floor, Harrisstown 2  
Harrisburg, PA 17126

Dear Dr. Zahorchak:

I am writing to express my concerns relating to the regulation changes proposed in Chapter 339. In particular, I believe certain changes will have an adverse effect on vocational agriculture programs in the Commonwealth.

As a result of changes being proposed in Chapter 339 the reimbursement currently going to students who receive less than 360 hours of class instruction time in their vocational area will end. Moreover, I must contend the Department should reconsider its position with regard to the mandate of 360 hours, in light of the time involved with other required courses. In addition, one must take into account the time required for No Child Left Behind and admission to post-secondary education.

Additionally, under the new guidelines, the use of supervised occupational experiences for vocational education credits will be eliminated. By its very essence, agriculture cannot be limited to just classroom time. Surely, removing the use of "field" experiences will compound the difficulties in meeting the 360 hour requirement.

As the number one industry in the state, agriculture must continue as a potential career choice for our students. As you consider the negative impact the changes to the vocational education regulation could have, I ask that this issue be carefully and objectively reviewed. Thank you for your time and attention in this important matter.

Sincerely,

Joe Scarnati  
State Senator-25<sup>th</sup> District

JBS/lsp



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
333 MARKET STREET  
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17126-0333

SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

717-787-5820 (TEL)  
717-787-7222 (FAX)  
717-783-8445 (TTY)

March 27, 2006

The Honorable Joe Scarnati  
Senate of Pennsylvania  
Senate Box 203025  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3025

Dear Senator Scarnati:

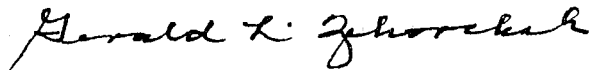
Thank you very much for expressing your concerns regarding the standards under review in Chapter 339. It is imperative that the Department of Education (PDE) receive feedback when considering the implementation of regulations and standards. We appreciate your commitment to Career and Technical Education (CTE) and look forward to continued efforts in serving the students of Pennsylvania.

In regards to the 360 hour requirement under chapter 339, the Bureau of Career and Technical Education (BCTE) has been thoroughly reviewing how to best serve pupils, and how this can best benefit the needs of business and industry. A study by Jobs For The Future, for the state of Pennsylvania, has given us guidelines for proceeding. This study has found that along with academic rigor, Pennsylvania should align CTE with industry relevant training and standards. Sufficient time must be spent in the CTE classroom to ensure we are meeting these standards. We are considering all options in the effort to strengthen CTE programming, and also improve math and communication skills. In fact, current school improvement initiatives require integrating academic standards into CTE programs.

It is not our intention to eliminate any CTE program, rather to provide resources for strengthening curriculum content and improving student occupational and academic achievement. Also, please be aware that the use of the Supervised Agriculture Experience (SAE) does meet the time requirement for each approved program. Basic Education Circular title Instructional Time and Act 80 Exceptions notes that SAE would be eligible for credit if it occurs within the regular school day.

Quality career and technical education programs require a continuing commitment and dedication of schools, legislators, business and industry and the Department of Education. BCTE stands ready to provide the needed resources and support. Together, we can provide quality education for all students in Pennsylvania.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gerald L. Zahorchak".

Gerald L. Zahorchak, D.Ed.

cc: Diane Castelbouno, Deputy Secretary, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education  
Dr. Lee Burket, Director, Bureau of Career and Technical Education ✓