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Quality & Fairness in
Pennsylvania's Public Schools

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October 30, 2006

Members of the Independent Regulatory Review Commission
c/o Mike Stephens
333 Market Street, 14th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101

**RE: *Support for the Early Childhood Pre- Kindergarten Regulations
Vote "Yes" on the Proposed Amendments to Chapters 4, 11 and 12 regarding Pre-K
standards***

Dear Commission Members:

On behalf of the Education Law Center-PA ("ELC") and the Statewide Early Intervention Coalition of Advocates (EICOA), we want to express our strong support for the proposed changes to Chapters 4, 11 and 12 regarding pre-kindergarten standards and urge you to support and approve these proposed Amendments.

ELC is a non-profit public interest law firm dedicated to ensuring that all Pennsylvania's children have access to a quality public education. Current research makes clear that a quality public education system begins with strong pre-kindergarten programs. For the past 30 years, ELC staff has worked with thousands of children and families in Pennsylvania and have seen first hand just how critical early intervention and early childhood programs are to individual children and families and to positive educational outcomes for all children. ELC staff works closely with the EICOA and with others statewide, on issues of early childhood. We have been closely following the progress of these proposed regulations and are very pleased with the final proposed regulations. The Education Law Center and the EICOA urge you to support these amendments and help ensure they become final.

We strongly support these regulatory mandates because, among other things, they will require school districts and others that operate pre-kindergarten programs, to meet certain standards, including class size maximums, certification requirements for teachers and paraprofessionals and to provide developmentally appropriate assessments and curricula. These requirements will

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Members of the Independent Regulatory Review Commission

RE: Proposed Pre-K Regulations

October 30, 2006

ensure that as more school districts begin to open pre-kindergarten programs, those programs will provide real developmental and educational benefit to children.

The proposed regulations are particularly important for families of young children with developmental delays and disabilities. The requirements that school districts explain in their strategic plans how the district will coordinate with agencies that serve pre-school-aged children with disabilities, and how they will serve and support these children in their preschool programs are critical to ensuring that children with disabilities also receive developmental and educational benefits from pre-kindergarten programs across the State.

On behalf of the Education Law Center-PA and the children and families we represent, we want to commend the State Board of Education for passing these amendments and now urge you to ensure they become final by voting "yes" to approve them.

Very truly yours,



Nancy A. Hubley
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Janet F. Stotland
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Julie Hladio
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cc: Linda Warren, Department of Education
James Buckheit, State Board of Education