



Suite 8 -- Executive House
101 South Second Street
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17101
(717) 234-2621 • 234-7615 (fax)
www.thearcpa.org

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*The Arc of Pennsylvania is
affiliated with The Arc of the
United States and 39 local
chapters of The Arc across PA.*



Chairman Alvin C. Bush
Independent Regulatory Review Commission
14th Floor
333 Market Street
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17101

Dear Chairman Bush and Commission Members,

On September 20th, 2006, the Pennsylvania State Board of Education unanimously approved reforms to pre-school regulations to ensure students with disabilities can attend pre-school programs.

The Arc of Pennsylvania has been a strong proponent of these changes and applauds the board's decision. The Arc testified before the board in favor of these important reforms and was active in a coalition of organizations that pushed for their implementation.

As part of the reforms, school districts will be required to explain in their strategic plans how they will coordinate with agencies that serve pre-school children with disabilities to provide needed supports and accommodations to ensure physical and programmatic access. Also required in the district's strategic plan are policies for additional instructional opportunities for students not achieving at a proficient level, as well as transition plans to pre-kindergarten programs including all local agencies involved in early intervention programs, to ensure appropriate supports are in place.

Additional positive reforms include language that requires school districts to assure that all programs offered in pre-K programs - such as language and literacy, math, science and physical development - be open to children with disabilities.

When implemented, these reforms will assure that all children with disabilities will be included in Pre-K programs across the Commonwealth, with the supports and accommodations required for their success.

The Arc of Pennsylvania will continue to be involved in the finalization and implementation of these regulations and encourage the Commission to approve these regulations for all of the children in the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

Pam Klipa
Public Policy Specialist
Early Childhood and Education
The Arc of Pennsylvania

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