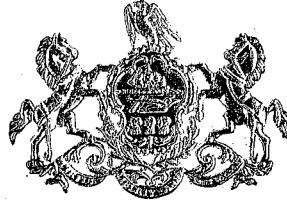


State Senator
Don White
41st Senatorial District



Senate of Pennsylvania

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January 29, 2007

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

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PA. STATE BOARD
OF EDUCATION

Dear Mr. Buckheit:

Enclosed are comments I received from a constituent in the 41st senatorial district regarding the proposed changes to PA Code, Title 22, Chapter 49.13(b)(4)(i) (teacher certification regulations).

It would be appreciated if you could consider Ms. Ferguson's concerns about how the revised regulations will adversely impact the music education program at Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

Thank you for your assistance. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Don White
Senator, 41st District

DCW/ama
Enclosure
Cc: Laura Ferguson, Ed.D

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REVIEW COMMISSION

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Department of Music
Cogswell Hall, Room 101
422 South Eleventh Street
Indiana, Pennsylvania 15705-1070

724-357-2390
Fax: 724-357-1324
Internet: <http://www.iup.edu/mu>

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PA. STATE BOARD
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Pennsylvania State Board of Education
Chapter 49 Committee, Attn. Dr. James Fogarty
333 Market Street, 1st Floor
Harrisburg PA 17126-0333

Dear Dr. Fogarty and Committee Members:

As a person responsible for training music teachers at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, as well as a parent concerned about the quality of curricular content of Fine Arts in our public schools in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, I have strong concerns about the proposed changes to PA Code Title 22, Chapter 49.13(b)(4)(i), and the impact it will have on the content preparation of music teacher certification in our state. The proposal states as follows:

(i) The evaluation by the Department will provide assurance that, on or before January 1, 2010, teacher education programs will require at least 9 credits or 270 hours, or an equivalent combination thereof, regarding accommodations and adaptations for students with disabilities in an inclusive setting. Within the content of these 9 credits or 270 hours, instruction in literacy skills development and cognitive skill development for students with disabilities must be included, as determined by the institution. At least 3 credits or 90 additional hours, or an equivalent combination thereof, must address the instructional needs of English language learners. For purposes of this requirement, 1 credit equals 30 hours of coursework. Applicable hours are limited to a combination of seat hours of classroom instruction, field observation experiences, major research assignments, and development and implementation of lesson plans with accommodations and adaptations for diverse learners in an inclusive setting.

These requirements in the initial certification program will result in the major subject matter of the degree being reduced resulting in less competent teachers for all students who will be unprepared to teach students to accomplish the state standards and the requirements of NCLB.

Please keep in mind that this reduction of major subject matter for future music teachers would be *in addition* to many curricular cuts that were made in our content area in the B.S. in Music Education degree at IUP after the Board of Governors mandated a 120 credit hour cap on all degree programs within the State System of Higher Education. To satisfy this mandate, between 15-25 credit hours of core music content was excised from the teacher training program of music educators at IUP. Currently our students only receive between 15-16 credit hours in courses that directly relate to music teacher preparation; The special education requirements proposed by the Department of Education would equal 75%-80% of the amount of time we currently devote to core coursework. To implement this proposal would result in teachers who have no content to teach.

For more information on the requirements for music teacher accreditation, and how implementation of the proposed changes to Chapter 49 would affect the B.S. in Music Education program at PASSHE schools, I ask you to revisit the letter and proposal sent to the Department of Education by the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association from Patrick Jones in May of this year.

I recommend no more than 90 hours (equivalent of 3 credits) for "instruction in literacy skills development and cognitive skill development for students with disabilities" be addressed in the initial certification program, and the remaining hours plus the 90 hours for English language learners be requirements for Instructional II certificates.

Sincerely,

Laura Ferguson, Ed.D
Associate Professor of Music
Indiana University of Pennsylvania