

11TH DISTRICT
MICHAEL A. O'PAKE, Esq.
SENATE BOX 203011
HARRISBURG, PA 17120-3011
TELEPHONE: (717) 787-8925
FAX: (717) 772-0578

ROCKLAND PROFESSIONAL CENTER
1940 NORTH 13TH STREET, STE. 232
READING, PA 19604
TELEPHONE: (610) 929-2151
FAX: (610) 929-2576
E-MAIL: opake@pasenate.com
WEB SITE: www.senator-opake.com

REPLY TO:

Harrisburg Office

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

Dear Chairman Bush:

I am writing to relay the concerns of Dr. Paul B. Eaken and Dr. Bethany L. Bosold, Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent respectively of the Fleetwood Area School District, with respect to suggested amendments to the state's teacher certification regulations as proposed by the state Board of Education and currently before the IRRC.

According to Drs. Eaken and Bosold, these proposed regulations "would make it more difficult" for the Fleetwood Area School District "to appropriately staff" their schools. A letter more thoroughly outlining their concerns is enclosed for your commission's review.

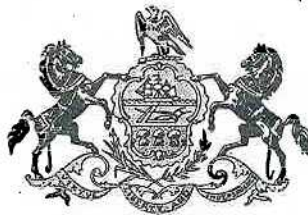
I trust you will carefully study the issues raised by Drs. Eaken and Bosold in conjunction with any final determination of this matter. Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Michael A. O'Pake
Senator -- 11th District

2583 Democratic Whip



Senate of Pennsylvania

December 12, 2006

RECEIVED

DEC 12 2006

PA. STATE BOARD
OF EDUCATION

COMMITTEES
AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS,
MINORITY CHAIRMAN
APPROPRIATIONS
ETHICS
JUDICIARY
RULES AND EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS
CAPITOL PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION ON
CRIME AND DELINQUENCY
PENNSYLVANIA HIGHER EDUCATION
ASSISTANCE AGENCY
JOINT STATE GOVERNMENT COMMISSION
AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION BOARD

MAO'P: JH
ENCLOSURE

CC: Honorable James J. Rhoades, Chairman, Senate Education Committee
Honorable Raphael J. Musto, Democratic Chairman, Senate Education Committee
Jim Buckheit, Executive Director, State Board of Education
Superintendent Eaken; Assistant Superintendent Bosold

Fleetwood Area School District

ADMINISTRATION OFFICE • 801 N. Richmond Street, Fleetwood, PA 19522-1031
Phone: 610-944-9598 • FAX: 610-944-9408 • E-mail: peaken@fleetwoodasd.k12.pa.us



Paul B. Eaken, Ed.D.
Superintendent

December 6, 2006

Senator Michael A. O'Pake
11th Senatorial District
Senate Box 203048
Harrisburg PA 17120-3011

Dear Senator O'Pake:

We are writing to express concern about the proposed amendments to the State Board of Education's teacher certification regulations (Chapter 49-2) that are now before the Independent Regulatory Review Commission. These regulations, if finally adopted, would make it more difficult for us to appropriately staff our schools.

Our greatest concern is the staffing of our special education programs. Currently, special education teachers receive K-12 certification. In Fleetwood, we have had great difficulty staffing our secondary and life skills support special education classrooms. Under the current system we have had the flexibility to assign special education certified teachers to these classrooms based upon our staffing needs. In the past few years, we have had six special education teachers (four of whom hold special education and elementary education certificates) who initially preferred teaching at the elementary level but were assigned to secondary special education positions due to the district's need. All of these teachers have become very successful at the secondary level. The proposed requirement that special education teachers also be certified for a particular age range (specifically early childhood, elementary/middle, or secondary) will greatly impact our ability to find appropriately certified special education teachers to meet our programming needs.

Although we have not experienced any difficulty staffing elementary positions, we are concerned that a similar problem may arise with a limited scope of certification for elementary teachers under the proposed regulations. We are also concerned that further specialization in the certification of elementary teachers will interfere with our efforts to provide a seamless curriculum throughout the elementary grades. New teachers hired under the proposed regulations will not have the background and experience in both the early or upper elementary grades that they presently have upon graduation.

Based upon these concerns, we urge you to oppose the adoption of the proposed Chapter 49-2 regulations in their current form.

Sincerely,


Paul B. Eaken, Ed.D.
Superintendent


Bethany L. Bosold, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent