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January 29, 2007

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

2007 FEB 23 PM 2: 23

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

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PA. STATE BOARD
OF EDUCATION

Dear Mr. Jim Buckheit,

I am currently in my third year of teaching in a public school in the state of Pennsylvania. I obtain a teaching certificate in the field of Special Education. All of my teaching experience has been in a part-time emotional support classroom. In this setting, I have instructed students ranging from grades two through six, with a wide variety of skill levels and behavioral issues.

Upon reading the proposed amendments to Chapter 49, I found myself in support of many aspects of the proposal, and at the same time in disagreement with many parts as well. I am in agreement with the requirements of all teachers to complete at least 9 credits regarding accommodations and adaptations for students with disabilities in an inclusive setting. I also agree with programs providing 3 credits addressing the instructional needs of English language learners. I believe these issues are two of the most difficult aspects in the teaching profession today. All teachers need to be made aware of and understand the difficulties these students face in our classrooms.

The portions of the amendments to Chapter 49 that I am in disagreement with are the new limitations of the instructional certificates. These new limitations do just that, they limit a teacher to a more specific age group. Thus, making it more difficult for a teacher to make a change in the future. If a teacher does decide they would like to change grade levels, even from third to fourth, they will now need a new certificate or participate in an accelerated program. I believe a teacher should be able to make a change throughout their career and should not be punished by having to pay for the courses that are going to be required in order to make this change.

I am speaking from the standpoint of a person who has acquired \$25,000 plus in student loans in obtaining an instructional certificate. If these amendments are passed, they will require many others and myself to take more courses on top of those required to obtain our instructional II certificates. Thus, placing many others and myself in further debt. In addition, teachers are sometimes asked to change grade levels from year to year based on the number of students in grade levels. These amendments will limit administration within a school district when placing teachers in different grades.

In closing, I believe that there are many hard working teachers at the current time that will be harmed by these proposed amendments. Teachers are already under plenty pressure trying to get our students to reach the standards in place, which sometimes feel unachievable.

Thank you,
Concerned Teacher