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345 Liberty Street
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania 18018
610-317-2250

January 29, 2007

State Board of Education
333 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

Attention Jim Buckheit, Executive Director

Dear Mr. Buckheit:

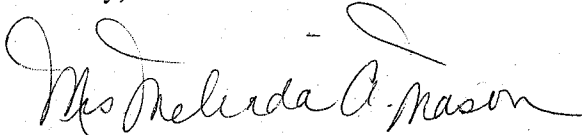
While I understand that the Public Comment period for input specific to Chapter 49-2 has been completed, I am writing to express my concerns regarding the proposed changes to certification requirements in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

In May of 2000, I received my teaching certification in the field of special education, which encompasses grades kindergarten through twelve. I have been teaching students who have disabilities since this time, and I have acquired tenure in my local school district. My undergraduate coursework addressed a number of different areas specific to teaching students with disabilities, and I believe this instruction provided me with the foundations to become a highly qualified special education teacher.

Given the shortage of special education teachers, I find that the proposed changes will negatively impact the field in a number of ways. To begin, it is somewhat discouraging that regular education teachers will only have to take a minimum of nine credit hours in the field of special education. Even though I have already received my Level II certification in special education, I am now required to be dually certified and/or highly qualified in at least one content area if I am going to teaching at the secondary level. Further, I chose to be a special education teacher and to work with students with disabilities. This area is my "specialty," and I feel that my expertise in this area, given the proposed changes, will be overlooked. I also believe that preservice teachers who want to work with students with disabilities will be less inclined to complete their studies in special education given the pending issues surrounding teacher certification.

Please consider altering the proposed changes to reflect a more unified approach to certification in the field of special education. I thank-you for your time and attention these concerns.

Sincerely,



Mrs. Melinda A. Mason

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