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PA. STATE BOARD
OF EDUCATION

January 30, 2007

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

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

Dear Mr. Buckheit:

Upon reading the proposed Chapter 49 rulemaking, I admit that I was surprised to find myself agreeing with a large portion of the proposal. Being a special education teacher, I hear quite a bit of negative discussion concerning teacher certification requirements.

I found myself agreeing with the dual certification for special education teachers, the new grade level ranges, the thorough collegiate instruction, and the induction programs for new teachers. The need to better train prekindergarten teachers is certain, and the Program Endorsement Certificate looks somehow elite. How reasonable, how possible, and how necessary these changes seem.

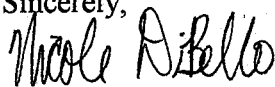
However, I wonder if anyone notices the speed at which special education teachers burn out. Why do so many teachers of children with disabilities take graduate courses as quickly as possible? Is it to become more "highly qualified," or is it to escape the overwhelming loads placed on them, not by their students, but by stakeholders.

My intention is not to complain. It is to ask questions and to point out the extreme need for practicality. Most men and women who become teachers have a passion to learn, to excel, and to ignite in students a desire for those things as well. Furthermore, most teachers honestly enjoy the students for whom they work. Is there a way to fuel the passion in teachers to teach while still raising the professional standards? I certainly would love to know the answer to that question.

Again, I agree with the majority of the proposed changes. However, my agreement comes from the appearance on paper alone. Practically speaking, I am concerned that teachers, some average, yet some with amazing potential, will grow weary of the heavy legal burdens placed on them before even reaching tenure. I would be surprised and saddened if that were the intention. I trust that it is not.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Nicole DiBello