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January 30, 2007

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

Mr. Buckheit,

I am pleased the State Board kindly extended the Public Comment period regarding Chapter 49-2. I would like to take this opportunity to express my comments and concerns.

The changes that were made specific to early childhood educators are going to be beneficial. Section 49.16 includes teachers in prekindergarten programs in an induction plan. I feel this is very important because it will make new teachers more prepared and informed. This builds confidence and increases the chances of a successful start to a new career. Section 49.85 (b) requires instructional certificates specific to Special Education/ Primary- prekindergarten through 3. This will help focus attention during post secondary education for those who want to teach special education/ early childhood. The more specific the education, the more prepared the teacher.

I do have some concerns as well with Chapter 49-2. Section 49.85 grade level limitations will cause serious teacher shortages to the special education/ secondary level teachers. It has become difficult for secondary special education teachers to become qualified for their jobs. These teachers are already in shortage and this grade level limitation will cause many college students to choose a grade level and course of study before graduation. The teacher who chose elementary special education will not qualify for the available secondary special education that will most likely be open and in need of teachers. If there is no limitation, a special education teacher could qualify for elementary or secondary education. Please do not make it more difficult to fill secondary special education positions.

Please take into account my comment and concerns. I am again thankful to you for extending the public comment period. It is comforting to know that teacher, parent, administrator, and the general public voices are being heard.

Thank You,

Stephanie Korkos
Autistic Support Teacher
1075 Sunset Drive
Bangor, PA 18013

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