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PA. STATE BOARD  
OF EDUCATION

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
REVIEW COMMISSION

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

Dear Mr. Buckheit:

Currently, I am a full time graduate student at East Stroudsburg University seeking a Masters in Reading. To fulfill one of the course elective options in the program, I decided to enroll in a special education current issues course. A recent topic discussed in class was the Chapter 49-2. Two changes in the document with a similar end result are of concern to me as a certified elementary education teacher.

First, the potential change of splitting the elementary teacher certification could cause a decrease of "highly qualified" teachers in the upper elementary grades. This result is possible if more students elect the Early Childhood option, rather than the possible new Middle School option, which is happening in Ohio. Similarly, the impending change of the Special Education certification would be more challenging and rigorous, both academically and of time relating factors. A continuous shortage of teachers could arise if special education required a content certification in addition to the secondary level certification. Both of the changes being proposed affecting the elementary and special education certifications would result in the creation of another decreasing population, while continuing to decrease an existing special education teaching population.

The brief statements above regarding the Chapter 49-2 revisions contain two ideas that can hinder the education system in Pennsylvania. Although, currently there is an ample amount of elementary education teachers, the proposed change may aggressively adjust the situation too harshly. Also, it can clearly reduce the amount of special education teachers, even though a shortage already exists. Hopefully these concerns will be reflected upon when considering the proposed Chapter 49-2.

Sincerely,

*Michelle McColgan*

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