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Buckheit, James

RECEIVED

From: Buckheit, James
Sent: Tuesday, January 30, 2007 8:38 AM
To: 'Camie Modjadidi'
Subject: RE: Chapter 49

2007 FEB -2 AM 8:12

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

State Board of Education

333 Market Street, First Floor

Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

January 30, 2007

Dear Dr. Modjadidi:

Thank you for your email message received by the State Board of Education on January 29, 2007 regarding the proposed Chapter 49 Certification of Professional Personnel regulations that were published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin on November 25, 2006.

Copies of your message will be shared with each member of the State Board of Education, the chairs of the House and Senate Education Committees and Independent Regulatory Review Commission (IRRC).

If you would like to be included on the list of individuals that notified when the final-form regulation is submitted for final approval by the legislative committees and IRRC, please submit a written request to me with your name and mailing address to the address listed above.

Sincerely,

Jim Buckheit

Executive Director

-----Original Message-----

From: Camie Modjadidi [mailto:mecam01@moravian.edu]
Sent: Monday, January 29, 2007 2:37 PM
To: j buckheit@state.pa.us
Cc: hornung@pitt.edu
Subject: Chapter 49

Dear State Board of Education Members,

Presently I am the field coordinator and an instructor at Moravian College, a private liberal arts institution that takes great pride in the caliber of our teacher candidates. Prior to my full time position at Moravian College, I was a special education teacher, a lead instructional support teacher, an educational consultant, and an acting assistant to the principal in an elementary school.

1/30/2007

First, I want to express my appreciation to you and the other board members for your willingness to listen to all the stakeholders impacted by the proposed changes in Chapter 49. It became quite evident to me at the round table discussion held in Allentown that members of the State Board of Education are eager to hear from all constituencies.

I fully support the Committee's recommendation not to require dual certification in Special Education for all Early Childhood and Elementary Education candidates. I believe this would have caused tremendous disservice to all involved. With this in mind, I do have a number of concerns related to the proposal to have separate certifications for Early Childhood Education (Pre-K-3) and Elementary Education (3-6).

1. It has been my experience that many students entering college are not prepared to make a decision regarding elementary education versus secondary education, let alone making a decision within the elementary level. Even those students who are "certain" they want one level or the other, change their minds after completing mandatory early field experiences, which are specifically designed to expose the students to different grade levels. Each semester students come to my office to tell me how working at this grade level or that grade level has helped them come to a more informed decision regarding the certification area they want to pursue. In my opinion, requiring freshmen to commit to Early Childhood Education or Elementary Education would result in students and ultimately teachers who discover that they are not suited for a particular level.
1. I believe it is critical for elementary candidates to have knowledge and developmental understanding of children K-6. Classrooms often have children ranging several years in ability. Certainly a first grade teacher may have students who perform on a fourth or fifth grade level as well as a sixth grade teacher working with students who perform on a second or first grade level. How will these teachers be prepared to effectively address the students' needs? Teachers need to understand the full scope and sequence at the elementary level.
1. There is no research-based evidence that indicates how this change will enhance the educational experience for students.
1. This proposal will significantly impact school districts' flexibility in their hiring and staffing practices. Along the same line, it would hinder teachers' ability to move from primary to intermediate grades when, for instances, they develop new interests.
1. Moravian College has a well respected, PDE approved elementary certification program. I receive numerous calls from principals in Pennsylvania as well as neighboring states requesting recommendations to fill vacancies. Our graduates are actively recruited by many school districts. The proposed changes would place our program in jeopardy since our students must have an academic major in addition to their education coursework. Students would not be able to complete the program in four years, which is required by PDE.
1. There are numerous higher education institutions which have established Early Childhood Education certification programs. Students who wish to obtain this specific certification are able to attend one of those institutions. This would certainly allow more choices for candidates.
1. We need to keep in mind that our graduates are entry-level teachers. The proposed changes and guidelines reflect qualities of a seasoned educator. Clearly teachers must continue to develop their skills and expand their knowledge base. I believe we must be life long learners. Postbaccalaurate programs, Act 48 hours, and well-designed in-service programs are the appropriate opportunities for teachers to develop skills in specialty areas.

In conclusion, I would like to thank you for being approachable and receptive to differing opinions. I am passionate about working with future teachers while growing as a professional myself. Thank you for your time, dedication, and genuine commitment to the educational field.

Most Sincerely,

Camie Modjadidi, M.Ed.
Moravian College
Education Department