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INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

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

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PA. STATE BOARD
OF EDUCATION

Dear Mr. Buckheit:

I am a special education teacher serving students with severe autism. I am writing in reference to Chapter 49-2, namely Section 49.85(b). It seems the purpose of this amendment is to produce better-prepared special educators. While I agree our education system is in need of higher quality educators, I do not feel that having grade level limitations is the answer.

My suggestion is to make certifications specific to severity of disabilities, as opposed to grade levels. In all grade levels, students with severe disabilities partake in curricula focused on functional skills and activities of daily living. On the contrary, in all grade levels, students with mild disabilities partake in general curricula, with accommodations and adaptations made for individual needs and abilities. With grade level limitations, educators will still need to be trained in best programming practices for all disability levels. However, with disability level limitations, teachers will be highly trained with one population.

It is my opinion that limiting instructional certificates by disability level, as opposed to grade level, will result in a higher quality of special education teachers and therefore more effective programming in our schools.

Thank you for your dedication to our children.

Sincerely,

Kristyn Michalesko