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Pauley, Eric

From: Stephen Mailman [smailman1@aol.com]
Sent: Tuesday, April 03, 2007 10:01 PM
To: Greenleaf, Senator Stewart
Subject: Support Students with Disabilities - Support Teacher Qualification Regulations

Stephen Mailman
837 Timber Lane
Dresher, PA 19025-1811

April 3, 2007

The Honorable Stewart J. Greenleaf
Pennsylvania Senate
Senate Box 203012
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3012

Dear Senator Greenleaf:

I am your constituent and an advocate for students with disabilities. Advocates have worked hard over the past year with the PA State Board of Education and the PA Department of Education to craft improvements and updates to Chapter 49 regulations to best serve the needs of students with disabilities, English language learners, and other diverse learners.

The new regulations are not perfect, but they are a significant improvement. If implemented, the new regulations will improve greatly the quality of teachers and in turn improve education outcomes for students with disabilities.

1. All teachers must be prepared to teach students with disabilities in inclusive settings, as required by law.
2. In the past, the state has often ignored the educational needs of the most vulnerable children. Most teachers today do not possess the tools needed to provide equal access to quality instruction.
3. The new regulations DO NOT increase the overall professional training hours required, but would ensure that, within the current requirements, all teachers develop skills to strengthen their ability to help diverse learners, such as students with disabilities.
4. The proposals spread out the new requirements, so that teachers will gain some skills in college and then will continue to improve their skills throughout their career.
5. The proposals give colleges, school districts, and teacher's great flexibility to meet the new rules in different ways - i.e., get credit for existing courses; add content and structure to the curricula in "methods", "student teaching", and other courses; and allow professors to teach in pairs or teams. (Some colleges oppose the regulations because they want to keep teaching in the old ways.)
6. The changes for the grade levels of teaching certificates are most important for students in special education. The state should no longer issue a broad K-12 special education certificate.

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As you constituent, I request that you allow these regulations to proceed to IRRC and be fully implemented.
Thank you.

Thank you,

Stephen Mailman
215-572-1228