

Buckheit, James

From: Buckheit, James
Sent: Wednesday, May 09, 2007 11:47 AM
To: 'Couchenour, Donna'
Subject: RE: Chapter 49-2 letter of support

RECEIVED

2007 MAY 14 AM 10:50

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

State Board of Education

333 Market Street, First Floor

Harrisburg, PA 17126 0333

May 9, 2007

Dear Dr. Couchenour:

Thank you for your email message received by the State Board of Education on May 8, 2006 regarding the proposed Chapter 49 Certification of Professional Personnel regulations.

Your letter is considered public comment. As such copies are 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). Your letter is also considered a public document that may be publicly released upon request.

Sincerely,

Jim Buckheit

Executive Director

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

From: Couchenour, Donna [mailto:DLCOUC@ship.edu]
Sent: Wednesday, May 09, 2007 9:44 AM
To: Buckheit, James
Subject: RE: Chapter 49-2 letter of support

Jim Buckheit
Executive Director, State Board of Education
1st Floor
333 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17126

Dear Mr. Buckheit:
RE: Chapter 49-2

I am writing for two reasons. I would like to request a copy of the final form regulation of Chapter 49-2. Also, I am including some information based on my concern for the modification to the certification proposal as PK-4 and 4-8.

I am writing to express concern about the latest configuration for the early childhood and elementary/middle level

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certificates. The pre-kindergarten through grade four configuration is problematic on multiple levels. First, the national accrediting body for early childhood education defines early childhood as pre-k through 3rd grade. As a reviewer for program accreditation reports, I have seen firsthand that programs in the states that offer pk-4th grade certificates typically have very weak early childhood programs, often not meeting the standards for preparation of pk-3rd grade teachers. Surely, we do not want to create such a system in Pennsylvania.

The criticism that fourth through eighth grade students are not at the same developmental level is faulty logic. Using this argument, adding fourth grade to the early childhood certificate indicates that three-year-olds and ten-year-olds are at the same developmental level. In fact, it is not uncommon presently for ten-year-olds to be entering puberty; thus, the developmental progression seen from fourth grade (9-10 years) to eighth grade (13-14 years) provides a more coherent basis for understanding how to best teach children in this age group. Further, cognitively, children from three to eight are known to be essentially in the same developmental stage.

The best information that we have from research and practice about increasing the effectiveness of early childhood education is to align programs for children from birth through age eight with common standards, curriculum and assessment. Adding another age level to this certification will diminish the efforts that are currently underway through the Office of Child Development and Early Learning to strengthen this alignment in our Commonwealth.

I urge the Board to holistically consider the impact the certification changes will have on teacher preparation and children's learning. Highly prepared and qualified teachers are known to be the most significant factor in children's learning, following family involvement. In addition, we have a multitude of evidence for a pk-3 certification, but none at all for pk-4. The wealth of evidence about preparing outstanding teachers for pk-3rd grade can easily be translated to Pennsylvania teacher preparation for this age group. However, there is no such body of evidence that translates clearly to including fourth grade in the alignment.

Thank you for your consideration.

Donna Couchenour, Ph.D., CFLE

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

From: Buckheit, James [<mailto:jbuckheit@state.pa.us>]

Sent: Fri 12/22/2006 9:13 AM

To: Couchenour, Donna

Subject: RE: Chapter 49-2 letter of support

State Board of Education

333 Market Street, First Floor

Harrisburg, PA 17126 0333

December 22, 2006

Dear Dr. Couchenour:

Thank you for your letter received by the State Board of Education on December 22, 2006 regarding the proposed Chapter 49 Certification of Professional Personnel regulations.

Your letter is considered official public comment. As such copies are 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). Your letter is also considered a public document that may be publicly released upon request.

The Regulatory Review Act provides that notice regarding final regulations be provided to those who make official comment if requested. If you would like to receive a copy of the final-form regulation when it is submitted for final approval by the legislative committees and IRRC, please submit a written request to me at the address listed above.

Sincerely,

Jim Buckheit

Executive Director

5/9/2007