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Pennsylvania Business Education Association

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December 1, 2006

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

DEC 04 2006

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

Dear Mr. Buckheit:

This correspondence concerns the State Board of Education's proposed amendments to Chapter 49 regulations for teacher certification. Specific clarification is needed for the impact of the amendments on the current K-12 Business Computer Information Technology Certification in the language, "Other key provisions of this proposal change the scope of instructional certificates".

Business teachers who currently teach keyboarding at the elementary level, and basic business courses such as personal finance, careers, keyboarding and economics at the middle school levels, will certainly be impacted negatively with this current language.

If these amendments will change the status of this certification in any way the **Penna Business Education Association is strongly opposed**. To rectify the situation we recommend revisions/additions following the example below marked with asterisks:

1. Early Childhood Certificate would cover grades pre-K - 3.
2. Elementary/Middle Certificate would cover grades 4-8. Elementary/Middle certificates permit instruction in any subject in grades 4, 5 and 6 and in a core academic subject or subjects in grades 7 and 8.
3. Secondary Certificate would cover grades 7-12.

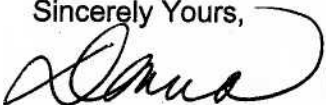
Recommendation to add:

*****4. Business Computer Information Technology (BCIT) certificates would cover K-12**

5. Specialized Area Certificate (such as art) would cover pre-K -12.
6. Special Education Primary (Pre-K -- 8th grade) w/ dual certification in Early Childhood Education.
7. Special Education Middle (Pre-K -- 8th grade) w/dual certification in Elementary/Middle Education.
8. Special Education Secondary in a core academic subject (Grades 7-12).
9. Special Education Hearing Impaired, Visually Impaired and Speech/Language Impaired would cover preK

Thank-you for this opportunity. Please keep us apprised of the status of this request before the 30 days expires.

Sincerely Yours,



Donna R. Gavitt, President PBEA
Ed Tamm, Legislative Chairperson, PBEA

Enclosure:
Testimony by Dr. Jon Shank to the State Board in 2003



This correspondence was sent in 2003 by Jon Shank to the State Board of Education. We are including the correspondence as a reminder of the testimony for K-12 certification and for the benefits to all students in PA schools in BCIT today.

COMMENTS PERTAINING TO CSPGS 33 AND 41 AS PUBLISHED ON SEPTEMBER 22, 2003,
BY THE PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

I want to commend the Pennsylvania State Board of Education for including keyboarding and computer technology skills in the recently adopted Science and Technology Standards. Students who develop touch keyboarding skills typically enjoy these important advantages that enhance learning:

- Students are better able to use the computer to learn other subjects because they can use courseware, write, and solve problems more efficiently when a keyboard is used in these activities.
- Students use their time more effectively because they can input with greater confidence and speed; therefore, they do not waste time and effort locating key and scarce school resources.
- Students' language arts skills are improved because touch typists produce written work with fewer errors and are more likely to revise writing than those who cannot operate the keyboard efficiently.
- Students' finger dexterity, eye-hand coordination, and muscle coordination are improved via keyboard training.

The way in which these standards have been included at the various grade levels indicates that the Board is supportive of these beliefs:

- Keyboarding is a developmental skill that needs to be addressed throughout our children's education—keyboarding is not to be taught just once and then forgotten.
- Keyboarding and computer usage skills like word processing, spreadsheet, database, and presentation software applications and Internet usage are learning tools that help students learn other subjects throughout all grade levels.
- Keyboarding and computer usage skills are means to the end and not the end; that is, these content areas are best learned early in the child's education so they can be used to learn other subjects rather than gaining proficiency just prior to graduation.

Additionally, I want to commend the State Board of Education for changing the grade level of the business education certificate (BCIT) from grades 7-12 to K-12 (CSPG # 33).

This change recognizes the need that keyboarding and computer technology skills need to be taught by highly qualified teachers throughout all grades levels. Persons holding the BCIT certificate have the best understanding of learning theory pertinent to these two content areas. This is especially critical in keyboarding in the lower grades where the teacher must be able to teach the students the touch system from the beginning so the standard requiring touch keyboarding skills can be attained by the 10th grade, as specified in the Science and Technology Standards: The business education teacher has the most knowledge and experience to:



- have students develop a useable psycho-motor skill.
- know how to develop proper keyboarding techniques for each student—technique is the foundation upon which keyboarding speed and accuracy are built.
- properly present, demonstrate, and prescribe practice for each new-key reach—alphabetic, numeric, symbol and frequently used service keys.
- diagnose keyboarding strengths and weaknesses so effective practice routines can be prescribed for each student on an individual basis.
- use appropriate formative and summative assessment to gauge progress.
- understand the relationship between technique, speed, and accuracy so students can achieve expected skill levels.

Another commendation is the Board's desire to phase out keyboarding and computer technology instruction that is presently delivered by persons holding the computer specialist certificate (see CSPG No. 33 Restrictions).

The above actions of the Board are all positive and will improve keyboarding and computer technology instruction in grades K-6. However, allowing teachers with elementary certification (see CSPG 41) to teach keyboarding will negate many, if not all, of the advantages students can gain from effective keyboarding instruction. Elementary Education majors completing college and university approved programs are not required via Chapter 49 or Chapter 354 to meet standards relating to keyboarding instruction. Only business education teachers are required to meet standards in this area. Without such preparation it is unrealistic to expect elementary teachers to be able to deliver quality keyboarding instruction—an outcome that is far from the No Child Left Behind's Act objective of having a "highly qualified" teacher in every classroom. Without quality instruction in the lower grades, students cannot be expected to achieve the 10th grade keyboarding standards at any grade level because they are likely to develop improper techniques and many bad habits. Therefore, much student and teacher time and computing resources will be wasted as business teachers attempt to have students "unlearn the bad" and then spend additional time teaching students correct techniques and proper habits so the touch keyboarding standard can be attained. This can be avoided by having students learn correctly from the start—in the elementary grades. To do otherwise is a waste of valuable classroom time, student and teacher time and effort, and computing resources that are scarce in most of schools.

In the unfortunate event that CSPG No. 41 is not changed to prevent or restrict elementary teachers from delivering keyboarding instruction, it is imperative that both CSPG No. 33 and CSPG No. 41 be revised so they be clearly state when a person holding a BCIT certificate must deliver keyboarding instruction in grades K-6 and when it is permissible for elementary teachers to deliver keyboarding instruction. The CSPGs as presently written do not provide this clear statement.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the CSPGs that were distributed on September 22, 2003.

Respectfully submitted by:

Jon Shank, Ed.D., Professor of Education at Robert Morris University for more than 35 years, retired Dean, School of Applied Sciences and Education, and author of numerous keyboarding and computer applications text book and software products published for grades 3-12 by South-Western Publishing, Cincinnati, Ohio