

Kathy Cooper

From: Joseph Gillespie [gillespj@neumann.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, December 12, 2006 2:42 PM
To: IRRIC
Subject: Chapter 49.2



Joseph Gillespie.vcf
(366 B)

I write to express my continued concerns about the implementation of Chapter 49.2. Serving as Dean of the Division of Education and Human Services at a private college within the Commonwealth I listen continually to my colleagues and hear the same concerns about the potentially devastating impact the implementation of Chapter 49.2 in its current timetable could have on programs preparing future teachers to serve in Pennsylvania. I assert the following:

Chapter 49-2 eliminates the current Pennsylvania elementary certification (K-6); this will result in a narrowing of the focus of the preparation of teachers and negatively impact the ability of the teacher to deal with the developmental needs of his or her students. For example, learning to read is it developmental process. If a student enters grade 4 and presents issues with the developmental process of reading, a teacher certified in only the proposed middle school (grades 4-8) will not have received the prerequisite instruction to assist the student on his or her developmental level.

The proposed structure of Chapter 49-2 could result in a shortage of educators prepared to teach in the upper elementary grades (grades 4-8). This will have a corresponding effect on staffing problems for elementary schools in Pennsylvania. The rigidity of the certification requirement (N-3; 4-8) is such that it will impact the level of preparation and the grades and settings in which one could teach.

Chapter 49-2 will limit the portability of Pennsylvania certified elementary teachers. Chapter 49-2 could discourage enrollment in teacher preparation programs within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania because the Pennsylvania certificates will be less portable.

The implementation of Chapter 49-2 will seriously impact the preparation of special education teachers on the secondary level. The need to obtain certification in a content area as well as obtain the required courses for special-education certification will make pursuit of this degree highly unattractive (over 150 credits could be necessary to obtain this certification). What will we do when there is a need for special-education teachers in the secondary level and no one is prepared to fill this need?

I certainly applaud the efforts of those within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Department of Education who wish to ensure that the needs of the early childhood learner are best addressed; however, I am not certain if the best way has been developed. If the concerns I am raising, and those raised by many, many of my colleagues are "on target," then I believe these concerns need to be listened to and addressed before Chapter 49-2 is fully implemented.

The date for compliance Chapter 49-2 currently set for 2010 suggests that certificates issued after January 1, 2012, will fall under the revised Chapter 49-2 regulations. By moving the dates up two years we would be able to re-design our teacher education programs comprehensively, institute appropriate faculty development activities, and hire necessary faculty members in order to provide the resources required to produce highly qualified classroom teachers.

Finally, both I personally, and all those involved with the teacher education program at Neumann College, stand ready to serve in any way we are able to assist the Commonwealth with this endeavor.

Your consideration of our needs is most appreciated.

Sincerely yours,
Joe Gillespie

Dr. Joseph E. Gillespie
Academic Dean
Division of Education and Human Services
Neumann College

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INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

One Neumann Drive
Aston, PA 19014-1298
Phone: 610-558-5640
FAX: 610-361-5443
email: gillespj@neumann.edu
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