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PA. STATE BOARD  
OF EDUCATION

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December 19, 2006

Jim Buckheit, Executive Director  
State Board of Education  
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INDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
REVIEW COMMISSION

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Dear Mr. Buckheit:

I want to comment on the proposed rule making for 22 PA Code Chapter 49, Certification of Professional Personnel.

I am a parent of two students who were identified as gifted in the Mt. Lebanon School District several years ago. I know that the needs of gifted children can be as diverse as those with disabilities. My children have moved on to college and graduate school now but their years in K-12 were a mix of a few excellent classroom teachers who understood their needs and accommodated them, and unfortunately far many more teachers who understood nothing about the gifted learner and resented being asked to accommodate their strengths, or did not know what could or should be done for such students. At times my children would refuse to go to school. I was a parent willing to fight for their needs even though I found it highly stressful to do this. Sometimes I succeeded. It should not have to be this way for others. All children deserve an appropriate education without parents having to "fight the bureaucracy."

I agree that all new teachers should hold dual certification in both their academic area and in special education. However, Special Education certification should be defined to include gifted education, also. (See *Background*, Page 1 of 11.)

**Section 49.1 Definitions.**

*Diverse learner* should include a student identified as gifted. Insert "or giftedness" after "or disabilities." Alternatively, add "and gifted learner" to wherever diverse learner is stated in the regulations.

*Education specialist* should include gifted coordinators and gifted teachers.

**Section 49.13. Policies**

The teacher education programs should also include at least 9 credits or 270 hours regarding accommodations and adaptations for students identified as gifted in an inclusive setting in addition to those hours required for teaching/assisting students with disabilities and English Language learners.

Section 49.14 *Background* mentions that the purpose is to “enable the achievement of all students”; all students should include addressing the needs of gifted students.

**Section 49.17 Continuing Professional Education** Add gifted students:

(7) The continuing professional education plan must include a description on how the school entity will ensure.... teaching diverse learners, including gifted students. Or alternatively, “and gifted students.”

Thank you so much for considering my comments. I hope these regulations will truly help all students succeed in the public schools of Pennsylvania.

Sincerely,



(Ms.) Lourdes M. Castellanos