

Buckheit, James

From: Buckheit, James
Sent: Thursday, December 21, 2006 12:21 PM
To: 'Alyssa Varner'
Subject: RE: Music Education Issue!

State Board of Education
 333 Market Street First Floor
 Harrisburg, PA 17126 0333
 December 21, 2006

RECEIVED
 2006 DEC 27 AM 9:19
 INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
 REVIEW COMMISSION

Dear Ms. Varner:

Thank you for your email message received by the State Board of Education on December 21, 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

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

From: Alyssa Varner [mailto:sfrk@iup.edu]
Sent: Thursday, December 21, 2006 8:34 AM
To: 00statbd@psupen.psu.edu; dreed@pahousegop.com; dwhite@pasen.gov
Subject: Music Education Issue!

Dear State Representative:

As a Music Education student in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, I have strong concerns about the proposed changes to PA Code Title 22, Chapter 49.13(b)(4)(i), and the impact it will have on the content preparation of music teacher certification in our state. The proposal states as follows:

(i) The evaluation by the Department will provide assurance that, on or before January 1, 2010, teacher education programs will require at least 9 credits or 270 hours, or an equivalent combination thereof, regarding accommodations and adaptations for students with disabilities in an inclusive setting. Within the content of these 9 credits or 270 hours, instruction in literacy skills development and cognitive skill development for students with disabilities must be included, as determined by the institution. At least 3 credits or 90 additional hours, or an equivalent combination thereof, must address the instructional needs of English language learners. For purposes of this requirement, 1 credit equals 30 hours of coursework. Applicable hours are limited to a combination of seat hours of classroom

instruction, field observation experiences, major research assignments, and development and implementation of lesson plans with accommodations and adaptations for diverse learners in an inclusive setting.

These requirements in the initial certification program will result in the major subject matter of the degree being reduced resulting in less competent teachers for all students who will be unprepared to teach students to accomplish the state standards and the requirements of NCLB. Because it is not allowable under our current PASSHE mandates to add a 9th semester to the Music Education program, valuable classes will have to be cut in order to fit the proposed 9 extra credits into the curriculum, and hinder my understanding of what I have just spent the past five years in college for. Currently, the Music Education program is set at 8 semesters, 7 semesters of classes and 1 semester of student teaching. With limited seats available in classes and low numbers of qualified professors to teach the classes, it is very difficult to graduate with an education degree in 8 semesters. I have already experienced being denied access due to insufficient room in a class, and have had to take my ensembles for zero credit because ensembles aren't considered a class. Why should it be considered fair for me to put forth all of the effort in my ensembles and not receive credit?

Adding these extra credits to our program will cut valuable classes such as Class Strings, Class Woodwinds, Class Percussion, Class Brass, Class Voice, Instrumental Methods, Elementary Methods and General/Choral Methods. These classes are vital to the specific area of content knowledge for all Music Education majors. Class Strings, Brass and Woodwinds teach us to develop rudimentary techniques to initiate instruction for beginning students, and emphasize correct playing position and overall tone production on all instruments in the respective families. Class Percussion introduces us to the many instruments in the percussion family, how to assemble and play them, and how to instruct correct playing techniques to students.

Instrumental, Elementary and General/Choral Methods teach us how to effectively introduce and teach children about their instruments, and how to incorporate lessons and activities into the appropriate classroom level for optimum learning and understanding. If 9 extra credits are added and these classes are cut, you will be sending a new generation of Music Teachers out into the world who will not know how to teach the instruments, let alone know anything about them at all.

You will be sending a new generation of teachers into the world that will not have the ability to think.

I recommend no more than 90 hours (equivalent of 3 credits) for "instruction in literacy skills development and cognitive skill development for students with disabilities" be addressed in the initial certification program, and the remaining hours plus the 90 hours for English language learners be requirements for Instructional II certificates.

Sincerely,

Alyssa A. Varner
Indiana University of Pennsylvania