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1/2/08

Mr. Kim Kaufman, Executive Director
Independent Regulatory Review Commission
333 Market Street, 14th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Dear Mr. Kaufman,

I am writing to you today to discuss the important matter of caseload size for the many public school-based speech/language pathologists (SLP) in Pennsylvania, of which I am one.

I have been a school-based SLP for 23 years in the Millcreek Township School District in Erie, PA. During my tenure, I have treated students with many different speech/language impairments with different levels of severity. During the last 4 years, there has been a trend and an involvement in my role here. The high incidence of severe communication deficits is on the rise. This is a nationwide trend as evidenced in the staggering statistics of high numbers of autistic students in which communication is a major weakness. Stuttering is on the rise too. The children with the diagnosis of failure to thrive as infants ARE thriving and exhibit significant delays including communication. Currently, I service 2 large schools, an elementary school and a middle school with a total population of 1,190 students. I have 3 students who use 3 different speech generating devices at 3 different instructional levels. This is addition to the other students with speech and language difficulties that benefit from my program for a total of close to 60 and rising. The number of 65 is too high as 1/3 of these students are seen 3x each.

I am writing today to encourage you to consider a recommendation of revising the caseload size for Pennsylvania's school-based SLPs. The American Speech/Language/Hearing Association (ASHA) recommends a caseload number of 40. The caseload number for SLP's who service early intervention in PA is 50. Please consider a caseload number of no higher than 50, for Pennsylvania's school based SLP's like myself who provide DIRECT services to students to help them meet Pennsylvania's Academic Standards for Listening and Speaking.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



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