

2618

Sandra Jane Metzler  
10 Julia Lane  
Waterford, PA 16441

RECEIVED

JUL 13 2007

PA. STATE BOARD  
OF EDUCATION

June 29, 2007

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

Dear Mr. Buckheit,

I am appalled to learn that the PSBE has taken the time to fix something else that isn't broken, namely the system of dedicated paraprofessionals involved in public education. I teach at Seneca High School in the Wattsburg Area School District and have had several experiences with paraprofessionals with no complaints about their ability to provide for the student they were attending. Being a paraprofessional is a matter of HEART, not formal education! The care that these employees provided for the variety of disabilities presented by the individual student has been exceptional.

When any of these paraprofessionals was in the classroom there was excellent communication with me, the teacher and excellent service provided to their client. It is not their duty to teach the student – that is MY duty as the teacher, and expecting them to know the content area is ridiculous. If they have the education to teach, they are going to leave the long hours and poor pay associated with being a paraprofessional and become a professional. When one student graduates with a physical disability and another enters with downs syndrome or autism, it is ludicrous that the paraprofessional would receive different training to fill a position with a new student.

The compassion of the paraprofessional is the ingredient that maintains the integrity of the relationships between all parties. Increasing training, or requiring more rigorous testing or increased education will place an undue burden on these dedicated staff members and reduce the number of people available for these important positions. There are already far too few people available for these positions and instead of placing a greater burden of preparation on these dedicated staff you should be spending time finding ways to increase their wages to reward them for the difficult work they do. Please reconsider this action and be reasonable in your expectations while recognizing the HEART of the matter – compassion!

Sincerely,

  
Sandra Jane Metzler

Regular education secondary English teacher

P.S. You should reconsider the income of the Chancellor of Education who makes twice as much as the Governor. Is that really necessary?

RECEIVED

2007 JUL 18 PM 1:10

INDEPENDENT  
REPRESENTATIVE  
REPRESENTATIVE