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PA. STATE BOARD
OF EDUCATION

July 5, 2007

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

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
HEALTH COMMISSION

2007 JUL 16 AM 9:56

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Dear Mr. Buckheit:

I am very concerned with the proposed changes for paraprofessionals currently working with special education students. I am a paraprofessional in an elementary school and I do not have the required 2 years of post-secondary studies or possess an Associate Degree or higher.

However, I have over six years experience in my field. My annual evaluations always state that I exceed the expectations of my job description. Every year I receive accolades from the parents of the students I work with. I do not understand how a test is going to determine if I am capable of doing the job or not.

I currently have over 70 hours of specialized training that I've attended. Many of these hours are from classes and workshops that my school district has offered. Many are from classes I attended on my own time, at my own expense. I work very closely with the teaching staff and if I have questions or concerns I ask for their support immediately.

I suggest that someone with over 5 years of experience, at least 50 hours of training, and the expectation of continued training yearly, along with better than average yearly evaluations from their teaching staff and administration be considered or deemed as meeting the rigorous standard.

I do not feel it important for paraprofessionals to memorize all of the subject matter that the student is learning. Our job is to assist the student with supplementary services (not teach) and help them to understand the matter.

Please reconsider the proposed regulations. I love the work that I do and my students are always first in my thoughts.

Sincerely,


Barbara J. Lees