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PA. STATE BOARD
OF EDUCATION

July 9, 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 writing in response to the proposed changes for paraprofessionals to meet rigorous standards. I have been employed as an instructional assistant through the Special Education Department of my school district. The district has provided the training they felt was appropriate to maintain a level of high standards when working with our students with special needs.

With consideration to the expense that may be at the hand of the paraprofessional to obtain the post-secondary requirements, what accommodations will be made...

- ✓ to increase the salary scale?
- ✓ to provide course work via internet at little or no charge?
- ✓ to evaluate the paraprofessionals' ability to function effectively in a classroom?

I am also concerned about the type of evaluation or test the PDE proposes to use to test knowledge of content matter. Paraprofessionals/Instructional Assistants work closely with certified teachers to support the special needs students. I question the PDE's ability to test what the paraprofessional does during the day to support these children's needs. As you are aware, our special needs population comes with a wide variety of disabilities which must be assessed and evaluated on a one-by-one basis. Support for these students has been set up the same way. How can that be tested? What additional, mandatory course work will supply more appropriate training than the school district already provides?

I appreciate your time and attention to this most serious matter.

Sincerely,



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