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INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

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JUL 20 2007

PA. STATE BOARD
OF EDUCATION

July 18, 2007

RE: Proposed Changes For Paraprofessionals

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

Dear Mr. Buckheit:

I am writing to express my concerns about the major changes proposed for paraprofessionals by the PA State Board. I have worked as an Instructional Assistant for the Neshaminy School District for 24 years. From the beginning of my service with the School District, I have not only received extensive training through workshops, but I have also voluntarily attended selected post secondary educational training courses pertaining to special education matters. Last year I voluntarily completed 11 hours of training in Nonviolent Crisis Intervention offered through the Crisis Prevention Institute.

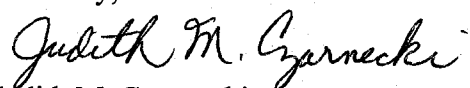
Throughout my career, I have received on-the-job training, working closely with the same Special Education Teacher, as well as with other Inclusion Teachers. My training and experience has not only helped me in my daily work with children with learning disabilities, but it has also given me the needed tools to identify children with emotional difficulties who need immediate and more extensive help. Throughout my 24 years, I have also benefited from the willingness of the Special Education Teacher I work with to share her knowledge and workshop training so that I could truly be an integral part of a "special education team".

I continually strive to keep abreast of special education matters by reading articles on learning disabilities, autism, etc. I am rarely absent because I know my students need a consistent routine and I truly love what I do. I've had excellent evaluations throughout my career.

I could probably go on and on about my lifetime training, experience, and knowledge of special education, but the bottom line is that given my years of training and experience, I now find it hard to believe that the PA State Board is "proposing that I need to take a test to prove that I am highly qualified for my position as a paraprofessional". It is not important that a paraprofessional memorize all of the subject matter applicable to special education. What is important is that the paraprofessional impart his or her training and

knowledge in a way that best serves to educate the children with special needs. I hope you will take all of the above into consideration when you finalize the requirements for Instructional Assistants, especially for paraprofessionals like me who have devoted 24 years of working to insure that children with disabilities receive the highest level of attention and education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Judith M. Czarnecki".

Judith M. Czarnecki
515 Maple Point Drive
Langhorne, PA 19047