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**Buckheit, James****From:** Melissa Regnell [mnr@treborllc.com]

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**Sent:** Monday, July 30, 2007 1:10 PM**To:** kkaufman@irrc.state.pa.us; :ljohnson@irrc.state.pa.us; fwilmarth@irrc.state.pa.usINDEPENDENT REGULATORY  
REVIEW COMMISSION**Cc:** jbuckheit@state.pa.us**Subject:** Public Comments Period to IRRC for Chapter 14

I presented a copy of these comments to the Board of Education on 18 July, 2007, and was told to submit them again.

Please advise me if I have properly submitted these comments for the public comment period for the IRRC on Chapter 14, Special Education. I will also fax a copy to 717-783-2664. Thank you for your time.

Comments submitted by:

Melissa Regnell

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It is most important to acknowledge that children can be gifted and disabled. Acknowledgement is the first step to identifying this very unique class of children - children, who quite frankly, go unidentified and therefore slip through the cracks. This may be the child who has high verbal abilities but is unable to express himself in the written language. Or she may require frequent teacher support and feedback in deficient areas and be highly independent in other areas. Or the child may have some form of other health impairment that directly impacts his ability to learn.

As an analogy it is like asking yourself to place your pen in your non-dominant hand. You will quickly come to the conclusion that your inability to provide a writing sample has no affect on other areas of your intellect. But on the other hand, it can very quickly impair your

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ability to keep up with a discussion we may be having, if you must rely solely on your ability to take notes. This analogy illustrates the case where the disability might be acknowledged, but the gifts are not explored while the child's deficit is being addressed.

Another issue of importance in the under identification of 2E kids lies with the masking affects that either their gifts have on their disability or their disability has on their gifts. Some of these children are never evaluated and those who may have been evaluated are found to have FSIQs that fall in the high average range. The erroneous conclusion is that these children do not need specially designed instruction. For a while these children appear o.k. when it comes to academic performance. However, these children are at risk. At some point in their development they often become frustrated and are unable to compensate. They begin to decline in performance and often develop behavioral problems. Unfortunately, this behavior is often looked at as the cause and not the symptom.

When we know better, we do better. So now that we know better we must do better. We must do better by acknowledging the twice exceptional child in Chapter 14 and by providing clear guidance in your regulation to school district personnel on how to identify children with both disabilities and gifts. Please show the wisdom to modify Chapter 14 with the proposed written changes PEGS has provided to the board.

I will leave you with one parent's story – I will call him John. At 7, John was given a GMDE with a WISC score of 123. On many of his subtests John scored in the range of 16-19 which were clearly 2 or more standard deviations above the norm. John also had other subtest scores that ranged from 7-10; clearly at or below average. Though John was not identified as having either a disability or being gifted, he excelled in elementary school. John is now a 9<sup>th</sup> grader and is in an alternative educational setting due to behavior problems. His parents are being blamed, John is being blamed – everyone but the school. He should have been rescued from this fate. Rescued by a

responsive group of experts whose job it is to diagnose and treat these children with a prescription for education that fosters these children to become all that they can be. John's Mom believes that it is "too late" for her son. It doesn't have to be too late and it certainly should never be this late!

Children don't fail the schools but sometimes the schools fail the children.

