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EMBARGOED MATERIAL

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From: Help
Sent: Wednesday, September 17, 2008 4:26 PM
To: IRRC; Schalles, Scott R.; Wilmarth, Fiona E.; Gelnett, Wanda B.
Subject: FW: IRRC Website - New Message

2008 SEP 17 PM 4:40

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

Comment letter

-----Original Message-----

From: Independent Regulatory Review Commission [mailto:No-Reply@irrc.state.pa.us]
Sent: Wednesday, September 17, 2008 4:16 PM
To: Help
Subject: IRRC Website - New Message



IRRC

Independent Regulatory Review Commission

A new message has arrived from the IRRC Website

First Name: Wayne

Last Name: Mery

Company:

Email: merywl@ptd.net

Subject: Final Regulation 6-307, Gifted Education (IRRC #2635)

Message:

Internal Regulatory Review Commission 333 Market Street Harrisburg PA Attn: Arthur Coccodrilli, Chair Re: Final Regulation 6-307, Gifted Education (IRRC #2635) Dear Chairman Coccodrilli, I am a parent of a graduated gifted son, a PAGE board member, and a six year member of our school district's Gifted Advisory Council - a careful formulation of administrators, educators and parents that works collaboratively to advise the school district in all matters related to gifted education. Many people and many groups have worked passionately and even feverishly to improve upon the existing Chapter 16 regulations. This work is commendable, and I believe there is significant overall improvement in the proposed regulation, indeed in some areas incredible improvement. I would be in favor of approval, while acknowledging there is plenty of room for improvement as indicated by many people, were it not for one significant flaw - insufficient enforcement through the monitoring process. My concern is not school district procedure, nor substandard services from those districts that are not well informed, but rather the large number of school districts that by choice provide no measurable educational benefit for most or no students in their district, and who will continue on that path until forced to do so. These students should not have to wait for twelve years for there to be even a 30% chance that their school district be audited by PDE's monitoring process. Perhaps the Department has plans to improve the monitoring process. But it took three years for the Department to implement the middle (monitoring) clause of the requirement "To meet this responsibility [to "superintend ... and enforce the provisions"], the Secretary will continue to include students who are gifted in Departmental tracking systems, monitor the actions of school districts for compliance with the requirements of this regulation, and hear and investigate complaints." Indeed I suggest that, in these districts, the "balance" sought by the State Board of Education in framing the chapter for gifted students has been vastly underachieved, to wit "This chapter is intended to strike a proper balance between necessary regulatory

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protections and maximum local control." At \$21,000 per anum, PDE's current monitoring process does not significantly insure that such a balance will be achieved in any meaningful time frame. And it should not be incumbent on parents in those districts to effect the level of change needed for a minimal gifted education, i.e. to go from zero to something for students district-wide. I am not aware of such a problem when it comes to enforcement of building standards, IDEA standards, and general educational standards for which district receive federal and state funds. Why should it be so for Chapter 16, "Special Education for Gifted Students?" I count myself lucky my son received a gifted education, though in many years it was far, far from great. I pity the students in those districts that receive no meaningful benefit whatsoever in the gifted sense. If the final form of the regulation is approved, which I expect it will be, I would expect a) the Department's timely issued Basic Education Circular will be superior to and *improve* on the present procedures (which are not fully adequate as pointed out by others in great detail) or b) failing to be substantially improved, the State Board of Education exercises oversight within a meaningful time frame to achieve the needed changes at the Department. While I am very eager to see this regulation approved, we cannot in good conscience forget this underserved population of students. With thanks to everyone involved in the process. Sincerely Wayne Mery