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Cooper, Kathy

From: Kasgerb@aol.com
Sent: Tuesday, September 25, 2007 2:04 PM
To: IRRRC
Subject: Re: Chapter 16 Revisions

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INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

To: Kim Kaufmann, Executive Director, IRRRC
From: Gigi Gerben kasgerb@aol.com
 Via email

Dear Ms. Kaufmann:

I am providing my comments on proposed changes to Chapter 16, which governs Gifted Education in Pennsylvania. I support the following revisions:

- I support stricter compliance monitoring, including complaint-driven monitoring. Until recently, even limited monitoring for compliance with Chapter 16 did not occur. The Department of Education should perform cyclical and complaint-driven monitoring to ensure implementation of Chapter 16. The Department should establish a complaint procedure and disseminate notice of that procedure, which should include:
 - The process for parents to file
 - An opportunity for the school district to respond to such complaints
 - A plan for the Department to resolve complaints
 - A system of annual reporting to the State Board and public that sets forth the numbers of and the substantive and procedural issues of complaints filed by parents
- A full-time teacher's caseload should be limited to 60 students. Gifted teachers provide curriculum development, enrichment/acceleration on a one-to-one basis, pull-out enrichment. These teachers are also responsible for planning and implementing GIEPs. Therefore, their caseload needs to be limited. I have personally seen what happens when a teacher's caseload is too high.
- Class size should be limited to 20 students. If teachers are to uphold the spirit of Chapter 16 "...to provide individualized specially designed instruction" which will allow for meaningful academic progress and achievement, then class size needs to be smaller in order to allow for the amount of individuation and differentiation which should be occurring.
- Criteria used for identification
 - The wording which explains what giftedness is should be changed to read "...includes a person who has an IQ of 130 or higher OR [rather than the current "and"] when multiple criteria as set forth in this chapter and in Department Guidelines indicate gifted ability..."

The rationale for this is that many IQ tests have a +/- of 5 points. Students with an IQ measure of 125 may indeed be gifted and should receive services, but the way in which the law reads now allows for school districts to use 130 as a cut-off for providing services. Consideration for services should be given to students falling in the 125 range.

Gifted education is important in Pennsylvania and these revisions will strengthen our law governing Gifted Education and will provide clearer guidelines for school districts, teachers, and parents.

9/25/2007