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From: Heidi Eby [heidi63@comcast.net]
Sent: Friday, September 28, 2007 2:15 PM
To: IRRC
Cc: heidi63@comcast.net
Subject: Chapter 16 Revision

INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

September 28, 2007

Dear Sirs or Madams,

I am writing to express my views on the proposed version of Chapter 16. I absolutely support change and better enforcement of policies, procedures & regulations with regards to gifted education in the state of Pennsylvania.

I have a 16 year old daughter who was identified gifted at the age of 8 while in the third grade at Hershey Elementary School in the Derry Township School District. Our experience with the gifted education program in our school district has been an very frustrating experience. While she has had many wonderful and outstanding teachers during her education, the assertion that there is a 'gifted education program' to enhance, enrich & engage these unique children is not accurate. In talking with many other parents in and out of Derry Township School District, this appears to be a common theme in a gifted child's education, inadequacy in policies, procedures, options and regulations.

As a parent of an identified gifted child whose evaluation states that she is in the upper extreme of intellectual range and that the regular educational curriculum would in no way meet her educational needs, I find the state extremely lacking in guidance, enforcement and communication about options for gifted education, both to the school districts as well as to parents. Derry Township School District has a 'pull out' gifted program where the students are pulled out for a 45 minute group session with the gifted support teacher once every six day cycle. These children are not gifted for only 45 minutes every six days. What about the day in and day out boredom, unchallenging & fruitless busy work that is experienced each and every school day for these kids? Why doesn't the state and individual school districts celebrate the best & brightest of our academically gifted students?

Particularly alarming is the message being sent to this kids your exceptional ability is not important, you should be happy to be getting A's so easily and because you make our school district look good with your high achievements in the classroom and on standardized tests, we need to concentrate on those that have more struggles. Why are these kids not applauded & allowed to go as far as they can at each grade level, in each subject and/or as fast as they can if that is their desire? Our star quarterback on the football team is regularly praised & given opportunities to succeed, the clarinet player who makes district or county band is honored & praised and is in select musical groups. But, the child who takes the SATs in 7th grade and scores higher than more than 80% of the current seniors or the child who can complete the typical curriculum unit in days rather than months is told to be patient, help the other kids & to wait until the entire class has reached a sufficient level of understanding to continue. When my daughter took a year-end math test in 5th grade at the *beginning* of the year and scored 84%, we were told all about what she could not do & that the 84% wasn't good enough to place her out of the regular math curriculum in 5th grade. Her teacher gave us a 500 page elementary algebra book and told us that she could work on this book at home at her leisure. When I asked where she should start or if she should keep in sync with the same type of unit that her class was working on, I was told that she could do what she wanted but it was to be independent of and in addition to her regular classroom work. Is this how we want to engage & nurture these intellectually gifted minds? These kids are our future leaders, our future scientists, our future period! If the USA, and specifically the state of PA wants to be the proud home of the future world leaders and brilliant contributors to society, then we certainly should better provide these kids with what they crave ... an atmosphere free to learn as much as they can and celebrate their academic gifts by providing guidelines and opportunities to which our school districts must adhere, offer & absolutely embrace with the eagerness & enthusiasm these kids deserve.

We are failing the best of the best we are actually harming these kids by failing to challenge them - perfectionism, low

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self-confidence, anxiety, and the feeling that they are not acknowledged and appreciated for their amazing intellectual gift all set them up for a hard educational & emotional road to travel.

It is my sincere hope that change is imminent with the gifted education programs in our state. I hope that Pennsylvania can be a leader in providing opportunities and the best education for gifted children as possible.

Sincerely,

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