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INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVIEW COMMISSION

OCT 1 5 2007
PA. STATE BOARD
OF EDUCATION

Jim Buckheit
Executive Director
State Board of Education
333 Market St. 14th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17125-0333

Dear Mr. Buckheit,

I am writing in response the proposal to change Chapter 16 regulations. As a veteran educator, close to retirement, I am fully aware of the critical need for appropriate specially designed instruction for gifted students. I am appalled that the committee is recommending that the instructional class size be raised from twenty to twenty five students. How can the needs for stimulation, challenge and acceleration really be addressed when the class size is increased?

I have worked for along time with gifted high school students in the Pittsburgh Public School System. The full-time academic program that was specifically designed to meet the educational needs of gifted students has been well respected for over twenty years and has been cited by the state of Pennsylvania two times for being exemplary. Should the new regulation be implemented with increased class size, our gifted program's strength would be severely impacted in a negative way. Our high school gifted program attracts new residents with high school age children who are relocating to Pittsburgh. Over one third of our ninth grade population enters from local private and parochial schools, attracted by our accelerated programming. Given the respect accorded our gifted program, it promotes neighborhood stability within Pittsburgh and thus contributes to viable tax-base.

If the United States is to remain competitive in the future, it is essential that we nurture and challenge the best and the brightest students. One fact of critical importance is that the population of GIFTED students in China equals the entire school age population of the United States.

Thank you for your consideration of such a vital matter.


Helen Meigs