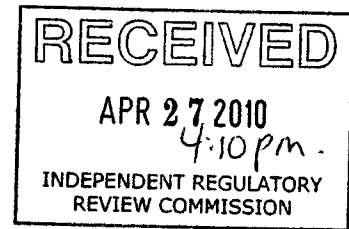


Independent Regulatory Review Commission
333 Market Street
14th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101
Fax number: (717) 783-2664
irrc@irrc.state.pa.us

2817



RE: Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts final omitted regulations (#6-319)

Dear Commission members:

My name is Janice S. Gebicki and I am a retired primary school principal of 35 years and am now working as the School Readiness Director of the United Way of Westmoreland County. I am writing to express **my support** for the Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts final omitted regulations re-submitted to you on April 7, 2010 (#6-319).

The quality expectations of Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts, which are included in the regulations, are essential to gaining positive outcomes for our young children. Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts is giving our at-risk children, such as those living in low-income families, those with special needs, and English language learners the strong start that research shows can help them overcome these risk factors and enter school ready to learn.

An important piece of these guidelines is promoting inclusive classrooms. As a former primary principal I realize first hand the importance of inclusion of children with disabilities and developmental delays.

- Research has shown many positive effects of including children with disabilities in early childhood programs. The benefits accrue not only to children with disabilities but also to children with typical development, their families, classroom teachers, and the community at large.
- The quality expectations of Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts, which are included in the regulations require approved providers to collaborate with infant/toddler and preschool Early Intervention services to provide a smooth transition for children entering classrooms, facilitate the Early Intervention services needed for children enrolled in PA Pre-K Counts classrooms, and facilitate identification of children who are not receiving Early Intervention services but are eligible.
- PA Pre-K Counts has been a contributing factor to the increase of EI children in typical settings. Historically, less than 50% of preschool children receiving Early Intervention services received their services in typical early childhood settings. Since the creation of PA Pre-K Counts and targeted efforts to promote inclusion in PA Pre-K Counts classrooms, 15% more preschool children receiving Early Intervention services are enrolled in typical classroom settings.
- Across Pennsylvania, between 5%-7% of preschool children are receiving Early Intervention Services. Approximately 7.5% of children in PA Pre-K Counts are receiving Early Intervention services.

I have personally worked with PA Pre-K Counts programs in Westmoreland County (New Kensington-Arnold and Seton Hill Child services) and have witnessed how these programs served children with disabilities.

Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts is working because it is providing high quality pre-kindergarten to our at-risk children in inclusive classrooms.

Please approve these regulations in full.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Janice S. Gebicki".

Janice S. Gebicki
School Readiness Director
United Way of Westmoreland County

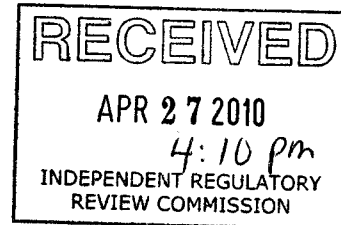
From: Jan Gebicki [Jan@unitedway4u.org]
Sent: Tuesday, April 27, 2010 4:03 PM
To: IRRRC
Subject: letter
Attachments: LETTER.doc

2817



Jan

Janice S. Gebicki
Director of School Readiness
United Way of Westmoreland County
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Greensburg PA 15601
Phone - 724/834-7170 ext. 19
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LIVE UNITED

United Way of Westmoreland County is working hard to advance the common good.
Our goal is to create long-lasting change for children, seniors, families and our communities.

Be part of the change. **GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER.**

Together, united, we can inspire hope and create opportunity for a better tomorrow.

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