

Monday, February 28, 2022

Pennsylvania State Board of Education
Pennsylvania Independent Regulatory Review Commission
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania



Dear State Board of Education and Independent Regulatory Review Commission Members,

On behalf of the Pennsylvania Educator Diversity Consortium, we would like to submit the below comments on the final form amendments to Chapter 49. The Pennsylvania Educator Diversity Consortium (PEDC) is a grassroots organization of PK-12, higher education, non-profit, government leaders, and other invested partners striving to increase the number of educators of color as well as culturally responsive and sustaining educators in Pennsylvania. Our consortium includes over 150 individuals from 80 organizations across the Commonwealth.

PEDC strongly supports the inclusion of culturally relevant and sustaining education (CR-SE) in the proposed amendments to Chapter 49. We know from research as well as our own experience at our institutions that culturally responsive educators are able to create more affirming environments, develop stronger relationships, and produce better academic, social-emotional, and postsecondary outcomes for students, especially students of color. We consider it an urgent priority to ensure that all pre-service teachers, current educators, and teacher educators in Pennsylvania are trained in CR-SE in order to build a more equitable educational system that serves all students, especially those from historically marginalized backgrounds. One of our five policy priorities is to “elevate and provide support around the Culturally Relevant & Sustaining Education competencies.” We applaud the State Board for recognizing the importance of CR-SE and taking the first steps to embed it in teacher training in the Commonwealth.

Many of our members were involved in the Pennsylvania Department of Education’s Aspiring to Educate initiative to diversify the teacher pipeline through programs and partnerships at our institutions. As part of that grant program, PEDC developed and submitted to the Department of Education a draft form of CR-SE competencies, which the Department has shared in draft form with the State Board. These competencies were developed with input from experts and practitioners across the Commonwealth as well as research into similar competencies from other states. We urge the Department to quickly finalize the competencies PEDC has co-developed with the Department, and to create implementation guidelines for educator preparation programs and local education agencies to incorporate CR-SE into their educator training. We further urge the Department to take up the State Board’s directive to incorporate CR-SE into the regulations for educator preparation programs in Chapter 354.

Finally, we offer our partnership and support to the Department and State Board as they implement this updated regulation and continue with efforts to infuse culturally relevant and sustaining education into all aspects of educator training and professional development across Pennsylvania.

Sincerely,

The Pennsylvania Educator Diversity Consortium

www.paeddiversity.org