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

Independent Regulatory
Review Commission

Laura Campbell
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Scott Schalles
IIRC
sschalles@irrc.state.pa.us

March 3, 2022

Dear Laura, Scott, and the IIRC Board,

“If children can’t learn the way we teach, then we have to teach the way they learn.” Robert Buck

This letter of support of Chapter 49, PA Code 22 is on behalf of Decoding Dyslexia PA. To spark improvement pertaining to education and dyslexia, I co-founded Decoding Dyslexia PA. Decoding Dyslexia is a grassroots parent advocacy group, which supports parents, teachers, professors, professionals, and students with dyslexia and other learning difficulties and empowers them to better advocate for themselves. Pennsylvania was the second state in which Decoding Dyslexia was established and was at the start of a National Movement.

Decoding Dyslexia is now in all US states, plus several Canadian provinces and other countries such as Tanzania and Bermuda. We have improved dyslexia and education laws both locally and federally.

One in five to ten children are struggling with reading. Because such a high percentage of children are not identified as having dyslexia or similar challenges, but need such support, better education, structured literacy. professional development, and other improvements are necessary for all learners.

Such improvements also can reduce co existing conditions that often exist especially because most public-school models require a “fail first, test later” model. Depression, anxiety, suicide, dropping out of school all occur when the students’ educational needs are not met. Literacy is at historic low and better teaching can combat that.

I am writing in favor of final amendments to Chapter 49 Code 22 including but not limited to the following aspects of the document:

Structured Literacy is successful because it is research based, systematic and explicit phonics instruction. Improving training in Structured Literacy for higher education faculty is critical. Doing so through the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network will empower the new generation of teachers joining the declining yet important profession of educating our future generations. (Please Note error in the document and use **systematic** moving forward).

Culturally Relevant and Sustaining Educational practices (CR-SE) is very important for many reasons. Professional Development and training of CR-SE will empower a more culturally diverse student population as well as maintain and attract a more diverse workforce in education. Such instruction and guidelines will help close the Achievement Gap as well.

In summary, Decoding Dyslexia PA applauds the efforts to improve education in the state of Pennsylvania and urges that the recent revisions are approved for 22 PA Code Chapter 49. Structured Literacy and CR-SE are needed for a better, more diverse future for ALL students in Pennsylvania.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Rosette Roth
Co-Founder
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