



POSITION STATEMENT

PACASE is opposed to the proposal allowing Certified School Psychologists to pursue qualifying for the Supervisor of Special Education Credential without having taught in a classroom for the current pre-requisite five years.

The Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE) is a Division of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the largest international professional organization dedicated to improving the educational success of children and youth with disabilities and/or gifts and talents.

The Pennsylvania Chapter of CASE (PACASE) has over 300 members comprised of current administrators, retired administrators, University faculty, and graduate students in the field of Special Education Administration. We are the educators who hold, have held, or will hold the position under discussion.

The Leadership Team of PACASE has reviewed the proposed change to Chapter 49 that would allow Certified School Psychologists to complete an approved graduate program and demonstrate satisfactory achievement on the assessment prescribed by the Department of Education in order to qualify for a certificate as a Supervisor of Special Education, **but without** having to meet the current, in force requirement of five years teaching experience. The Board also surveyed the membership and solicited comments to arrive at a consensus.

PACASE opposes the proposed change because Special Education programs are first and foremost instructional programs. School Psychologists lack the prerequisite background knowledge, experience, and skills to design, assess, and implement instructional programs. Likewise, they do not have the skills and knowledge to provide support and guidance to teachers or to evaluate teachers. These core expectations of a Supervisor of Special Education are delineated in PDE's *Framework for Leadership: Domain 3-Leadership for Learning*. Without pre-service coursework in learning theory, instructional design, and strategies, and, more importantly, demonstrated proficiency in the classroom, it would be extremely difficult for a School Psychologist to meet the requirements of a Supervisor of Special Education.

Secondly, PACASE is opposed because many districts are experiencing a shortage of School Psychologists. Prior comments to the Board have cited shortages in education as the purpose for seeking changes. While we all agree that there is a shortage of educators in general and support the idea that the State Board should consider alternate pathways to recruit and retain effective educators, this specific proposal would hurt rather than help. Since there is a shortage of School Psychologists, just as there is a shortage of Special Education Administrators, proposing to recruit Administrators among School Psychologist is just increasing one shortage to address another.

[Pg.2_Proposed revisions to Chapter 49]

PACASE members work very closely with School Psychologists and rely heavily on the expertise they bring to the field. School Psychologists provide unique and critical services to students, particularly students with disabilities. As a rule, they are highly skilled and knowledgeable at what they do. However, we do not agree that they are innately prepared to provide instructional supervision. As a result, we are concerned that special education programming would suffer. Simultaneously, we are concerned that recruiting among School Psychologists would exacerbate the shortage of effective School Psychologists.

This proposed amendment contradicts the very intention and two of the goals of the Certification of Professional Personnel of Chapter 49 as outlined and stated below:

1. Proposed amendments are intended to reinforce the professional integrity expected of both new and experienced educators.
2. Through these proposed amendments, the Board seeks to ensure that educators in this Commonwealth are prepared not just in pedagogy and content knowledge, but that they possess a clear understanding of the ethical practice that is expected of them.

Finally, it is the position of PACASE that the proposed amendment to Chapter 49.111 compromises the professional integrity of the Supervisor of Special Education certification and the current expectations for performance of Supervisors of Special Education. In addition, the lack of preparation and demonstrated proficiency in pedagogy, content knowledge, instructional practices and teacher effectiveness fails to fulfill the mission of CEC and PACASE of **improving** the educational success of children and youth with disabilities and/or gifts and talents.

Respectfully submitted,

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