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The Arc of Pennsylvania is affiliated with The Arc of the United States and 33 local chapters of The Arc across PA.

July 6, 2021

Karen Molchanow
State Board of Education
333 Market Street, 1st Floor
Harrisburg, PA. 17050

RE: Comments, Chapter 4, Academic Standards and Assessment

Dear Director Molchanow

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Chapter 4: Academic Standards and Assessments.

The Arc of Pennsylvania is a statewide nonprofit organization that provides advocacy and resources for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and their families. For 71 years, we have advocated for the rights of individuals with disabilities to live, work, be educated, and play in their communities. We have over 12,000 members and 30 local chapters covering 50 counties. The Arc of Pennsylvania and its chapters are first and foremost advocates, but we also provide services. Our perspective is unique in that we are led by people with disabilities and their families, yet we know what it means to provide quality inclusion services.

The Arc of Pennsylvania submits the following comments for your consideration:

Section 4.13. Strategic Plans.

The Arc of Pennsylvania recommends the addition of the following sentence, "Special education plans shall be developed in alignment with the foundation and principles of the district's strategic plan."

Often school districts develop the strategic plan without input/inclusion of representation of special education and develop their special education plans in isolation from the district's overall special education plan. Development of a district's special education plan should be completed within the context of the overall strategic plan and representation of general education curriculum, pupil services, and assessment specialists should be included. The expertise and context of special education should be included in the overall development of the district strategic plan.

Section 4.31. (a). Career and Technical Education.

The Arc of Pennsylvania recommends the addition of the follow sentence, "Assessment of occupational competency for students with significant



disabilities may include assessment of competency to complete specific aspects and tasks within a specific occupational course of study.”

Students with significant disabilities should not be denied access to participation in a vocational education occupational course of study because they may not develop proficiency in all aspects of that occupation. Instead, a student's Individual Education Program team should develop goals for specific skill development of tasks in that industry, which the student can demonstrate competency and would lead to employment in the field of choice of the student.

The Arc of Pennsylvania continues to advocate for all students with intellectual and developmental disabilities to have the opportunity to learn in inclusive settings and with their non-disabled peers. By implementing inclusive practices, Pennsylvania supports students with disabilities in their neighborhood schools, their community, and as successful employees in Pennsylvania's workforce as they transition into adulthood.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sherri Landis".

Sherri Landis
Executive Director