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PA. STATE BOARD
OF EDUCATION

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
333 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

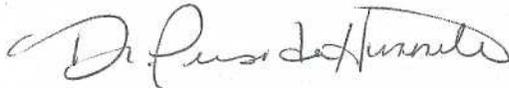
Dear Sate Board of Education Members,

We thank you and applaud your efforts in preparing teachers to be the best that they can be in the teaching of ALL children. **We strongly support** the requirement that all teacher certification candidates complete at least 3 units of coursework in teaching English language learners. We feel that the most effective way to bridge the achievement gap between English language learners and their native English speaking peers is to train classroom teachers on the best practices for meeting the needs of English language learners in their classrooms.

As you may already know **the national drop-out rates for Anglo students in US schools is about 9%, for African Americans the rate is 12%, for Latinos the rate jumps to 30% with the majority of those dropping out (approximately 80%) being English language learners.** If we expect to make a dent in the rate of student failure and increase academic achievement on the part of English language learners, then we must begin with the adequate preparation of teachers to meet the needs of all students, including English language learners. We especially think that it is important for the State Board to specify minimum hours of coursework, as you have done, as opposed to generally stating that there should be *an understanding* of teaching methodology geared toward teaching English language learners. In our experiences, when *a general understanding* has been emphasized, the topic of teaching English language learners becomes lost and forgotten. Thank you for being specific.

We applaud your initiative in taking a step to further the success of our English language learners in the state of Pennsylvania.

Sincerely,



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