



# PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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**STATEMENT OF DR. MICHAEL MCGOVERN,  
VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS, NORTHAMPTON COMMUNITY  
COLLEGE  
BEFORE THE  
HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
NOVEMBER 13, 2008  
HARRISBURG, PA**

**CHAPTER 49-2: TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

Good morning Chairman Roebuck, Chairman Stairs, members of the House Education Committee, and guests. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before this Committee. I am Dr. Michael McGovern, Vice President for Academic Affairs at Northampton Community College. I am here today to offer remarks on behalf of the 14 community colleges and in support of the proposed Chapter 49-2 regulations regarding teacher preparation programs.

Before I begin my comments, I want to take a moment to offer a bit of context. In June of 2006, the legislature adopted Act 114 providing for articulation and transfer between the community colleges and the PaSSHE universities. Act 114 provided a framework to bring institutions of higher education together to establish effective transfer

arrangements for a minimum of 30 foundation credits. While not the full faith and transfer of the associate degree that our community colleges support and continue to advocate, it is a good starting point nonetheless. We value the work of the state Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee (TAOC) and hope that it can lead to the next phase that being moving toward a fully articulated associate/baccalaureate continuum.

I raise the issue of articulation and transfer, because we believe the proposed Chapter 49-2 regulations further the initial efforts of Act 114 by providing for seamless articulation of early childhood associate degree programs into baccalaureate degree programs that lead to Pre-K-4 teacher certification. This, among other current efforts around teacher education programs, is an articulation model that supports the development of well qualified early childhood teachers. The Department has also emphasized the importance of articulation agreements by making them a condition of program approval under these guidelines.

The Chapter 49-2 regulations before you today were developed by educators from Pennsylvania's public and private colleges and universities who have expertise in teacher education directly related to the ages of the children who will be served at the various certification levels outlined under the regulations. So these program guidelines and requirements were not developed in a vacuum – they are based upon research and are consistent with best practice and aligned with National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Associate degree accreditation standards.

I am not going to raise specifics with regard to the regulations. Much of the Department's comments and those of other groups – such as the PA American

Associate Degree Early Childhood Educators (PA ACCESS) and the PA Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators -- extensively addressed the areas of the proposal.

The Pennsylvania Commission for Community Colleges offers its support for the Chapter 49-2 regulations as proposed. The current guidelines represent research based best practice and are developed in a way to ensure that future educators are provided content and methods that are best suited for teaching young children. The use of the faculty matrix will also ensure that faculty assigned to teach in the certification curriculum have the breadth and depth of knowledge about the unique developmental nature of children in this age group. Without the guidelines for both content and faculty qualifications it will not be possible to ensure that the improvements that are the intent of the new certification areas will be achieved.

The true dilemma with the proposed regulations may be the timeline. Not because the timeline is not "doable" from our perspective but because of the need for alignment across the sectors. Universities are revising their existing programs to comply with the new regulations. However, before community colleges can align their curriculum with their transfer schools, the four-year institutions must decide what their requirements are going to be. Northampton and East Stroudsburg University, for instance, have already developed a program to program articulation model. We have also begun conversations with other PaSSHE universities. In addition, because community colleges enroll students in the first two years of their program, it is important that we be involved at the front end of curriculum changes so that their students can transfer efficiently. The numbers of community colleges students that transfer into the education majors at our state's public and private universities continues to be substantial and one that has steadily increased. Given this, the coordination of these issues among the

higher education sectors is vital. Community colleges have been and will continue to be an important pipeline for tomorrow's teachers.

We have much work to do within all sectors of higher education to bring programs into alignment with the new requirements. The Commission urges the Education Committee to allow the Chapter 49-2 regulations to move forward as proposed so that all institutions can engage in the dialogue that must occur – and sooner rather than later – for the benefit of our students who will be seeking to enter these education majors this next academic year.

Thank you for time and I would be pleased to answer any questions.