

Statement in Support of Maintaining the Current Pre K –4 Guidelines and Program Approval Process

**Presented to the Pennsylvania House Education Committee,
November 13th**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a written statement in support of Pennsylvania's cutting edge work to revamp our teacher preparation programs that were re-designed to strengthen and make them more accountable so that our children can get more out of their experience in our public schools. My name is Kent Chrisman and I am the President of the Pennsylvania Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators (PA AECTE).

I was privileged to have served as a member of the P-4 Guidelines Committee where I spent many days reading, reviewing, writing and discussing current research, national standards and documents from professional associations. Based on this work, the committee recommended what I believe, to be a framework that will best serve the needs of children in the Commonwealth in the p-4th grade age span. The components that include requirements for content in family involvement, child development and age appropriate content are consistent with current best practice and are grounded in evidence-based teacher education. The committee spent considerable time in referencing each professional association in reading, mathematics, science and social studies to gather their recommendations and standards. The guidelines committee also spent hours gathering research to support the need for expanded field experiences for undergraduate students in teacher preparation programs.

The program, as it is currently designed and being advanced by the supportive work of the PA Department of Education, also supports the transfer and articulation of credits from 2 yr. institutions to 4 yr. institutions. This is particularly important for career and workforce development for those working in early childhood education. Through the competencies, found in the Program Review Guidelines, programs can easily transfer coursework from institution to institution without loss of credits. Additionally, the credit concept, as advanced in this initiative is helpful and useful, as we seek to assure sufficient local flexibility for the institutions of higher education. However, all institutions must contain sufficient commonalities that provide assurances that higher education can be counted

upon for its important preparatory role in a fair and fundamental way throughout the Commonwealth.

The current guidelines and program approval process as they are written are helpful and essential. I note in particular three aspects of this work that I believe are helpful: the competencies, the course credits, and the faculty matrix. The competencies and the course credits are essential to the integrity of the outcomes of a professional educator who understands the age level, content and methods for teaching young children. This is bolstered by the creation of the faculty matrix, which is designed to assure that those faculty members have devoted time to professional development in the area that they are teaching, have an extensive understanding of this content and are prepared to provide meaningful pedagogical experiences to teacher candidates. Without these assurances the outcomes of the teacher preparation cannot be guaranteed. We have all worked hard, in a thoughtful, disciplined process that has been organized by the state staff, to have a comprehensive approach to our needed overhaul of teacher preparation.

Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kent Chrisman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kent Chrisman, Ed.D.

President, PA Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators