**Request for Feedback about HB 1386**

**Impact on certification!**

Earlier this summer a bill was introduced in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives by Representative [Kristin Hill](http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/member_information/house_bio.cfm?id=1690) (R-93) that, if enacted, would lead to new Instructional certification grade bands in Pennsylvania.  Rep. Hill’s [sponsorship memorandum](http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/Legis/CSM/showMemoPublic.cfm?chamber=H&SPick=20170&cosponId=23926) indicates the following about her bill:

Specifically, my legislation would create the following certification levels for new teachers:

* Early childhood: pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, grades 1 though 4 or ages 3 through 9;
* Elementary: kindergarten, grades 1 through 6 or ages 4 through 11;
* Middle: grades 6 through 9 or ages 11 through 15;
* Secondary: grades 7 through 12 or ages 11 through 21;
* Specialized areas: pre-kindergarten through grade 12 or up to ages 21; and
* Special education: pre-kindergarten through grade 12 or up to age 21.

The bill stipulates that certifications issued under current regulation would remain valid for the term of those certificates, but that PDE would be obligated to develop pathways for teachers holding those credentials to earn certification in the new grade bands in the event they wanted to do so.

Language in the bill that is not mentioned in the sponsorship memo involves what is essentially a repeal of language in Chap. 49 requiring that applicants for certification in special education (PK-8 or 7-12) must also obtain certification in another certification area, such as PK-4 or a 7-12 content area.  From the bill:

(6) Special education - prekindergarten through grade twelve (12) or up to age twenty-one (21). An additional content area shall not be required for a special education certificate issued in accordance with this section.

HB 1386 is currently sitting with the House Education Committee.  According to the House calendar, this committee has no meetings or hearings scheduled at this time.

The PAC-TE Government Relations Committee met on August 1, 2017 to discuss the bill and decide if it is one on which we might want to take a position as an organization.
Since we were not able to come to consensus on that question, we decided to solicit input and opinions from the PAC-TE membership.  We will use your input to develop a statement we would (potentially) share with the House Education Committee for their information and use as they consider the bill.

Please take a look at the sponsorship memo and the bill linked above (the bill itself is quite short) and provide us with your feedback using the following questions as a guide.

1. What is your initial opinion on the reorganization of the certification grade bands?
2. The proposed grade bands overlap each other. Does this overlap make sense to you? Why or why not? For example, will PK-4 and K-6 overlap too much? Does the slight shift from 4-8 to 6-9 make sense?
3. In your opinion will the new grade bands serve the needs of our PK-12 partners? Why or why not?
4. Do you agree with the requirement that special education revert back to a stand alone certification (i.e., doesnot require previous or simultaneous certification in another area such as PK-4, 4-8, or a secondary content area)?
5. What other thoughts and opinions do you wish to share?

Please provide your feedback to these questions or general opinions about the bill on my blog [(here](https://geodrake.blogspot.com/2017/08/pac-te-request-for-feedback-on-hb-1386.html)).  Provide your comments no later than Friday, September 1, 2017.  Please include your name, title, and institution.  We will not share this information beyond our organization without your express permission.  If you wish to follow the feedback of others, please check back there from time-to-time.

Thanks so much,

George Drake
PAC-TE President-Elect and Chair of Government Relations