



5604 Solway Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15201
412.421.3889
tryingtogether.org



July 15, 2024

Independent Regulatory Review
Commission Commissioners
333 Market Street, 14th Floor
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17101

Dear Commissioners:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comment on the Academic Standards and Assessment proposed rulemaking (Regulation # 6-354).

Trying Together supports high-quality care and education for young children by providing advocacy, community resources, and professional growth opportunities for the needs and rights of children, their families, and the individuals who interact with them. Through our Institute of Career Pathways, Trying Together is dedicated to supporting new and current early care and education professionals in Southwestern Pennsylvania by centralizing workforce recruitment, placement, retention, and ongoing professional development. Trying Together is pleased to partner with PennAEYC to support the Pittsburgh Chapter of PennAEYC.

As an organization that supports the early childhood workforce, we support the proposed new strand for Education and Early Childhood Development within the Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) standards. We recognize that the FCS standards aim to prepare students for personal, family and work responsibilities and empower students for the challenges of living and working in a diverse, global society. We understand and support that this proposed addition of the strand will support the instruction aligned to Pennsylvania's new Career and Technical Education Program of Study in Education. We also support the proposed substrands for Education and Early Childhood Development: developmental stages, learning environments, health and safety, literacy, collaborative relationships, and careers.

We believe that these proposed additions will prepare learners in exploring and finding careers, obtaining employment and training. Our hope is that with these proposed additions learners will choose early childhood education as a career with the skills that are a part of the standards for FCS. Trying Together is prepared to support new educators who have chosen a career in early childhood education through their CTE program and can provide a variety of supports, courses, and services to meet their personal needs and professional goals.

We also note that educator preparation programs will need to integrate instruction in the updated standards into the coursework they deliver to those becoming teachers. The early childhood workforce is struggling and has been in a crisis in recent years therefore growing the workforce that holds the necessary credentials to practice and meets the standards and guidelines of the profession and work within their scope of practice is important in addition to recruitment and retention initiatives.

Additional specific comments on the proposed rulemaking:



- At §4.23 (c)(8) related to high school education is missing the inclusion of the principle of child development under family and consumer sciences.
- Within the Academic Standards for Family and Consumer Sciences and the strand, Education and Early Childhood Development, in Appendix D-1:
 - Health and safety substrand – We would recommend an addition of a standard for the Kindergarten to grade 2 grand band. The standard could focus on implementing strategies to teach health, safety and sanitation habits.
 - Collaborative relationships substrand – We would recommend an addition of a standard for the grades 3 to 5 grade band. The standard could focus on applying developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive guidelines for behavior.
 - Careers substrand - We would recommend an addition of standards for the Kindergarten to grade 2 and the grades 3 to 5 grade bands. The standard could focus on explaining the roles and functions of individuals engaged in early childhood, education, and services for Kindergarten to grade 2 and analyzing opportunities for employment, entrepreneurial endeavors, and emerging careers for grade 3 to 5 grade bands.
- Within the Academic Standards for Career Education and Work and the strand, Personal Interests and Career Planning in Appendix E-1:
 - Research careers substrand – We would recommend an addition of a standard for Kindergarten to grade 2 grade band. The standard could focus on analyzing potential career choices to determine the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and opportunities associated with each career.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide public comment. Please contact our Director of Public Policy, Emily Neff, at emily@tryingtogether.org should you have any questions.

Respectfully,



Cara Ciminillo
Executive Director, Trying Together

