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**Media Release**

# **Public Advocacy for Kids Joins Broad Coalition with Major Concerns about Recent Teacher Preparation Regulations**

## Public Advocacy for Kids Cites Equity Issues, Cost, Lack of Evidence, as Major Problems

Washington, DC October 21, 2016: Joining over 30 organizations \* including the governors, state legislators, civil rights, higher education, child advocacy and elementary and secondary education groups, Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK) cites major deficiencies of the new federal teacher-preparation [regulations](http://www2.ed.gov/documents/teaching/teacher-prep-final-regs.pdf), despite some positive tweaks by made by the US Department of Education.

“The US Department seems not to learn,” says Arnold F. Fege, Public Advocacy for Kids president. It insists on imposing one-size fits all standards and policies on over 26,000 education institutions, this time on teacher preparation institutions. Rating schools of education effectiveness based on the standardized test scores of the student’s their graduates teach is costly, arbitrary and without evidence. This is a method not used to evaluate any other professional preparation program.”

Public Advocacy for Kids believes that with teacher shortages, the need to recruit more minority teachers reflecting the changing student demographics, challenges of increasing the number of STEM, ESL and special education teachers, and the importance of schools of education to adapt to the changing needs of students, clearly schools of education need not shy away from collecting that data leading to change and improvement. But these regulations, focusing on the same punitive test and punish measures that sunk No Child Left Behind, will actually discourage teachers from teaching in low income and special needs schools, and certainly create a major impediment to attracting minority teachers. In a nutshell, it will further the inequitable distribution of teachers which according to the US Education Office of Civil Rights is already increasing without these regulations.

But it gets worse. The cost of implementing the regulations will be borne by the state and local level institutions, many of which are already suffering from funding and resources shortages. While states are given some leeway in developing a teacher prep rating system, they have to adhere to four metrics, tying access to student financial aid, collecting the student test score data, and rating teacher prep programs on an annual basis. California has estimated that this regulation will cost them approximately $485 million dollars. Just imagine that each year, your state is required to track all of the teacher prep graduates, compile

tests scores (in many cases from various states) based on standardized tests that may be different from state, and then know that all of this process does not have any evidence or research behind it?

Unfortunately, these rules are a lost opportunity to make deep, substantive and research based changes, but instead reflect a real lack of understanding by our top federal officials about how to lead sustained and systemic innovation, starting with those who are charged with the practice of teaching, parenting, supporting and caring. Parents do not want their students, nor their students teachers identified with a test score, but rather want teachers who are experienced, know how to engage their children, link home and schools, and individualize instruction. Teacher prep institutions need incentives, investment, deep teacher training such as urban residencies, mentoring, national board certification, but above all, they want to be an equal party in change and improvement, rather than being at the bottom of bureaucratic compliance. The story of the regulations are now to be found at the state level as state departments of education begin to grapple with issues of implementations and cost. Public Advocacy for Kids will continue to oppose the flawed regulations, and hopes there is a time when the regulations can be revisited, hopefully when the new Congress and Administration come into office.

\*Find AACTE Coalition Statement https://secure.aacte.org/apps/rl/res\_get.php?fid=3003&ref=rl

*Public Advocacy for Kids is a national group devoted to federal and national education and child advocacy policy with a focus on low-income and special needs children and families. The group has deep involvement and knowledge in ESEA, IDEA, teacher preparation, parent information centers, integrated services, positive school climate, and the federal budget. You will find PAK working on the Hill, with federal agencies, school districts and community based organizations believing that policy must be shaped and crafted from the bottom-up including the community, families, and practitioners who often have no voice in the education of their children, in the United States and internationally.*