



Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC)
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MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 22, 2015

TO: The Honorable Members of the Delaware General Assembly

FROM: Robert D. Overmiller, Chairperson
GACEC

RE: **House Bill No. 52 (Cursive Writing)**

The Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC) has reviewed **House Bill No. 52** which will make the teaching of cursive writing a requirement for all public schools in Delaware. The GACEC **endorses** the proposed legislation.

Council understands that the Common Core standards do not require students to learn cursive writing. However, several states have reacted to this by adopting legislation requiring cursive instruction, including California, Georgia, Massachusetts, and Tennessee. In March, 2015, the New Hampshire Senate voted to require students to be taught cursive and multiplication tables.

Opponents argue cursive proficiency is unnecessary given the prevalent use of electronic keyboards on computers, phones, and pad devices; while proponents argue that learning cursive enhances brain function, increases fine motor dexterity, allows students to read handwritten and historic documents, and is artistic. Please see the attached articles which address writing by hand and brain functioning.

This debate is reminiscent of the debate over Braille instruction for individuals who are blind or have visual impairments. With screen reader software, text may be read to such individuals. With software such as Dragon Dictate, verbal dictation is printed on a screen. Therefore, detractors of Braille instruction argue it is unnecessary. To the contrary, studies confirm that instruction in Braille increases brain function and is correlated with higher educational and vocational achievement. See attached articles. Although the Delaware Department of Education has proposed regulations omitting Braille instruction, it has been prompted to reinstate standards when reminded that Delaware law requires instruction in Braille. See Title 14 Del.C. §206.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our observations. Please feel free to contact me or Wendy Strauss should you have any questions.

Attachments