



September 16, 2019

Dear Vermont Standards Board,

Craftsbury Saplings is a four STARs child care center founded in 2017 to support young families in the larger Craftsbury area. We currently serve two dozen families from seven communities.

Part of our long term vision has been to offer Universal Pre Kindergarten to our families, so that their children may be better prepared for school, and to afford them the advantages of Vermont's innovative preK voucher.

One of the most difficult hurdles for private providers in the provision of UPK is the shortage of licensed PreK teachers. Over the past six months we have worked to implement UPK, yet have not been able to find a licensed educator to provide the required ten hours/week of classroom programming.

Recently, we were delighted to find a veteran elementary educator equipped with more than thirty five (35) years teaching in Orleans South Supervisory Union. With a Masters degree in Education with 45 graduate credits in continuing education, an Elementary Education teaching license, a Special Education endorsement and a stellar career in our School District spanning more than three decades, we were sure we had found the person we needed to support families.

Not so. The teacher is lacking the Early Childhood Education endorsement required to comply with Act 166. We had hoped that our Superintendents (we have approached the two Supervisory Unions where our families reside) would support our efforts. However, we have come to understand that they are not willing to take on what they see as the liability of offering provisional licenses (under their own license) for educators they are not hiring and who won't be directly under their supervision. This appears to hold true even for an educator with such long tenure within one of their own districts.

In conversations with Licensing at the Agency of Education, we learned that we can make an appeal to the Vermont Standards Board. We are writing in hopes that you will be able to work with us in finding a solution. Is there any kind of waiver that can be granted in this situation? Is there a possible alternative path to provisional or emergency licensure, when there is a highly qualified teacher lacking the necessary ECE or ECSE endorsement as required by Act 166,

ready to step in to initiate a UPK program and expand this opportunity for families who do not otherwise have access?

We have a problem. If our system is not flexible enough to support a more nuanced approach to a PreK endorsement, then the system is not supporting the mission of UPK, nor the purpose of our system of public education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. J. G.", is written over a light gray rectangular background.

Chair, Board of Directors
Craftsbury Saplings