

Remarks of Howard Dashefsky
Special Education Teacher
Bloomfield High School, Bloomfield, CT

Before the State Dept. of Education and State Board of Education
Concerning the proposed changes to certification in Special Education

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Good afternoon. My name is Howard Dashefsky and I am a Special Education teacher in Bloomfield, CT. I am in my thirty-first year of teaching Special Education. I am against the proposed changes in Special Education certification for a couple of reasons.

The new requirements make it take longer for a special education teacher to prepare for the classroom and more costly because of the additional credit requirements. I am concerned that there will be fewer teachers inclined to go into this area if they feel that it will take longer and be more costly. For many teachers, the cost of graduate level courses while they are working may be prohibitive. This may lead to initially a shortage in special education teachers at a time when they are needed even more. In addition the preparation does not include a valuable student teaching requirement.

This is a key element that was for me very important in my training and learning.

Another concern I have is that I feel that this new requirement will include a broader range of responsibilities that will make it more difficult for special education teachers to service students. Today I have a caseload of about thirteen students; however this

does not include classes that I directly teach and classes that I co-teach. I am expected to consult with, plan, and carry out lessons with as many as four different teachers. There is a tremendous amount of work that I must do to familiarize myself with the curriculum and to make modifications. There is not always time built into teachers' schedules to do this. Newer teachers coming in under these new requirements will be overwhelmed with new responsibilities and have little time to directly service students. Without the benefit of student teaching and beginning with an initial certificate, teachers will lose valuable time in the classroom where they would have been able to learn and grow.

I hope that the State Department of Education will consider the current responsibilities of special education teachers and reconsider changes in certification. I hope that it will not be too difficult or costly to enter the profession and that the training provided will be timely and effective. Thank you.