

Remarks of Jon-Paul Roden
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Before the State Department of Education and State Board of Education concerning
proposed changes to certification in Special Education, Literacy Consultant and
Teacher Leader

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As a retired Connecticut teacher, but one that is still VERY involved and serves as President of CEA-Retired, a member of the CEA Board of Directors, and as an appointed member of the CEA Student Program Committee, I have several concerns with the proposals which are being discussed concerning teacher certification in Connecticut. These areas concern special education, teacher leadership, and reading/literacy.

I am first concerned that students who are still in high school or even in pre-teaching college/university programs will look at the increased requirements as just one more burden - and perhaps the straw that breaks their back - as they consider teaching as a career. We know all too well that beginning teachers are unlike those that I was among when I started teaching. They aren't at all sure that they will stay in teaching more than a few years. As a result, statistics show that they leave the profession - never to return - and that we are constantly and inducting a much larger new crop of teachers. Adding the new requirements, particularly in special education

and the reading/literacy areas will undoubtedly add to the time and expense that students will need to even obtain their initial certification in these areas.

I recall a group of the deans of a number of certifying colleges and universities being asked about increased requirements only a couple of years back. They looked into the matter and concluded that their schools would not be able to hire sufficient additional faculty necessary to teach the additional courses. They further concluded that these additional faculty members were simply not available. That, of course, would add even more time for students waiting for available classes and thus raise the expense to the pre-service teachers.

Now couple the potential reduction of new candidates for positions with the possibility that those currently teaching under these programs may not be fully "grandfathered" and I believe districts across the state will face a shortage of teachers in these areas that will only be described as catastrophic. The result will be that children are not served and that is just unconscionable.

A question has also been raised by retired teachers who are able to renew their certification in order to take long term substitute positions and whether, if teachers currently teaching in these positions with professional educator certificates aren't grandfathered, retired teachers will be similarly treated. If that is the case, many fewer retired teachers are likely going to continue to substitute. That will add even more to the shortage.

Finally, I simply question why so many fine literacy teachers who are doing a great job every day would need the coursework required for the reading consultant's certificate when those two jobs seem to have such different requirements - one being somewhat administrative and the other much more student centered.

I am sure that you will receive quite a bit of written and oral testimony. I hope that those comments will be given your most serious attention. Thank you for your consideration.