

Good Afternoon. My name is Dawn Darche. I am the Reading Intervention Specialist for the Town of Sterling, CT. I have twenty-four years of experience in education which range from substitute teaching to parochial school teaching to public school experience. I hold a Master's Degree and a Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies.

I heartily endorse the ideas of two levels of certification for literary specialists as suggested by CEA. I am primarily interested in defining the separate areas of study. This brings clarity to the regulation and leaves less to the imagination and creative spirit of the interpreter. Specific coursework in how to teach writing, speaking, listening, and viewing skills must be included in the preparation program. One does not know how to build until they are given the specific techniques of

development. Each participant must know how to generate and nurture the skills necessary to be a literate citizen.

I see no requirements for field experience. Clinical and field work are not interchangeable. Clinical experiences are most often in a controlled environment. Field work should be with a heterogeneous group of students who learn the various styles that are found across Connecticut's classrooms..

It is imperative that each Literacy Specialist have at least thirty months classroom teaching experience and preferably some part of this, or a clinical experience, should be in the elementary grades. Teaching at the elementary level is extremely important.

One cannot fully comprehend the process of planting and growing until one gets involved. Experiencing how a wide variety of youngsters encounter the learning experience and how they process at this level will allow the educator to be effective at the middle and high school levels. Clinical Experience at the middle and/or high school levels would round out a teacher who had experience teaching in the elementary levels and the teacher would benefit by the experience of work with older children.

Too often certification is given to administrative and specialist positions when there is no knowledge of the ground level. This proposal must include the experience. You can't build a successful literacy program until you know how the foundations are set and have actually attempted to nurture the growth. Working with children first is the ideal means to effectively

work with adults. You cannot effectively direct your staff unless you have been in the field and experienced what they are encountering on a daily basis. We must work to eliminate the “Ivory Tower” aspect of certification and allow only those proven educators to become the guides, leaders and specialist of their peers and students.