

Remarks of Dr. Linette Branham
Education Issues Specialist
Connecticut Education Association

Before the State Dept. of Education and State Board of Education
Concerning the proposed certificate changes

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Good afternoon. My name is Dr. Linette Branham. I'm a certified teacher and school administrator, and currently work as an Education Issues Specialist at the CT Education Association. I'd like to comment on the State Department of Education's (SDE) explanation of how reading teachers would be grandfathered if the proposed literacy specialist certificate is adopted.

The question is, 'What is true grandfathering?' I'm not sure the SDE understands the correct, long-used definition of the term. When a teacher is 'grandfathered' into a position with the use of a certificate and its endorsement, that teacher can *continue to work under that endorsement* without having to meet additional requirements to keep it. A certificate is a property right, that can only be taken away through the formal certificate revocation process. The certificate lists the endorsement the teacher holds, which means the teacher has met the requirements to get the endorsement. As long as a teacher *holds* the certificate, she or he holds the endorsement. The question is whether or not the teacher can *work under* the certificate and its endorsement. If the SDE changes the requirements for the certificate and the teacher would have to meet the new requirements in order to work under the certificate, the teacher can continue to *hold* the certificate, but wouldn't be able to work under it until the new requirements are met. That is not grandfathering.

The proposed regulations for the literacy specialist certificate indicate that a reading consultant (who holds the 097 certificate) would be eligible for either the provisional or professional level certificate, depending on how many months of experience the consultant has working under his or her current (097) certificate. It would appear that the holder of the 097 would be grandfathered, since s/he would have already taken the 12 credits required by the proposed literacy specialist professional level certificate. But there is a question that needs to be asked, and clarified, before it can be said that the reading consultant would be truly grandfathered. The question is this. The proposed regulations state that, for a provisional level literacy specialist certificate, *"an applicant shall present evidence of meeting requirements for an initial educator certificate..."* Does this mean that the reading consultant has to meet the requirements for the initial literacy specialist certificate, or is having met the requirements for the initial reading consultant certificate sufficient? The requirements for the proposed initial level literacy specialist certificate are different than those for the reading consultant ; additional areas of study are required for the literacy specialist certificate. If the reading consultant would have to have study in any of these areas in order to be eligible for the provisional (or professional level literacy specialist certificate), *then that reading consultant has not been grandfathered.*

Remedial reading teachers (holders of 102 endorsement), according to the proposed regulations for the literacy specialist certificate, are definitely not grandfathered, in that no matter how much experience the reading teacher has under his or her certificate, she or he would be *required* to take 12 additional credits to get the literacy specialist professional level certificate. Once a teacher holds a certificate, *in order to keep it valid and work under it*, she or

he must advance through the continuum and reach the professional level...there is no choice. If the certificate expires, the reading teacher technically still *holds* it (certificates are property rights), but holding it isn't worth much if you can't teach under it.

We also have to ask what the status would be of teachers who earn the 102 endorsement but don't have any experience working under it by July 1, 2014. Would they be expected to meet all the requirements for the proposed literacy specialist certificate in order to be transitioned to it at the initial level? This would mean taking an additional 9-18 credits. Would they be able to 'add on' to the planned program they already completed for the 102 certificate, since the literacy specialist certificate requires study in a *planned* program? No matter how they would transition to the literacy specialist certificate, they would be required to take additional coursework for the professional level certificate, so would not be grandfathered.

These are serious issues that the State Board of Education members should understand prior to making a decision about the proposed literacy specialist certificate. If reading teachers and consultants would be required to take additional courses in order to be transitioned into a certificate so they can continue to do the jobs they've been doing, some of them for many years, we run the risk of losing many talented and dedicated professionals. Many of them would simply return to teaching in whatever area in which they started their careers, creating a shortage that could be avoided. Thoughtful discussion with practicing reading teachers and consultants is a must.

Would current reading teachers (102 endorsement) and reading consultants (097 endorsement) be 'grandfathered' into the proposed literacy specialist certificate?

Definition of grandfathering - teacher holding a certificate with a particular endorsement can *continue to work under that endorsement* without having to meet additional requirements to keep it.

102 – remedial reading & remedial language arts

097 – reading consultant

Current cert. & level	Literacy specialist cert. that would be issued	Requirements to be met to move to next level of lit. spec. cert.	Remaining questions?
102 initial – less than 10 months experience	Unclear....proposed regulations don't discuss this	Unclear...depends on whether or not teacher would be issued the lit. spec. cert. at initial level	Will 102 holder need to have 30 credits, & meet same preparation program areas of study, as well as coursework in children's literature, adolescent literature, and curriculum development?
102 initial – 10-30 months experience	Provisional	12 graduate credits in specified areas of study	Will 102 holder be required to have coursework in children's literature, adolescent literature, and curriculum development? **
102 initial – 30+ months experience	Professional	12 graduate credits in specified areas of study	Will 102 holder be required to have coursework in children's literature, adolescent literature, and curriculum development? **
097 initial – less than 10 months experience	Provisional ? (due to having met the experience requirement while holding the 102)	30 months experience to move to professional level; would already have the 12 credits required (credits were required for initial 097 cert.)	Will 097 holder be required to have coursework in children's literature, adolescent literature, and curriculum development? **

097 initial – 10-30 months experience	Provisional	Total of 30 months experience to move to professional level; would already have the 12 credits required (credits were required for initial 097 cert.)	Will 097 holder be required to have coursework in children’s literature, adolescent literature, and curriculum development? **
097 initial – 30+ months experience	Professional	N/A	Will 097 holder be required to have coursework in children’s literature, adolescent literature, and curriculum development? **

** Note : The proposed regulations state that *“To receive a provisional educator certificate as a literacy specialist, an applicant shall present evidence of meeting requirements for an initial educator certificate...”* The proposed requirements for the initial literacy specialist certificate include *“at the undergraduate or graduate level, study in each of the following areas:*

- (1) Curriculum development;
- (2) Children’s literature; and
- (3) Adolescent literature.”

If a teacher who applies for the literacy specialist certificate has to have met the requirements for an initial certificate in order to be eligible for the provisional certificate, will teachers who currently hold reading certificates also have to meet those new initial certificate requirements to be eligible for a provisional (or professional) literacy specialist certificate? While a reading teacher is quite likely to have taken courses in children’s literature, adolescent literature, or both, the teacher is not as likely to have taken coursework in curriculum development.

From SDE 2008 cert review committee slide 45 on grandfathering:

- All teachers holding ‘old’ endorsements will continue to hold and serve under them
- Prior authorizations will be given to allow transition time for meeting new requirements for the professional educator certificate for those holding an initial or provisional certificate in any discontinued endorsement.
- Expired middle grades certificate holders, not meeting requirements for a professional by 7-1-19, will be required to meet requirements for the new integrated secondary endorsement.