

Remarks of Angela Butler

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Before the State Department of Education and State Board of Education  
concerning the proposed changes to certification in Special Education

April 6, 2010

Good Afternoon. My name is Angela Butler, and I am a special education teacher in the Stamford Public School district. The proposed special education certificate should be changed because the financial burden on special education teachers would be increased by thousands of dollars to obtain an initial certificate. The school districts would be forced to hire special education teachers at the master's level, which would increase the pre-existing financial burden on the school districts. Therefore, this action would result in a limited number of special education teachers.

Not only would school districts and special educators suffer from the proposed certificate change, but the identified students receiving direct instruction and specialized education will suffer as well. Special educators would be responsible for many tasks such as training paraprofessionals, diagnostics, and facilitating meetings. These tasks will take time away from directly instructing students with special needs. It is impossible to accept that special educators can complete these tasks and fully service their increasing student caseloads.

Personally, I feel that there are days where I require more hours to assist children, and individualize their education to help meet their learning needs. I cannot imagine having to complete other daily tasks along with working with related service providers, communicating with parents, modifying instruction, and implementing accommodations *and* continue providing specialized instruction. This will reduce the amount of time spent working with children, and possibly put a special education teacher at risk for being out of compliance with the number of service hours indicated on the Individualized Education Plan. If a teacher cannot meet the child's service hours because he/she is responsible for other tasks, he/she can be held legally responsible.

I hope you will consider all of the individuals, including the students with special needs that will be affected by the proposed change. Thank you.