

Remarks of Geraldine Carley  
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Before the State Dept. of Education and State Board of Education  
Concerning the proposed changes to certification in Special Education, Literacy  
Specialist and Teacher Leader

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Good afternoon. My name is Geraldine Carley and I am a teacher in Ridgefield. I would like to add my voice to the opposition of the proposed certification changes. In a time when we are looking at a looming teacher shortage in general, the special education, literacy, and teacher leader changes have huge implications for all teachers.

In a time when so much more is being required of classroom teachers, with increased interventions and data collection becoming necessary to guide their instruction to meet all students' needs, my fear is that, with these proposed changes, there will be even fewer special education and literacy teachers to assist the classroom teachers so that, as a team, all teachers can use best practices for student achievement.

I can vouch for the fact that we have many highly qualified special education and literacy teachers in my district; they are now deeply distressed to think that additional hurdles will be required of them in order to maintain their current assignments. The fact that "grandfathering" is not at all clear adds even more stress to this situation.

I think Connecticut will come out a loser when we find teachers leaving for employment in states that are not going to require these additional burdens. As it is, Connecticut finds itself in the unenviable position of losing its best and brightest college graduates to other, more affordable and welcoming states. With baby boomers set to retire in large numbers quite soon, why would the State Department of Education think that it's a good idea to propose changes that will further diminish the pool of teachers that will be required to sustain our excellent school systems?

Thank you for your consideration in this extremely important and divisive issue.