

Speeches can only last for three minutes. Time yourself. If text is too long, shorten it. You will need to provide two copies, besides your own copy. When you arrive at site, you should sign up to speak immediately. Sessions go from 3:00-6:00 p.m.

I am Jackie Greene a member of the Connecticut Reading Association also known as CRA. I am here today to present CRA's viewpoint on the proposed certifications of Literacy Specialist and Teacher Leader in Literacy.

The mission of CRA is to promote literacy for all by improving the quality of literacy instruction. CRA agrees with the State Department of Education's proposal of the one certification of Literacy Specialist. This was elaborated upon when the Connecticut Association of Reading Research (CARR) and CRA with the help of CSDE, published their two studies of reading consultants in the state.

The current two certifications cause confusion. Unless Connecticut mandates that the remedial reading teacher may only work with students and the reading/language arts consultant coordinate and model language arts programs and work with students, administrators and teachers will continue to confuse the roles of the two positions. Administrators do not always understand the two reading certifications. Some remedial teachers are being asked to provide leadership for language arts programs although they are not prepared for this role. At times, reading consultants are only asked to remediate students. Unqualified teachers not certified as reading specialists are being hired as literacy coaches to provide staff development without in-depth training. In this economic climate, districts are not going to hire two specialists in literacy. The one certification recommended by the CSDE is the simpler and more economic way to resolve the confusion.

The one certification of Literacy Specialist will qualify a teacher to both remediate and lead classroom programs. As mentioned in the CARR studies, the Literacy Specialist in a school should be working in thirds: 1/3 with children, 1/3 with staff (modeling, etc.), and 1/3 administrative (testing, setting up programs, etc.).

The International Reading Association (IRA) recommends that Response to Intervention programs (also known as Scientific Research Based Instruction) have qualified literacy specialists throughout all tiers for students struggling with reading. During Tier 1, the literacy specialist should be assisting the classroom teacher with implementing the school's reading/language arts program. For the student who requires supplementary help in reading under Tier 2, the Literacy Specialist may give small-group supplementary instruction after diagnosing the student's needs. When a student requires more intensified instruction in Tier 3, the Literacy Specialist should diagnose the reading difficulties, collaborate with other specialists and recommend appropriate intervention.

One certification will encompass all of the above requirements, but it takes more than 30 hours. Higher education groups will need to devise an integrated and rigorous preparation program. Graduate students interested in strengthening their skills as classroom teachers of reading should be allowed to obtain a Master's degree in reading but not be given a title. We need classroom teachers who are highly qualified in literacy instruction. By having such highly qualified teachers, reading instruction will improve, and there will be fewer remedial students.

CRA questions the role of the proposed Teacher Leader in Literacy certification. This role is neither teacher nor administrator. How might this position relate to the Literacy Specialist? This proposed certification is redundant in that the Literacy Specialist will be the Teacher Leader in literacy.

The State of Connecticut is working diligently to erase the achievement gap. Literacy is a key to this accomplishment. Schools need reading consultants who have expertise and competence in literacy instruction. Our research found that students with reading consultants had higher test scores than those of students in schools without reading consultants (CARR 1997). We need to avoid the confusion of hiring people who are not properly qualified to deliver effective literacy instruction. CRA stands behind the State Department of Education's proposal of the one certification of Literacy Specialist.

Jackie Greene, Ct Reading Association Co- Conference Chair