

Cynthia Ritchie, Ed.D.

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Below is a proposal for the consideration of a new endorsement. I write to place this idea on the table for the Board to deliberate further, especially as we have heard public comment in favor of this for many reasons too. I acknowledge that research, information from other states, etc. is not a part of this initial proposal and I recommend that the Board do its due diligence to work with other partners to get this information, as well as gather input from the SDE's Talent Office leaders, so that a comprehensive and informed decision of the Board can be made. From a practitioner's perspective, I do believe this new endorsement would be very welcomed in the schools.

Proposal to Establish a Connecticut K–12 Math Specialist Endorsement

This proposal places the idea that the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) establish a K–12 Math Specialist Certification, modeled after the existing K–12 Reading Specialist Certification. The certification would aim to prepare highly skilled educators to lead mathematics instruction, intervention, coaching, and curriculum alignment across grade levels.

Effective mathematics instruction requires deep knowledge of mathematical progression and conceptual understanding. Effective instruction takes into consideration several things including: diagnostic assessment and error analysis, differentiation for diverse learners, mathematical discourse and reasoning, and intervention strategies aligned to core instruction. I do not believe generalist preparation programs alone can provide the depth required to meet these demands across K–12 settings. The addition of a dedicated certification in this area would ensure that Math Specialists possess advanced preparation similar, in rigor and focus to Reading Specialists. (Personal Anecdote: I, myself have both the reading consultant and remedial reading teaching certification and am incredibly grateful for the deep knowledge I learned through specifically focused coursework.)

In my many years of professional teaching and leading experience, I have seen a need for both teachers and students regarding additional support in mathematics and this has been across both urban and suburban districts in our state. Students' math scores (state and nation) need to improve. Confidence building and a commitment to promote a "love for mathematics" deeply, like a "love for literacy" needs to happen. Classroom teachers often seek additional coaching, help with differentiating instruction, and professional development to help them be most effective in teaching mathematics.

I believe a Math Specialist Certification could strengthen instructional coherence, improve student outcomes in mathematics, and build district capacity. I also envision this new

endorsement to be one that could pull math specialists together, across the state, for shared impact and the sharing of PD and resources. Building more teams to work together across the state, with shared aims and expertise gathered together, is critical at the time.

A Proposed Role of the Math Specialist: Certified Math Specialists would serve in a variety of instructional leadership roles, including providing targeted math intervention for students, coaching and supporting classroom teachers, leading data-informed instructional planning, supporting implementation of math curricula and standards, designing and monitoring Tier 2 and Tier 3 math interventions, supporting multilingual learners and students with disabilities in mathematics, facilitating professional learning communities (PLCs). These roles could be flexible, allowing districts to deploy Math Specialists based on local needs, similar to current Reading Specialist models.

Proposed Certification Structure

Eligibility: Valid Connecticut teaching certificate, teaching experience in elementary or secondary education

Program Requirements (Suggested): Graduate-level coursework in mathematics content and pedagogy, coursework in assessment, intervention, and progress monitoring, training in coaching and adult learning, supervised practicum or internship focused on math intervention and leadership

Suggested Grade Span Options: Elementary (K–6 and/or a 4-8); Secondary (7–12)

Conclusion: Establishing a Connecticut K–12 Math Specialist Certification could be a strategic, research-aligned investment in student achievement and instructional excellence. Modeled after the successful Reading Specialist Certification, this credential could elevate mathematics instruction, close achievement gaps, and strengthen Connecticut’s education system for the long term.

Thank you for your time reading and considering this idea. Additions, changes, etc. are welcome as we work together to consider new opportunities for teachers/leaders of CT, to benefit students.