

Testimony on Certification Regulation Draft for implementation in 2014

1. While I have great concern with the State Department of Education (SDE) requiring special education teachers to have a master's degree prior to practicing, I do applaud the SDE for requiring additional reading courses for special education teachers with prior experience as elementary teachers. I continue to be dismayed, however, that at the secondary level, with the exception of language arts, those teachers who choose to become special education teachers will still have only one course in reading.
2. I am pleased to see that data analysis is very prominent in the standards for new teachers; however, the word collaboration does not appear. We expect that teachers will be collaborative partners from the day they are hired. In fact, that is of prime importance in our teacher evaluation rubric, and in the infrastructure of our school scheduling. It is a major omission in the standards for new teachers.
3. The proposed certification for Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) only requires one course in the teaching of reading. I believe that is a serious mistake. TESOL teachers must understand how students learn to read and must have deep knowledge in the components of literacy, namely: oral language, phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. This must be more than one course and should have an application component.
4. I am pleased that the teacher leader certification has been extended to language arts and may be earned through a CEU program determined by individual districts. I assume that criteria for that program will be forthcoming from the SDE. I would respectfully request that district practitioners be involved in the development of that criterion.
5. I am pleased to see that the Intermediate Administration or Supervision Certification can be earned by either a full year internship or 450 hours. I believe that is sensitive to the fact that we have a number of outstanding candidates who may not be able for financial reasons to undertake a full year unpaid internship.
6. The School Library Media Specialist position serves as the "school hub" for the integration of technology into all curriculum areas. I don't believe the responsibilities section of the regulations is forceful in that area. Integration of technology into curricula is not mentioned.

Respectfully submitted on April 29, 2010
Fran Rabinowitz
Superintendent, Hamden Public Schools