

Remarks of Lori Chesanek
President, Thompson Education Association

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

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Good afternoon. My name is Lori Chesanek and I am the president of the Thompson Education Association. I'd like to comment on the newest certification proposals for Teacher-Leaders, Special Ed teachers, and Literacy Specialists. The proposed certification changes will have a negative impact on members of my local. As one member stated:

“This certification change will affect me because I was told by the State Dept. of Ed that if I passed the state of Massachusetts’ reading specialist test and took the required course work (I took an extra 18 credits at Worcester State to become a reading specialist) I would be able to receive my certification as a reading specialist in CT. This will all be accomplished in May of next year. I am concerned that after all of this money and education, the state of CT will no longer honor its recommendation.”

Our elementary school has not made Adequate Yearly Progress and its staff has been working diligently to improve methods of instruction and how reading difficulties are addressed. Additional teaching positions have been created and the results have been

positive. We are concerned that we would lose these positions due to teachers no longer having the proper certifications.

Another member expressed her concerns for the changes in special education certification:

“The 75 hours of Continuing Education Units (CEUs) required for a special ed. teacher prior to receiving a professional certification will put an undue burden on teachers. Will CEUs already obtained from in-house professional development even count toward the requirements? As the state will set out the requirements for which areas will fulfill the requirements, these will probably not count.”

Our district typically has a hard time retaining special ed. teachers, especially at the elementary level. The requirement for newly certified teachers to have their Masters degree prior to receiving their special education certification will put undue strain on our already tightly-stretched budget. Thank you.