

Remarks of Elizabeth Guidone  
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Before the State Dept. of Education and State Board of Education  
concerning the proposed changes to certification in Special Education

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Good afternoon. My name is Elizabeth Guidone and I'm a teacher in Berlin. Special educators have a very important job. No school can run efficiently without them. They often are overloaded with work that exceeds the number of hours in the day.

The proposed plan inhibits the work of the special educators as well as discourages new teachers from specializing in that field. As a regular educator, I know I can not service my special education population as thoroughly as I can with the help of my special colleagues. In a class of 19 children, I know I need at least two to three extra lessons for this population for them to be successful. If I lose the support of these teachers, there will have to be more independent work for the majority to service properly the needs of the special children in my class. Those who are borderline but not labeled would lose the extra small group instruction that I can provide.

The following would impact teachers entering this field:

- There is a need to grandfather our seasoned special educators so they don't have to go back to school and be tempted to make a move.
- Initial teaching certification should include special ed. and not require graduate preparation, as cost could be prohibitive in this day and age
- Special ed. teachers recommend nine credits in reading; they know best
- 75 hours of CEU credits is discouraging to the special professional
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Our special educators are valuable. We need to support them not make it a challenge. It seems that we want to make them work harder, require more hours of preparation and CEU maintenance to do the job. Will young people want to make that commitment?