

Remarks of Jamie Vincenti
Preschool Special Education Teacher
Roger Wolcott ECC, Windsor

Before the State Dept. of Education and State Board of Education
Concerning the proposed changes to certification in Special Education

April 5, 2010

Good Afternoon. My name is Jamie Vincenti and I am a Preschool Special Education Teacher in Windsor.

I am opposed to the proposed changes to the Special Education Certificate for the cost of the preparation for teachers and the broad range of responsibilities it will potentially place on educators in addition to working with students.

In Connecticut the cost for becoming a teacher ranges from \$10,000 to \$40,000 a year for a Bachelor's degree alone; the added costs of a Master's degree can make this amount increase by thousands. Many beginning teachers simply do not have the financial means by which to cover these additional costs. Many teachers, myself included, rely on working a few years in the field under an initial educator certificate in order to put aside money for graduate school. As well as from the financial support many school systems offer teachers for continuing their education. By forcing new teachers to have a Master's degree prior to their first job will eventually create a

shortage of special education teachers in Connecticut, an area already lacking good teachers.

I also believe by requiring teacher preparation programs to have a broad range of credits they do not fully prepare special education teachers for the work they face. Also it leaves special education teachers with more responsibilities than “teaching” which is what we went to school for. Supervision and training of paraprofessionals is a major part of what many special education teachers do on a daily basis. In my first teaching position as a new teacher I was over seeing 12 paraprofessionals as well as teaching the 8 children with Autism. This duty became very complex and often took my time and attention away from my students.

In conclusion, I truly believe the proposed changes to the special education certification would be devastating to not only the teachers and school districts but to the students who rely on their support and knowledge everyday in the classroom.

Thank you.