

Remarks of Beth Keenan  
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Before the State Dept. of Education and State Board of Education  
Concerning the proposed changes to certification in Teacher Leader

April 6, 2010

Good afternoon. My name is Beth Keenan and I'm an Individual Learning Needs Coach in Stamford, Connecticut.

In Stamford for the last four years we have had the position of Individual Learning Needs Coach. This position requires us to coach teachers on how to support individual students in regular education who are not performing academically or behaviorally up to grade level expectations. We are required to support teachers, recommend and plan interventions, and implement interventions at times, in all the areas of reading, math, writing, and behavior. At the outset of this initiative, no special certification was required of the candidates. Currently, a Special Education Certificate is required. Over the last four years in Stamford considerable training has gone on for the Individual Learning Needs Coaches, as well as district initiatives and training in Scientifically Research Based Interventions. The extensive support and knowledge gained during this time far surpasses any required coursework or certification put forth in this proposal. It is my belief that these changes will only further stall the much needed support that our teachers and children need to help narrow and close the achievement gap.

A well thought out teacher leader certification program and plan that is supported by our higher learning institutions is the best way to support the specialized certifications that you are considering. This proposal is far sweeping with no realistic timeline. This proposal leaves students, teachers, and districts in the potentially disastrous situation of losing qualified teachers who are teaching our children.