

Remarks of Anne Fleming
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Before the State Dept. of Education and State Board of Education concerning
proposed changes to certification in Literacy Specialist

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Good afternoon. My name is Anne Fleming and I'm a Reading Consultant in Orange. I am here today to speak to/comment on the proposed changes to the certification for Reading Consultant. I am speaking on behalf of the Reading Consultants in the Orange Elementary School System.

I have read many documents dealing with the proposed changes. I am aware of the rationale and the goal of the State's Five Year Comprehensive Plan for Education which is clear to me. I must tell you that the goal-"all students must have access to a rigorous curriculum taught by highly effective and qualified educators who believe that every student at every grade level can achieve at high levels" has been met/accomplished in the Orange Elementary School System. This is our mode of operation, our philosophy, our base and always has been.

I will tell you our thoughts on this important matter but before I do I would be remiss not to let you know how difficult a task this has been because of the ambiguous nature of the language within the documents.

First, we are opposed to combining the remedial reading and the reading consultant certificate. To homogenize them is wrong. They are essentially different roles. A remedial reading teacher works in conjunction with the classroom teacher and students to strengthen skills and reading performance. The reading consultant's role includes the aforementioned responsibilities but is broader in scope and includes assessing/diagnosing, creating reading plans, training, coaching, mentoring and writing curriculum. We see them as distinct roles-each critically important to a school system.

Second, we want individuals who currently hold a professional certificate in remedial reading or as a reading consultant to be "grandfathered" with no additional requirements. We need to see this in writing. Our reason: released documents contain conflicting statements on this notion; these teachers have the necessary knowledge and experience to meet the demands of the positions.

Finally, I can't express this strongly enough-it is imperative that we preserve the integrity of the role of reading consultant as it exists today. Thank you.