

Remarks of Lisa Bress

Science Teacher Leader K-6  
Windsor Public Schools

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

April 5, 2010

Good afternoon. My name is Lisa Bress and I'm the Science Teacher K-6 for the Windsor Public Schools.

I would like to speak out against the proposed certification changes requiring those currently serving in Teacher Leader positions to apply for a Teacher Leader Certificate. At the present time, I have met the qualifications to hold four certifications from the state department of education: administration, elementary education, special education K-12 and Theatre Arts. I have served as Teacher Leader in the Windsor Public Schools for the past five years and prior to that, was an elementary and special education teacher in a career that has spanned over twenty-five years.

During that time, I've had the opportunity to spend countless hours in professional development activities provided by school districts, CEA, Educational Resource Centers, University's and private organizations like the CT Science Center. This ongoing instruction has enhanced my professional expertise in subject areas such as reading, writing, math, science, social studies, technology and special education topics. In addition, Teachers Leaders in the Windsor Public school district have been given leadership training in Looking at Student Work, Data Driven Decision Making, Classroom Walkthroughs and Peer Coaching.

The education and professional development I've described above has prepared me for my role as a Science Teacher Leader, and enabled me to work with teachers on enhancing science instruction for Windsor's students.

Some of my other responsibilities include; creating and delivering professional development, writing curriculum and serving on the Teacher Evaluation Committee. I've worked at the state level on the MSP Grant Review Committee and the Science CMT Benchmark Setting committee. I've been an integral part of three science grants for the Windsor Public Schools and have worked with the Family Resource Centers to create and implement projects like the JFK Science Expo, a nationally recognized event that brought students, school and community together to explore careers in science.

My experience is not unique. Many teachers who hold teacher leader positions have similar backgrounds, certifications and training. They've been hired because of their subject area expertise and demonstrated leadership. Yet according to the current proposals on Teacher Leader certification, my peers and I would not be grandfathered in the positions we now hold, and would have to earn an additional certificate. This decision does not seem to honor the work that has already been done by teacher leaders or recognize their current level of experience, certification and expertise.

I respectfully request the committee reconsider this certification proposal. Making Teacher Leader Certification optional, as it is in other states, and grandfathering those already in Teacher Leader positions, would prevent the loss of the experienced educators currently serving in those roles. Many may choose

to leave the position rather than embark on a journey to meet a whole new set of criteria, especially since most of them are already highly qualified and experienced.

I would also ask that current Teacher Leaders be invited to join certification discussions. There is significant knowledge to be gained by tapping our collective wisdom.

With administrator and teacher shortages looming, it's important that we do all we can to support our future educational leaders by grandfathering them in their Teacher Leader positions and including them in the decision making process that will shape their role in our children's educational future.

Thank you for your time.

Teacher Leader – [TeacherLeader@cea.org](mailto:TeacherLeader@cea.org)

Special Education – [SpecialEducation@cea.org](mailto:SpecialEducation@cea.org)

Literacy Specialist – [LiteracySpecialist@cea.org](mailto:LiteracySpecialist@cea.org)