

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

April 6, 2010

Good afternoon, my name is Diane Cleary and I am a high school special education teacher in Berlin, Connecticut. I am writing to you today to express my dissatisfaction concerning the possible certification changes for special education teachers. There is already a shortage of special educators in our field today and these changes would exacerbate this issue. Young people going into this field of study will be greatly affected financially, since the cost of education will be out of reach for many.

Typically, teachers graduate from college and are able to use their new salary to pay for their master's degree. Now with these possible changes, new teachers will be forced into some of the other areas of teaching that do not require a master's to be initially hired. That will create an overage of teachers within our profession. There will be a direct correlation between the number of teachers going into the special education field and the number servicing our students. This will have a huge impact on our special education students in terms of services we can provide and size of our classrooms.

I do not understand why just special educators need to make this change and no other teaching professionals are required to do the same. The districts throughout the

state will also be financially affected by these decisions. There will be a huge financial burden to the districts within the state. As we know, we have had to tighten our belts over the last four years and this shortage of funds will really be affecting the number of teachers we can hire which directly impacts servicing students.

Please reconsider this decision, teachers within our state are not in favor of it and I do not see any benefits in making these changes, they will not help our students.

Thank you.