

I am writing this to share some of my concern about proposed certification changes in the area of special education in CT. I am dually certified in special education and deaf education. My master's degree is in deaf education.

I feel that acquiring a master's degree in special education would not be as valuable to me as the 25 years I have spent teaching in the field, attending professional development and sharing with colleagues. Not every student with a hearing loss has additional special education issues but many have specific learning disabilities, emotional issues or additional physical or cognitive challenges.

An additional master's degree would not provide me with the specific background necessary for individual student needs. I feel that requiring an additional degree from a veteran teacher would not provide increased benefit for students. I feel "grandfathering" current teachers is appropriate.

There continues to be a shortage of qualified applicants for special education positions and requiring a master's degree at this point will make the shortage worse. My friend, also a veteran teacher of 20 years plus completed the Alternative Route to Certification in special education last summer. Will her certification be valid?

*Susan Oates*