

Remarks of Gloria Brown
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Before the State Department of Education and State Board of Education concerning
proposed changes to certification in Literacy Specialist

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Good afternoon, my name is Gloria Brown. I taught grades 4-8 in Wolcott for 38 years before retiring four years ago. During my teaching career, I was very fortunate to have worked with many dedicated remedial reading teachers and reading consultants. Their goal was always to help me to do the best job possible of teaching my students and to support those students who needed extra help.

I am opposed to the proposed Literacy Specialist Certificate for several reasons. The main reason is that the rationale for the change is flawed; the idea that administrators often don't know the difference between a remedial reading teacher and a reading consultant so why not combine them into one certificate strikes me as unsound. Any changes should be made with the idea of doing what will help teachers better teach students; this change does not do that.

Under the present certification, a remedial reading teacher works with groups of students and provides support for classroom teachers to enhance student learning. The reading consultant has added responsibilities that require different preparation because they work with paras and teachers, develop curriculum, and are responsible for evaluating the district's literacy program.

Under the proposed change, the literacy specialist would have too wide a range of responsibilities; would she be a teacher or an administrator? The proposed preparation program for the initial certificate is too broad; yet some areas of literacy are not included in the proposed preparation program. Will these changes really benefit students?

Teachers will be discouraged from seeking this endorsement because of the cost of all the required coursework. Is this a time when we can afford to lose literacy teachers?

I urge you to examine carefully the CEA proposal for 2 literacy certificates. This proposal has been well-thought out and will best meet the needs of Connecticut's students. The proposal calls for having a Literacy Teacher certificate and a Literacy Specialist certificate- each with its own level of knowledge and skill. Having these two certificates will result in better prepared educators who will provide better services for students. Shouldn't that be our priority? Thank you.