

Testimony re: HB 6499, an Act Concerning Minor Revision to the Education Statues

Before the Education Committee

March 7, 2011

Submitted by: Beth Johnson, teacher

Senator Stillman, Representative Fleishman, Members of the Committee,

Good afternoon. My name is Beth Johnson and I am here today to speak on the fourth section of Bill 6499.

I am currently a 5th and 6th grade teacher at North Canaan Elementary School, which is a part of the Region 1 School District. We are a K-8 School with just over 300 students. I am a 2001 graduate from Central Connecticut State University with a BS in Elementary Education. I am CT certified K-6. Upon receiving my MS in Educational Technology from Eastern Connecticut State University I inquired with the state about receiving some sort of certification, and was told that none existed. My "specialty" in technology meant I could teach technology K-6. This poses a problem as I work in a K-8 school. The position is currently held by a teacher with a K-8 certification, which no longer exists. I asked what I could do to teach the remaining two grades in my school and was told that the only way this was possible would be to get another degree, perhaps as a Library Media Specialist or a 7-12 degree in another subject area. Being a library media specialist does not make me any more qualified to teach educational technology. I was then told there was no other way. We do not have a large enough population to justify two technology teachers, but as of right now there is no other way to serve our population.

Section 4 of this bill which, "requires the State Board of Education to adopt regulations that create a certification endorsement area in computer and information technology that allows computer and information technology teachers to teach in grades kindergarten to twelve," would allow teachers who have degrees in specialty areas, such as technology, to teach in a K-8 school such as my own. After obtaining a degree in Educational Technology in a Connecticut State School in addition to over 20 CEU hours of professional development in this subject area, I am more than highly qualified to teach this subject matter to all of the students in my school.

There are currently 95 K-8 schools in the state of CT. This means that my predicament is one that is not faced only by me, but by others who would choose to teach technology and other specialized subjects without CT certification available: As the teachers who hold a K-8 certification retire, this problem will become more widespread.

The newly revised Connecticut Common Core of Teachers is prefaced by stating how important it is to teach our students 21st Century Skills to prepare them for this quickly changing world. I am more than qualified to do this in my school. This bill will make it possible.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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