

Dear Representatives Fleischmann,

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>> I am writing to provide you with input regarding Tuesdays hearing on  
>> teacher certification. I am writing regarding the changes to the  
>> TESOL k-12 cross-endorsement requirements that are in the proposed  
>> regulations that were presented to the Higher Ed Board last year. I  
>> am deeply concerned about the proposed changes in the certification  
>> standards and requirements. The reasons are detailed below in  
>> excerpts of a recent e-mail I sent to the CONN TESOL Board, of which  
>> I am a member. I have also attached a chart I created that compares  
>> the proposed regulations with the current regulations.

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>> I believe that we need to make certain that ELLs have the most  
>> qualified teaches rather than less than minimally qualified  
teachers,

>> and we need to make make sure that all ESL students receive the  
>> services that they are legally entitled to. This belief is the  
>> impetus for my writing you, as well as my 30+ years experience in  
>> TESOL and bilingual education k-12 and TESOL/Bilingual teacher  
>> education in Connecticut, Florida, Arizona, and Washington State.

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>> Please contact me if you have any questions or would like further  
>> information.

>>

>> Sincerely,

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>> Concerns Related to the Proposed changes in the k-12 TESOL  
>> Cross-Endorsement Requirements

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>> 1) One concern is with the proposed changes to the TESOL  
>> cross-endorsements certification regulations. I have attached a  
chart

>> I created that compares the current regulations with the proposed  
>> regulations. TESOL is one of the only k-12 cross-endorsements that  
>> will be reduced from 30 to 18 hours.

>> Given that TESOL is a k-12 comprehensive cross-endorsement, I find  
>> this reduction in requirements to be of great concern.

>> Given the academic achievement gap between ELLs and other students,  
I

>> would think that the State legislature and education officials would  
>> want highly qualified and highly prepared professionals working with  
>> those students rather than less than minimally prepared professional  
>> that would result from the proposed regulations.

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>> 2) The reduction from 30 to 18 credit hours for the k-12

>> comprehensive TESOL cross-endorsement is one of several issues I have  
>> with the the proposed regulations. As the chart illustrates, the  
>> national NCATE and TESOL accreditation standards for teacher  
>> education programs were ignored in the development of the proposed  
>> regulations. The proposed regulations make TESOL a watered down  
>> reading and language arts specialization, which it is not. For  
>> example, the teacher education accreditation standard related to  
>> culture and cross-cultural competence was completely removed from the  
>> SDE proposed regulations, yet the culture standard has been  
>> strengthened in the latest version of the TESOL accreditation  
>> standards. A requirement of children's or adolescent literature was  
>> added, yet this is a topic addressed in a variety of classes, not a  
>> Standard in the NCATE or TESOL accreditation standards.  
>>  
>> The chart shows that someone in elementary education could become a  
>> TESOL certified teachers with as little as four courses. Believe me,  
>> as a bilingual and TESOL educator and a certified k-12 reading  
>> consultant, with 30 years experience at the public school, community  
>> college, and university levels, the proposed regulations will not  
>> prepare teachers for the complex roles they need to assume as TESOL  
>> professionals in today's public school context with SRBI, data  
teams,  
>> co-teaching and co-planning.  
>>  
>> I would like to know if there was a representative from an  
>> NCATE/TESOL accredited teacher education program on the committee  
>> that developed the proposed regulations.  
>>  
>> 3) An additional concern, and one shared by k-12 TESOL teachers with  
>> whom I have placed student teachers and with whom I have spoken, is  
>> that the proposed regulations reflect the trend in many Connecticut  
>> school districts to make TESOL professionals into language arts  
>> paraprofessionals. The overemphasis on children's literature and  
>> general courses in teaching reading and writing reflect this change  
>> in professional responsibilities that TESOL TESOL teachers are being  
>> forced to make. For example, elementary TESOL teachers are being  
>> staffed into one classroom during the 90 minute language arts block.  
>> In these situations, they are given not just ELLs to work with but  
>> native English speakers who are underperforming on their leveled  
>> reading tests. Developmental readers who are native speakers of  
>> English have very different linguistic needs for instruction than  
>> native speakers of English. By using TESOL teachers as languages  
arts  
>> paraprofessionals to help out during language arts, TESOL programs  
>> are suffering. One result is that ELLs who need TEOSL instruction  
and  
>> how would have been served during that 90 minute block when the  
TESOL  
>> teacher is in a mainstream classroom, is that they are not receiving  
>> the TESOL services that are legally entitled to.  
>>  
>> 4) Failure to provide legal services to eligible ELLs is a lawsuit  
in  
>> the making. I was in Florida in 1990 when the Consent Decree was

>> litigated in the State. The State was found to have failed to provide leadership and guidelines for the education of ELLs. Every district in the state (69) was required to submit to the lawyers (META) every year their plan for serving ELLs. This court decision is still in effect, although after 21 years the State is fighting to end the requirement of annual reports to the lawyers.

>> To summarize, these are my two most important concerns, the proposed changes to the TESOL and bilingual cross-endorsements and the latest trend in the state to place TESOL professionals in mainstream classes to teach reading groups with native English speakers and ELLs. The impact that the proposed regulations and the current practice of having TESOL professionals teach language arts will have and is having on the education of ELLs in Connecticut will be very negative and do little to close the achievement gap.