

I am writing during my scheduled lunch break to express my deep concerns regarding the current conversation about education reform in the State of Connecticut.

This is my 10th year teaching music in the public schools. I am 58 years old and a single parent. I went back to school full time in the fall of 1998 to Central Connecticut State University and completed my Bachelor's degree in Music Education in December of 2001. I began teaching in the fall of 2002. My first two years of teaching were consumed by the requirements of the CT BEST Portfolio requirement in place at the time. The completion of the Portfolio included extensive preparation, videotaping of my teaching, demonstration of student success in learning and much documentation. The Portfolio, which was akin to a Masters' thesis, earned me the right to obtain my second level of certification. To obtain the Professional level of certification, I needed to go back to school for a Masters degree. Beginning in the fall of 2009, I attended Bay Path College while teaching full time and completed my Masters in Special Education in the summer of 2011. I now have student loans totaling \$26,000 from both my undergraduate and graduate studies.

I have worked diligently since the fall of 1998 to complete all that has been asked of me in order to be the best possible teacher I can be for all of my students. I have also put my life on hold and missed out on time with my family to do this. It is disheartening to read and hear negative comments about teachers especially given what I have put forth personally and financially towards a profession that I believe is more a vocation than just a job.

I am completely floored that Governor Malloy has proposed to weaken the Masters degree requirement for teachers and make it "optional" in the State of Connecticut. I believe that would lower the quality and knowledgeability of future teachers in the State of Connecticut.

Thank you for your time and consideration in reading my testimony.

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