

## Teixeira, Angela

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**From:** Wagner, Ken  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 16, 2018 10:00 AM  
**To:** Foehr, Lisa; Keenan, Mary; Teixeira, Angela  
**Subject:** Fw: Certification Testimony

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**From:** Erika lafrate <eiafrate5314@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, October 15, 2018 10:15 PM  
**To:** Teixeira, Angela; Wagner, Ken  
**Subject:** Certification Testimony

Dr. Wagner and Ms. Teixeira,

My name is Erika lafrate and I am the school nurse at Blackstone Valley Prep Elementary School 2 and I have previously written to the commissioner regarding my support for the proposed certification changes. I am writing again tonight as someone who intended to speak at the last open meeting on Thursday October 11 but chose not to. I did not speak because there were many members of the Rhode Island Certified School Nurse Teachers Association present and speaking, all in opposition and all of which made it clear that any nurse in support of the changes is wrong. Each of these women are already certified school nurse teachers. These women can make being a member of an organization such as this one difficult if you do not always support the majority. My anxiety about the reactions of these experienced and influential women got the better of me and I chose not to speak. I regret that and, as a result, feel I need to send to you what I truly wish I had said that day.

My name is Erika lafrate and I work at Blackstone Valley Prep Elementary School 2 in Cumberland as the school nurse. I currently do not hold a School Nurse Teacher certificate but will have requirements completed by May and be fully certified at that time. Though the current proposal regarding changes in the school nurse classifications with RIDE will not personally affect me, I believe they will greatly affect the health and well-being of our states children.

The American Academy of Nursing has stated that daily access to a full-time school nurse is imperative in improving the health of this country's children, in turn leading to decreased health issues in adulthood and the decrease in health related costs. With the current requirements within Rhode Island, the access to a full time nurse in every school within the state is not being met. Recent studies have shown that as many as 27% of children have chronic health conditions, 13-20% of children are experiencing mental health issues, and there are increasing cases of communicable diseases as a result of increased immunization exemptions resulting in decreased herd immunity. These same studies have shown that for every dollar spent on access to a full time school nurse, more than twice that dollar amount is saved. Nurses increase attendance rates, promote health, assist in identification and supports for mental health, and manage chronic health conditions. The results are more time spent in the classroom and increased academic achievement.

The current RIDE requirements include 8 graduate level courses to achieve certification. Working full time and being a wife and mother to two toddlers, this means 8 semesters of course work. These courses are mostly education courses such as Health education pedagogy, psychological perspectives on learning and teaching, and universal design for educating all students with only one School Nurse specific course mixed in. I have heard others testify that School Nursing is a specialty and that is the justification for such extreme coursework to achieve certification in Rhode Island. While I certainly do not disagree that School Nursing is a specialty, and an extremely important one at that; I do not believe that 2 years of an advanced degree curriculum is necessary or even appropriate to providing the needed and recommended nursing care in schools. I have worked as a NICU nurse and a Pediatric Trauma Nurse. I held certifications in both of those. Neither certification required 8 semesters of coursework and graduate studies. My knowledge and skills in both specialties are not lessened by my lack of advanced institutional education.

I do not teach in the classroom. I spend countless hours educating my scholars on their health while they are in my office, while walking the halls, and sometimes on a Saturday night when I have a parent unsure how to access resources for the care and health of their child. I do not need to attend entire semesters of schooling to know how to be a participant in special education meetings, or how to write and implement appropriate 504's. I am quite certain that if you speak to my schools administration, they will agree that I am a respected member of the school community with knowledge that is sought after and appreciated on many levels. I have achieved all of this without being an official Certified School Nurse Teacher.

My testimony today is to express my support for the RIDE certification changes to the school nurse category. The recommendations are to have a dual pathway for certification. The first would maintain the current certification requirements and advanced education to achieve School Nurse Teacher Certification. The second gives the ability for a bachelors trained nurse to work in a school without the teacher certification and therefore will not be a teacher on record. By allowing these two pathways, the state will increase the access to nurses in schools. There are many experienced, knowledgeable and capable nurses willing to enter our schools and promote a healthy environment. However, most do not have the desire, time or financial capability to complete 8 semesters of graduate level coursework. My hope is that these changes will pass, allowing more nurses to enter our school districts and provide the recommended health services from the American Academy of Nursing. Your children, as well as my own, deserve the safety of having nursing services while in school.

Thank you again for your time.

Sincerely,

Erika lafrate, RN  
School Nurse  
Blackstone Valley Prep, ES2

**NEA**  
**South Kingstown**

October 11, 2018

Dear Chairwomen Cottam, Chairman McConaghy, and Members of RIDE Council on Elementary and Secondary Education,

My Name is Brian Nelson and I am the President of NEA-South Kingstown.

The NEA-SK is opposed to the new proposed changes to the school nurse certification that creates two pathways. School Nurse Teachers have a unique role in the educational system and are a vital part of the educational team. They are the first line of defense for many students and work collaboratively with teachers, social workers, psychologists, guidance counselors and administrators to provide support and resources.

It is of great concern that that one pathway is not requiring the education needed to prepare the nurse for this role.

We need highly competent nurses in these positions. Students deserve a nurse who can deliver all health services in the educational setting. It is not fair that some students will have better health services due to the qualifications of the certified school nurse. Rhode Island families have an expectation that all school nurses are created equal but if this proposal passes, that will not be the case.

The NEA-SK believes that the current, single certification is the best way to prepare a registered nurse to become a highly qualified School Nurse Teacher for all our public schools. If you have any questions please feel free to reach me via email or phone.

Sincerely,

Brian Nelson

NEA/South Kingstown President

[Bri234u@gmail.com](mailto:Bri234u@gmail.com)

401-580-4665 (cell)

October 11, 2018

Angela Teixeira  
Special Assistant to the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education  
Liaison to the Board of Education  
Rhode Island Department of Education  
255 Westminister Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Dear Ms. Teixeira:

My name is Jacqueline Fougere and I am an Auditory-Oral Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. I am writing in regards to the Teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing certification requirements in Rhode Island.

It is my concern that the new Teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing certification requirements in Rhode Island fails to equally represent all Teachers of the Deaf. Because there are a variety of educational approaches to teach students with hearing loss, Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing have diverse backgrounds, training, and expertise. The most common educational approaches to teaching students with hearing loss include: Bilingual-bicultural, Auditory-Oral, and Total Communication. Some students with hearing loss learn through a Bilingual-Bicultural approach, where American Sign Language (ASL) is the only method used in the classroom and English is taught through exposure to printed words on paper. Other students with hearing loss learn through the Auditory-Oral approach, where American Sign Language is not used, and English is learned through residual hearing and speech. Total Communication is an approach that combines auditory and visual communication for instruction. A combination of sign systems, like ASL, signed English, and cued speech can be used with this approach. Educational approaches are determined based on an individual's preference, needs, and capabilities as well as family preference. Depending on the educational approach used, the needs and services of students with hearing loss varies.

Many educator programs for individuals interested in becoming Teachers of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing focus on one specific educational approach (i.e. Total Communication, Auditory-Oral, Bilingual-Bicultural, etc.). Because of this, many states provide options for certification areas for Educators of the Deaf. In Massachusetts, Teachers of the Deaf can apply for an Aural/Oral Teacher of the Deaf Certification or an American Sign Language/Total Communication Certification. This allows teachers to become certified in their specialty area and it creates an opportunity for students with hearing loss to be supported by an educator that understands their specific needs.

As a certified Auditory-Oral Teacher of the Deaf, I support students with hearing loss that wear hearing aids and cochlear implants in developing the listening, language, and self-advocacy skills they need to benefit from and participate as fully as possible in the mainstream classroom. I am aware of potential challenges that students with hearing loss face in the mainstream and I provide them with strategies to handle these potential difficulties. These strategies/skills include management and independence with hearing devices, understanding their own hearing

loss/listening challenges, communication repair strategies, and self-advocacy skills to advocate for their specific needs. Part of my role as an Auditory-Oral Teacher of the Deaf also involves working within the mainstream classroom to support school personnel with hearing technology and to provide them with insight on the unique needs to students with hearing loss. Non-Auditory/Oral Teachers of the Deaf and/or other professionals that work with student through other educational approaches are mostly unaware of the issues faced by these students.

Although I am an Auditory-Oral Teacher of the Deaf, I support all communication methods and firmly believe that all families should choose a communication method that is best suited for them and their child. The Rhode Island Department of Education must recognize and acknowledge the diverse needs of students with hearing loss and the variety of educational approaches available to them. It is critical that RIDE equally represent all Teachers of the Deaf and create certification options available to them to ensure that students with hearing loss are being provided with appropriate services by qualified professionals.

Thank you for your time and consideration regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

*Jacqueline Fougere, MEd.*

Jacqueline Fougere, MEd.

Teacher of the Deaf





Anne Seitsinger &lt;amseit@uri.edu&gt;

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**Fwd: ESL/BDL Certifications in RI**

1 message

**Amy Correia** <correia@uri.edu>

Fri, Oct 5, 2018 at 9:12 AM

To: Anne Seitsinger &lt;anneseitsinger@uri.edu&gt;

Hi Anne,

Please see below to read my comments about the proposal (and other issues) to Commissioner Wagner. My feedback to him was also including the recent agreement [Providence Public Schools made with the Department of Justice](#).

I have serious reservations about the "ESL endorsement" compared to the certification.

I hope to attend the meeting in NK on October 11, but my husband coaches soccer at 5 p.m. and he can't coach and watch the three kids. If I can find a babysitter, I will attend.

Rabia is drafting a letter to Linda Borg at the Providence Journal because of inaccuracies in recent articles she has written, specially stating that there are no programs in the state that certify preservice teachers concurrent with their base teaching certification (we do, and so does RIC). Also, stating that it costs \$18,000 to earn an ESL certification through higher education. She was quoting Maher, but that number is inaccurate.

Please let me know if you need anything else!  
Amy

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Amy Correia** <correia@uri.edu>

Date: Mon, Oct 1, 2018 at 10:35 AM

Subject: ESL/BDL Certifications in RI

To: &lt;Ken.Wagner@ride.ri.gov&gt;

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Dear Commissioner Wagner,

I am writing to you to share information and concerns with the ongoing conversations and new initiatives regarding English as a Second Language (ESL) and/or Bilingual and Dual Language (BDL) teaching certifications in Rhode Island.

I understand how valuable your time is, so I have outlined only the major points I hope to address, but I would be happy to follow up with a conversation or additional context if you are interested and willing.

The following text in italics is an excerpt from your 2018 State of Education Address: *[Hispanic and Latino] is the fastest growing segment of Rhode Island's population, and yet the achievement gap for Hispanic/Latino students is wider in Rhode Island than anywhere else in the country...Second language acquisition is an asset, not a deficiency, and we need to invest in it more. To help support this work, the Rhode Island Foundation, Rhode Island College, the Learning Community charter school, Roger Williams University, and the Providence School Department are leading new efforts to provide English Learner certificates for more teachers.*

My major concern is your mention that, "the achievement gap for Hispanic/Latino students is wider in Rhode Island than anywhere else in the country," yet, we are considering reducing the minimum training teachers need to earn an ESL/BDL certification.

Our English Learners are in *greatest need* of our strongest teachers, but this reduction in rigor and requirements will mean this population will be short-changed by the state's concerns with fast-track compliance.

Please know that I am *very* supportive in alternative pathways to certification, but there are two major factors that have me concerned about these pathways for Rhode Island teachers:

1. Unlike our neighboring states (i.e. CT and MA), Rhode Island teachers do not need to earn a master's degree to renew their teaching certifications, and
2. The majority of Rhode Island teachers have reported via SurveyWorks that they are highly unsatisfied with current "in house" professional development, yet in house professional development is proposed to serve as a mechanism of training teachers to support English Learners.

Before coming to work in Rhode Island, I taught in Connecticut for twelve years. I will mention the following experiences, and Connecticut in particular, because you have been quoted as saying Connecticut is one of the states where you hope to recruit teachers for the ESL/BDL shortage in RI.

In Connecticut, I was a teacher for English Learners (EL), and I oversaw the EL Department for nine years. I had to earn two master's degrees to maintain my initial license and earn my TESOL certification *before* I completed my administration certification because there were no alternative pathways for ESL at that time. Though rigorous, time-consuming, and costly, these advanced degrees truly grew my ability to effectively teach English Learners. As a result, every year I instructed ELs my students demonstrated growth on their annual English Language Proficiency assessments.

I was also fortunate to work in a district that values teachers continuing their education and expertise; it is in the contract to be reimbursed 50% of in state tuition and awarded pay increases for each degree earned. Because of my experiences *as a student* in higher education, I fully understand the time and financial commitment those degrees take, which not all teachers can afford. That lack of access is why I am very supportive of alternative pathways, and I instruct in them, too.

Since 2015, I have been an instructor in [Connecticut's ARCTEL program](#), which is the only alternative pathway in the state. This is a fast-track to certification program and allows teachers to complete up to three certifications in ten months (TESOL, Bilingual Education, and TESOL for Adults). However, the program requires *412 hours of training* over the course of *ten months* and is a *non-degree* program. I am supportive of this alternative pathway because of its rigor, which is essential to properly train teachers to support ELs, but *moreover* the program is situated in a state that requires teachers to earn a master's degree to maintain certification.

Alternative pathways for educators make sense when there are other mechanisms in place to ensure that teachers are involved in ongoing professional development through means of higher education. Now that I am now a lecturer at The University of Rhode Island in the School of Education, I have seen the disparity between teachers who have not pursued higher education since their initial licensure and those who have continued their education. There is a sharp contrast in the skill-set between these two groups, and I think we would all agree that we want only the strongest teachers for RI students, especially for our most marginalized population: English Learners. So, if we as a state do not believe all of our teachers should earn a master's degree, we should, at a minimum, ensure the highest quality training is in place for those in pursuit and maintenance of teacher licensure.

Finally, I noticed that URI was not mentioned in your State of Education address as one of the organizations that is helping with the efforts to increase the number of ESL/BDL teachers in the RI, so I wanted to make you aware of the work we have done at URI to support this initiative.



- URI's Director of Education, David Byrd, negotiated with the university's Provost to set a flat, reduced tuition rate for any student enrolled in the MA in TESOL/BDL program. Students seeking the ESL/BDL certification pay \$1,386 per 3-credit course compared to our other URI graduate programs, which are \$2,205 per 3-credit course. This reduced rate saves teachers \$819 *per course*.
- Since our launch in the fall of 2016, 28 teachers have completed their ESL and/or BDL certifications.
- We have 40 active teachers in the graduate program, all of whom are seeking ESL and/or BDL certification, 27 of whom are receiving partial tuition support through various grants, projects, or initiatives.
- We have collaborated with 11 districts, the Rhode Island Foundation (\$60,000 project), and the Rhode Island Office of Postsecondary Education (\$380,000 grant) to provide funding support for a total 51 former or current students, all of whom have earned or are in the process of earning their ESL and/or BDL certifications. The financial support for these teachers was in addition to the reduced rate tuition already offered by URI. The projects supported teachers with tuition, textbooks, math manipulatives, summer training, teaching observations, and coaching.
- In spring 2017, we sought approval from both URI and RIDE to allow undergraduates to complete our ESL/BDL certification during their initial licensure program. We currently have 17 undergraduate students beginning or completing their initial teaching license *concurrent* with the ESL and/or BDL certification. We expect the number of undergraduates to increase as the ESL/BDL certification is in high-demand, but we are unsure of how preservice teachers will complete two certifications in four years if there is a change to add a year-long residency program to initial certification.

In total, 85 inservice or preservice teachers have completed or are currently enrolled in URI's ESL/BDL certification courses, which is only in its fifth semester of operation.

Our program provides teachers in Rhode Island with an affordable and meaningful Master's degree in TESOL/BDL, ESL and/or BDL certification, and effective professional development. Please see below for some of the feedback we have received from RI teachers about our program:

*"Being offered to take part in this cohort has been the best opportunity my district has provided to expand my (and my colleagues') knowledge of CLD [Culturally and Linguistically Diverse] students. In just the past six weeks, I have learned more about CLD students than I have ever had in all my years of teaching [13 years]." -Pawtucket teacher*

*"I have learned more in this class [EDC501] and LIN420 than I have ever learned. I feel that I'm looking at my students through a whole new lens and already feel like I can understand their development and struggles better." - Cranston teacher*

*"Joining this cohort has been a fantastic learning opportunity. I feel that I have already gained so much useful knowledge about language acquisition that I never knew and can apply to teaching my CLD students. So, I do applaud our district for taking part in the cohort." -Woonsocket teacher*

*"These courses have been tremendously helpful already!...I am now seeing the value of being qualified to teach our English language learners...I feel so fortunate to be in this cohort because the information, readings, and writings are so valuable for my daily teaching." -Providence teacher*

*"I truly enjoyed these two classes this semester...I have gained so much knowledge in such a short amount of time on how to understand, accommodate, and tap into the strengths of my students' and families culture." -Central Falls teacher*



10/9/2018

University of Rhode Island Mail - Fwd: ESL/BDL Certifications in RI

I share those comments with you to demonstrate that higher education programs can and do provide "high-quality, relevant professional development" with "job-embedded opportunities that promote continuous growth" as outlined in Rhode Island's Strategic Plan.

Therefore, I hope to engage in deeper conversations between you and my URI colleagues about how to thoughtfully teach and support Rhode Island educators in effective and affordable pathways to ESL/BDL certification.

I appreciate you taking the time to read this letter and my concerns.

Best regards,

Amy Correia

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Amy Correia

TESOL/BDL Lecturer  
School of Education  
University of Rhode Island

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Amy Correia

TESOL/BDL Lecturer  
School of Education  
University of Rhode Island

10/11/2018

University of Rhode Island Mail - RIDE proposed regs changes--would you share this?

THE  
UNIVERSITY  
OF RHODE ISLAND

Anne Seitsinger <amseit@uri.edu>

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## RIDE proposed regs changes--would you share this?

6 messages

Diane Kern <dkern@uri.edu>

Thu, Oct 11, 2018 at 1:17 PM

To: David Byrd <dbyrd@uri.edu>, Anne Seitsinger <anneseitsinger@uri.edu>

Hello, David and Anne.

I am teaching this evening, so I am unable to attend the RIDE public hearing this evening. Would you be willing to share this feedback on my behalf?

In proposed regulations section 1.9 Teacher Certificate Areas, pages 80-125 I (or we?) do not support striking the specific names of national professional associations (e.g., National Council of Teachers of English, International Literacy Association, National Policy Board for Educational Administration) and the insertion of "appropriate RIDE approved national professional associations."

Thank you for considering this request.

Diane Kern

*Diane Kern, Ph. D.*  
Associate Professor  
URI School of Education  
708 Chafee  
Kingston, RI 02881  
(401) 874-9490  
dkern@uri.edu  
dkern@reading.org  
Preferred pronouns: she, her, hers, herself

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Anne Seitsinger <anneseitsinger@uri.edu>

Thu, Oct 11, 2018 at 1:25 PM

To: David Byrd <dbyrd@uri.edu>

Hi,

Are you going to the Open Meeting tonight at NK High School? If so, are you going to address the proposed change to increase student teaching from one semester to one year?

Anne

[Quoted text hidden]

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Anne M. Seitsinger, Ph.D.  
Associate Dean for Faculty and Research  
Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies  
Professor, School of Education  
Director, Center for School Improvement and Educational Policy  
University of Rhode Island

**Keenan, Mary**

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**From:** Teixeira, Angela  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 9, 2018 8:46 AM  
**To:** Foehr, Lisa; Keenan, Mary  
**Cc:** Wagner, Ken; Snider, Mary Ann  
**Subject:** FW: RIDE's Proposed PD Changes

**From:** Sharon LaFrenaye [mailto:Sharon\_LaFrenaye@ewg.k12.ri.us]  
**Sent:** Monday, October 08, 2018 10:01 PM  
**To:** Teixeira, Angela <Angela.Teixeira@ride.ri.gov>  
**Subject:** RIDE's Proposed PD Changes

**To Whom it May Concern,**

I'm writing out of great concern for the recently proposed changes to teachers professional development requirements in Rhode Island. I am a dedicated teacher currently in my 14th year of teaching, and I am finding it very difficult to imagine fulfilling the proposed PD learning units proposed. I actively participate in the Professional Development opportunities offered in my district, and beyond, but the requirements (see below) and the cost that comes along with taking extra course work appears to be an overwhelming task for this working mom. In addition, this may mean taking me out of my classroom for additional PD, on top of the days I am already out of my room for PD, which will negatively impact my students, our classroom community, and the continuity of their learning environment. I am in full support of ongoing Professional Development, but I strongly urge you to reconsider the amount required.

Sincerely, Sharon LaFrenaye  
2016 EWG Teacher of the Year  
2016 RI Elementary Art Educator of the Year

**"For tracking purposes, rounding to the nearest half-hour is appropriate. 2. One (1) college credit= is equal to fifteen (15) professional learning units.**

1.8.5 Professional Learning Units A. A. Professional Learning Units (PLUs) are accrued for the purpose of demonstrating ongoing professional learning. The accumulation of these units is a requirement for renewing educator certificates. These units represent ongoing learning and are earned as a result of professional learning activities that are designed to increase educator effectiveness. Ongoing learning is an important and necessary responsibility of educators as they maintain the knowledge and skills needed to educate students. B. Educators are responsible for the completion of all PLUs, including any financial responsibility not otherwise provided for by the state or local education agency (LEA), as PLUs are a condition of the renewal of educator certificates. C. Each LEA that employs educators shall develop, in collaboration with the employed educators, an LEA professional development plan that includes an operational definition of the kinds of professional learning activities that will be approved for PLUs, consistent with these regulations, as well as the kinds of supports, including but not limited to, (e.g., time, opportunities, and resources; ) that will be provided by the LEA to at least partially help educators meet the PLU requirements. DC. All educator PLUs for employees of a LEA shall be approved by the superintendent of the LEA, consistent with these regulations, and once the LEA professional development plan is operative, consistent with the LEA professional development plan. In any instance where these regulations and the LEA professional development plan are in conflict, these regulations shall take precedence. PLUs for superintendents shall be approved by the chair of the school committee. The Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education shall have the authority to approve specific PLU offerings for all Rhode Island certified educators. 1. Activities that may count toward the accumulation of



professional learning units are those that develop subject matter/content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, curriculum implementation knowledge or enhance educator effectiveness. These activities may be facilitated in many ways, including, but not limited to, third parties not regularly employed by the LEA and other educators regularly employed by the LEA such as a professional learning community focused on a professional problem of practice. 2. Activities that do not directly relate to improving educator effectiveness, such as general logistics, school daily operations, safety trainings, and most committee work do not qualify for professional learning units. These are important activities for schools but are not considered professional learning. B. Sustained Professional Learning 1.1. Seventy-five percent (75%) of professional learning units earned must meet the sustained professional learning requirements. 2. Professional learning is sustained when at least ten (10) PLUs are earned through an activity that is ten (10) or more hours in length or when shorter activities of the same topic take place over time. 3. Sixty-seven and five tenths (67.5) of the ninety (90) required professional learning units for the Initial Educator Certificate must be sustained units. 4. One hundred five (105) of the one hundred fifty (150) required professional learning units for the Professional Educator Certificate must be sustained units. C. Alignment of Professional Learning to Individual and District Needs 1. Professional learning must be aligned to the professional and instructional needs and interests of educators or the needs of the schools and districts where they practice. 2. Individual needs may be determined via formal processes such as evaluation or informally through collaboration and needs assessments. 3. School and district needs are determined via strategic planning and school improvement planning. D. Activities for Professional Learning Units 1. Site-Based Professional Learning activities such as: structured Professional Learning Communities, data analysis meetings, local workshops, lesson study, student work analysis sessions and other sitebased activities designed to improve teaching and learning. 2.3 Structured coaching that involves trained coaches working with colleagues on focused objectives through observation and feedback cycles. Coaching may take the form of induction coaching for beginning teachers or peer coaching and instructional coaching. 3.4 Proficiency-based Learning and Micro-credentials activities that require the educator to demonstrate proficiency in a new skill by submitting evidence of mastery. Micro-credentials often require educators to submit evidence to third party providers for review. 4. University coursework at accredited institutions of higher education. 5. National Board Certification is a recognized form of professional learning that may be used to accumulate units. Educators may receive units for completing individual components even if the certification is not achieved. 6. External Conferences or Workshops led by external organizations encompass a wide range of learning opportunities. Short-term or standalone workshops can be counted for limited units if they do not meet the sustained requirement. E. Assigning Unit Values to Activities- In order to recognize hours-based and competency-based professional learning experiences, RIDE will use professional learning units as its measure for documenting professional learning. Conversions will be needed to accommodate different learning activities. 1. One (1) hour of a professional learning activity = is equal to one (1) professional learning unit. **For tracking purposes, rounding to the nearest half-hour is appropriate. 2. One (1) college credit= is equal to fifteen (15) professional learning units."**

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Sharon LaFrenaye  
6th Grade Teacher  
Metcalf Elementary School

October 11, 2018

Angela Teixeira  
Special Assistant to the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education  
Liaison to the Board of Education  
Rhode Island Department of Education  
255 Westminster Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Dear Ms. Teixeira:

My name is Jacqueline Fougere and I am an Auditory-Oral Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. I am writing in regards to the Teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing certification requirements in Rhode Island.

It is my concern that the new Teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing certification requirements in Rhode Island fails to equally represent all Teachers of the Deaf. Because there are a variety of educational approaches to teach students with hearing loss, Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing have diverse backgrounds, training, and expertise. The most common educational approaches to teaching students with hearing loss include: Bilingual-bicultural, Auditory-Oral, and Total Communication. Some students with hearing loss learn through a Bilingual-Bicultural approach, where American Sign Language (ASL) is the only method used in the classroom and English is taught through exposure to printed words on paper. Other students with hearing loss learn through the Auditory-Oral approach, where American Sign Language is not used, and English is learned through residual hearing and speech. Total Communication is an approach that combines auditory and visual communication for instruction. A combination of sign systems, like ASL, signed English, and cued speech can be used with this approach. Educational approaches are determined based on an individual's preference, needs, and capabilities as well as family preference. Depending on the educational approach used, the needs and services of students with hearing loss varies.

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loss/listening challenges, communication repair strategies, and self-advocacy skills to advocate for their specific needs. Part of my role as an Auditory-Oral Teacher of the Deaf also involves working within the mainstream classroom to support school personnel with hearing technology and to provide them with insight on the unique needs to students with hearing loss. Non-Auditory/Oral Teachers of the Deaf and/or other professionals that work with student through other educational approaches are mostly unaware of the issues faced by these students.

Although I am an Auditory-Oral Teacher of the Deaf, I support all communication methods and firmly believe that all families should choose a communication method that is best suited for them and their child. The Rhode Island Department of Education must recognize and acknowledge the diverse needs of students with hearing loss and the variety of educational approaches available to them. It is critical that RIDE equally represent all Teachers of the Deaf and create certification options available to them to ensure that students with hearing loss are being provided with appropriate services by qualified professionals.

Thank you for your time and consideration regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Fougere, MEd.  
Teacher of the Deaf



58 Baker Street  
Warren, RI 02885  
October 9, 2018

Commissioner Wagner,

My name is Ellen Estrella. I am a School Nurse Teacher in the Bristol Warren Regional School District. I have practiced as a School Nurse Teacher since 1998. On Monday, October 1, I attended the public hearing held at Portsmouth Middle School on the potential regulation changes for teacher certification. I did not speak at the hearing but I listened.

I am extremely concerned about the proposal to make a dual track for certification for School Nurses. In the handout titled Frequently Asked Questions, in the first paragraph the question is about the Why of making changes. The last sentence of that paragraph is **"It also allows us to ensure that teachers are prepared on day one of teaching..."** How do you propose that a certified school nurse be ready on day one if she/he has not taken the appropriate coursework that prepares a School Nurse Teacher for the job? Nursing programs, Baccalaureate, Associate or Diploma, do not cover the content of what is needed to prepare to practice in a school setting. Required health screenings, immunizations, 504, IEP, FERPA, caring for a child in the school setting are just some of the content area that is covered in additional education courses.

It is particularly distressing that the Rhode Island Certified School Nurse Teacher Association was not contacted for their input on this very important proposed change. Not only does our professional organization support school nurses being certified as School Nurse Teachers so does the Rhode Island chapter of the American Nurses Association (ANA) support our specialty. A letter of support was read into evidence at the Portsmouth hearing.

You would not want a nurse whose specialty is Geriatrics taking care of your critical newborn in a Neonatal nursery or an Orthopedic nurse caring for you in the Cardiac intensive care unit after a myocardial infarction. Why do you want to leave the care of our most precious assets, the children and adolescents of Rhode Island, to a registered nurse who does not have the qualifications to care for them?

Sincerely,  
Ellen Estrella M.Ed, BSN, RN, RICSNT

**Teixeira, Angela**

**From:** Renee Guertin <reneeguertin@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 09, 2018 2:19 PM  
**To:** Teixeira, Angela  
**Subject:** Proposed Certification Changes

Dear Ms. Teixeira,

I have served as an educator the past 28 years and have a Master's Degree in Education. I have 2 children who have successfully attended public schools. My son is in his 2nd year of college and my daughter is off to college next year. I hold my fellow educators and my children's teachers in the highest regard! I recently attended the meeting at Davies Career and Technical School on September 27th to find more information about the proposed revisions to RI regulations governing educator certification.

I truly believe RIDE has much more work to do prior to implementing the proposed changes. RIDE needs to listen to the educators in the field to truly understand the implications of these proposed changes to certification.

I heard at least 3 times at the meeting that teachers have approached RIDE and want their Master's Degree to count for "something". An educator with a Master's Degree has spent a significant amount of time and money earning this diploma to better their craft. It is beyond my comprehension why an educator with a Master's Degree would then need to go on and do an additional 150 PLU hours to attain re-certification every 5 years. In addition, mandating an additional 150 PLU Units for all is simply unrealistic. Teachers will end up paying more out of pocket money towards completing these hours as districts simply do not have the resources to supply, manage and keep track of PD for all of their employees. Young teachers coming out of college with debt and the desire to begin life into adulthood (starting a family, buying a car, buying a house, etc.) will be strapped with more financial burden. Valued, experienced teachers will leave the profession just to avoid having to jump through hoops to get re-certified. This is the reality. Communities will lose some of the best educators due to these changes.

Educators across RI fight for every 3 year contract and feel "lucky" if a 1-2 % raise is granted by school committees. Teachers are forced to pay increased contributions to health care, had their pensions sliced away and now have to work longer for less money with no COLA even after being vested in the state pension program and pay tax deductions to boot. Re-certification costs are extremely expensive especially if you hold multiple certifications as I do. Given the number of school shootings, increased emphasis on test scores over the years, and working conditions in old, unhealthy buildings, teacher stress level is at an all time high. I would hope RIDE considers these factors when thinking about these changes to certification. Disgruntled educators are not good for students.

I am requesting that RIDE take their time and "get it right" when considering implementing changes to our certification. Please do not rush into this and listen to the educators in the trenches. Take the advice given at your public meetings from the professionals actually working in the schools so educators know their voices are heard. We really do know what it best for the education of our students as well as ourselves! As educators, we want to attract our best and brightest young adults to this profession. RIDE needs to be progressive in its approach to doing this not simply expect more from already overloaded professionals.

Sincerely,

Renee M. Guertin, M.Ed

**Teixeira, Angela**

**From:** Foehr, Lisa  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 09, 2018 3:17 PM  
**To:** Teixeira, Angela  
**Subject:** FW: teacher certification requirements

comment

*Lisa M. Foehr* | Chief, Division of Teaching & Learning  
Rhode Island Department of Education  
255 Westminster Street, Providence, RI 02903  
(401) 222-8809 | [www.ride.ri.gov](http://www.ride.ri.gov)

**From:** VanHorne-Prior, Winnie <Winnie.VanHorne-Prior@ppsd.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 9, 2018 3:11 PM  
**To:** Foehr, Lisa <Lisa.Foehr@ride.ri.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: teacher certification requirements

yes please

*Winnie Van Horne-Prior*

Literacy Instructional Coach  
ASF @ Broad St. Elementary School  
Providence Public Schools

ASF teacher website:  
<https://sites.google.com/providenceschools.org/asfteacherhive/home>

**From:** Foehr, Lisa <[Lisa.Foehr@ride.ri.gov](mailto:Lisa.Foehr@ride.ri.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 9, 2018 3:09 PM  
**To:** VanHorne-Prior, Winnie  
**Subject:** RE: teacher certification requirements

Winnie,

You did not indicate in your email whether you are submitting this email as part of public comment. Would you like your comments to be included in the public comment?

Best,  
Lisa

*Lisa M. Foehr* | Chief, Division of Teaching & Learning  
Rhode Island Department of Education  
255 Westminster Street, Providence, RI 02903  
(401) 222-8809 | [www.ride.ri.gov](http://www.ride.ri.gov)



**From:** VanHorne-Prior, Winnie <[Winnie.VanHorne-Prior@ppsd.org](mailto:Winnie.VanHorne-Prior@ppsd.org)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 9, 2018 9:37 AM  
**To:** Foehr, Lisa <[Lisa.Foehr@ride.ri.gov](mailto:Lisa.Foehr@ride.ri.gov)>  
**Subject:** teacher certification requirements

Hi,  
Please reconsider the proposed changes for teacher re-certification. Already we have a deficit in the amount of teachers we need nation wide. Rhode Island (especially Providence) teachers are underpaid compared to the rest of New England. Many of us work second jobs just to make ends meet. Teachers have been made to feel terrible about our profession over the last 10 years. We are not treated like professionals. We are required to constantly change our practice according to the latest political pendulum swings in education. No other profession requires such content upheaval. RIDE is always changing the target for us.  
It is a sad and depressing day to be a teacher.  
Thank you,  
Winnie

Winnie Van Horne-Prior

Literacy Instructional Coach  
ASF @ Broad St. Elementary School  
Providence Public Schools

ASF teacher website:  
<https://sites.google.com/providenceschools.org/asfteacherhive/home>

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## Teixeira, Angela

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**From:** Moran, Colleen <Colleen.Moran@ppsd.org>  
**Sent:** Saturday, October 06, 2018 1:03 PM  
**To:** Teixeira, Angela  
**Subject:** Proposed Changes to Educator Certification in RI

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to oppose the changes to the RI educator certification process. As a teacher in the Providence School Department for 18 years, I am a strong believer in professional development. However, I am opposed to 75% of it being district priorities. As a professional, I should decide what professional development will best grow my skill set.

I also believe these proposed regulations do a major disservice to students by allowing non-certified teachers to deliver instruction. This delivers a strong message to every teacher, parent and to the public. That message being that the work we as professionals have put into learning and building our skill set, to educate our students with researched techniques, doesn't matter. Unfortunately, our students will suffer. I have seen non-certified substitutes in our building and our students have suffered greatly. One class in particular lost 5 months of instruction because the substitute did not have behavior management and skills to deliver quality instruction. All students deserve a highly qualified teacher!

Sincerely,  
Colleen Moran

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**Teixeira, Angela**

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**From:** linda arruda <nurselindas@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, October 08, 2018 5:10 PM  
**To:** Teixeira, Angela

Hello Ms Teixeira,

I am a new school nurse teacher in the Providence School District. I have been a registered nurse for 17 years, and was a volunteer school nurse for the past 9 years for my kids school also. The experience of being a school nurse drew me in to actually change my career path and advance. I am glad to hear the proposed changes that the Commissioner plan to implement because it allows me to pursue my Master's degree in Education in my home state of Massachusetts. I feel that to be an excellent school nurse entails having experience through years of service in our profession, and also dealing with a diverse group. I do believe furthering one's education is important to better oneself, and it doesn't have to be done in one state only. I hope your changes go through because they will allow me to continue being a school nurse full time, a mom fulltime, and accomplishing my goal of a Master's close to home.

Sincerely,

Linda F Arruda RN  
Nathan Bishop Middle School

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)



**Teixeira, Angela**

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**From:** Improtay-Young, Erin <erin\_improtay-young@nksd.net>  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 11, 2018 8:49 AM  
**To:** Teixeira, Angela  
**Subject:** Concerns about proposed recertification process

Hi Angela,

I am extremely worried about the proposed pathways for teacher certification. From what I have read and heard I feel that Commissioner Wagner has misunderstood what teachers meant, need, and want with the low percentage rating for current professional development. Forcing teachers to do many hours of PD is not helpful. What would be helpful is that during the PD provided to us by our school that we actually get to have PD that applies to us in our classrooms. Subject specific PD, not administrative agendas. The old evaluation system used to let us take undergraduate courses in our content area. I would find this extremely helpful! Especially if I wasn't the one having to pay for my PD. Which leads me to another concern. The financial aspect of having to pay for all of this extra professional development each year would be a massive burden on us. I can barely make ends meet now. There is also the factor of time that would have to be involved to complete all of this PD. Again, this would have a massive impact as well. I don't have enough time in my days as it is so adding more mandated work hours would be devastating to both me, my husband, and my two toddlers. I don't get to spend much time with them with all the after hour work I do already plus meeting the every day needs of a family. Having time with my family is of the utmost importance to me.

I really feel that Commissioner Wagner needs to realize that quantity doesn't equate to quality in addition to realizing all of the stress he would be putting on teachers financially, mentally, and emotionally.

Thank you for your time and please keep me updated on the outcome of this decision.

Erin Improtay-Young

Deborah L Svitil  
211 Angell Rd.  
Lincoln, RI 02865

\*\*\*\*\*

October 10, 2018

Dear Lisa Foehr and Members of RIDE Council on Elementary and Secondary Education,

As a practicing Certified School Nurse-Teacher (CSNT) in RI for more than 28 years, I am writing in opposition to RIDE's proposed alternate pathway for certification of school nurse-teachers. RIDE's proposal was made in response to claims of a shortage of CSNTs. In many districts across RI there is a shortage of substitute CSNTs, most often related to per diem compensation. To the contrary, nearly all vacancies of full and/or part time CSNT positions are filled within a reasonable time frame and without loss of nursing and health services.

In those instances where a vacancy might occur, there is a productive and successful mechanism in place whereby nurses who meet minimal requirements of having a baccalaureate degree, RI RN licensure, and 3 years of clinical experience can be hired with preliminary certification. They are required to enroll in graduate coursework to maintain/renew their certification. This process ensures that the RN will receive the necessary knowledge to provide high quality nursing services in the educational setting. Such coursework provides the nurse with in-depth knowledge specific to the school environment and prepares them to advocate for all students' well-being and success in school. Such coursework is not offered in undergraduate nursing programs.

It is imperative that all school nurses caring for RI children are highly educated, fully prepared, and highly qualified to ensure student health and safety and optimal access to education.

Respectfully Submitted,



Deborah L. Svitil M.Ed. RN BSN CSNT