

May 19, 2024

Attention Education Committee:

As a teacher in education for 26 plus years I am writing in support of Senate Bill 219. As an elementary school teacher and mentor, it has been my pleasure to host several pre-service educators in my 4th grade math classroom.

If we look at the quality of teacher preparation it makes sense to keep the license in smaller chunks to provide future teachers the ability to go deeper into the content. When adding on even just two grade levels the quality of teacher preparation changes. The content needed in the lower elementary grades versus the upper elementary level to middle school is quite different causing a strain on teacher preparation. It has been my experience when working with pre-service teachers in the 4-9 licensure band, their content knowledge as well as classroom management is quite deeper than those that are spread across more grade bands in the elementary. Allowing time and space to grow in two content areas (middle childhood licensure) ensures quality teacher preparation. Even changing the licensure from early childhood to K-5 has seen a greater impact on teacher preparation with many struggling to master content learning in the upper elementary. How I deal with first graders in reading versus fifth grade is quite an extreme. For the elementary licensure, content such as math is a wide range with many of the preservice teachers not as comfortable with the content in the upper elementary grades. The way in which we engage students in the content also changes with cognitive level. Thinking that someone can be an expert in all content areas in all grade levels is crazy. "Jack of all trades, master of none" is what I am thinking we will have with the new licensure bands.

It is concerning to think that teachers can be moved to any grade level of the new licensure without thinking about what is best for students. A warm body in a classroom is not what is needed but someone that is able to understand student learning as well as the content. Thinking that teachers can be moved like chess pieces is quite concerning as well. My colleagues and I are concerned about the quality of educators that will be coming to us and the depth of knowledge these preservice teachers will have to master. I fear that we will have an even more teacher shortage with the new licensure. I know several of my colleagues would not choose education with the new licensing changes.

Concerned Educator,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tami Matney".

Tami Matney
4th Grade Math Teacher
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