



**Testimony to the State Board for Educator Certification**

**Regarding Item #14, February 16, 2024**

**By Quinn McCall**

Madame Chair and members of the board, my name is Quinn McCall and I represent the Texas Classroom Teachers Association.

First, I'd like to thank TEA staff for working with us and other stakeholders on developing a flexible approach for high school special education teachers. In particular, we appreciate the agency's willingness to respond to our feedback, particularly by not requiring high school teachers to obtain additional certification, and we look forward to continued collaboration in the future.

However, we are greatly concerned about the proposal to require elementary and middle school special education teachers to have to add content certification. Asking special education teachers to obtain further certification is a huge burden for those who are already working, and likely an untenable requirement for aspiring special education teachers in EPPs. While allowing additional certification as an *option* is fine, *requiring it* is a different beast altogether.

Specifically, if the goal is to provide flexibility for special education teachers to show competency in their content area, *all* secondary teachers should be allowed to use HOUSSE to show that competency, not just high school teachers. Under your current rule, there is a HOUSSE option for all secondary teachers (grades 6-12). This recognizes the fluidity of teacher assignments between middle and high school as well as the various configurations across the state for what is considered middle vs high school as locally determined.

It has been argued that since a generalist certificate is available to middle school teachers, they wouldn't have the potential issue of needing a different certification for every classroom they enter to deliver on-level content instruction. However, for middle school special education teachers, this would mean that they would still have to obtain another certificate which is a significant undertaking. Just because a generalist certificate is available doesn't mean it should be the only option. We recommend that you give *all* special education teachers the flexibility that HOUSSE provides.

Finally, we need to accommodate our veteran special educators and ease our novice special educators into any new requirements we place on them. Draft guidelines require twenty-four points to meet HOUSSE standards. For example, those with little or no years of experience would not immediately qualify without some college coursework. These teachers should be allowed time to meet any new requirements placed on them.

Thank you for time and I'd be happy to answer questions.