

attachment 1
Vice Chairman Thayne and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns regarding Docket 08.0202.1501.044 Alternative Authorization-Content Specialist, which can be found on p 57 of your packet.

Let me begin by thanking Tracie for her willingness to work with us on this particular rule. When the rule was first proposed, the stakeholders were invited to meet with Tracie and discuss our concerns. Over the course of several meetings and numerous email exchanges, changes were made that did improve upon the rule.

We understand the importance of ensuring school districts can hire staff. Like you, IEA members want to be sure our students have access to teachers. At the same time, we want to be sure those teachers are qualified to work in our classrooms. We get concerned when policies are created that allow for shortcuts to becoming a teacher like bypassing requirements that the teaching candidate understand and practice how to best teach before taking responsibility for an entire classroom of students. That is the overall context for my comments today.

We have always had concerns about the use of alternative authorizations and certifications.

Under the change being proposed in this section of the rule, a candidate will not be required to first meet enrollment qualifications of the alternative route preparation program before being employed. Instead, this change to the rule will allow the school district interested in hiring the individual to ensure that the candidate is highly and uniquely qualified to teach. And, as the rule states, that could be done through a combination of employment experience and education.

We understand the dilemma. School districts are desperately seeking teachers. In some cases, districts report that they are unable to find teaching candidates. We appreciate the quandary.

We understand that the SBE will be doing work over the next year to address the teacher shortage issue and we look forward to working with them and the other stakeholders on this issue. In the meantime, we do not believe this change to the rule is necessary.

At a time when the state is ratcheting up expectations for both students and teachers, we do not believe the state should not be implementing policy that lowers the bar for those who enter our classrooms and work with our students. Instead, we need to address the fundamental problems that are limiting the state's ability to attract and retain highly qualified teachers.

We appreciate this opportunity to weigh in and urge you to reject this section of the rule.