**RSAI Testimony: Issuance of Teacher Licenses and Endorsements Rules Proposal Lowering Hours of Content Required, Feb. 5, 2020**

Thank you to members of the Board of Education Examiners for bringing forth this proposal:

**ARC 4870C** -- Teaching endorsements, 13.28 <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/aco/arc/4870C.pdf>

RSAI is very supportive of the rules as proposed to limit the hours of content coursework required for teachers credentialed to teach in the “all” categories of these content areas. RSAI priorities call for flexibility to recruit and retain teachers, providing attention to eliminating barriers to those entering the profession or entering the State of Iowa to continue the profession having been licensed in another state. This proposal furthers those interests.

**Rationale for Support:**

Rural schools are often isolated, many miles from urban centers and the amenities offered there. With lower economies of scale and declining enrollments, many rural schools also have lower salary pay scales for teachers. Until recently, with no funding formula adjustment for significant transportation costs, rural schools had to dedicate more of the per pupil revenue to busing. With lower class sizes, rural school teachers are often faced with multiple preparations and coaching assignments. All of these conditions create challenges in attracting teachers to rural schools and keeping them there. Meanwhile, there are fewer college students graduating from the schools of education, seeking a teaching position, in many content areas that are required for schools to offer and teach.

Lowering the credit hours required for these credentials opens the door for teachers from other states to join us in Iowa, or for those already credentialed in a content area but lacking sufficient hours for the “all” credential to be able teach another class in their content areas without having to simultaneously go back to school to meet the licensure requirement.

We believe these rules will increase the pool of individuals willing and able to teach in Iowa schools. Although some may voice concerns over lowering quality, we do not believe that will be a result of this proposal. There are now other supports in place Iowa schools, such as the Teacher Leadership and Compensation System, which can support teachers to network and expand their knowledge with their peers. Collective work on lesson planning and strategies to engage students can also support teachers along the way.

**One Concern:**

Although we support the reduction in hours, we have one concern with the elimination of Argumentation/debate and Mass Media Production from the areas of coursework required for the English/language Arts-all credential. These areas of content are increasingly critical for student success in our future, as the need to evaluate the credibility of sources, ability to debate, argue and dialogue with respect, and understanding the role of media in a democracy are more critical in a world of social media than ever before. We would suggest these areas of content be retained by perhaps combining multiple areas into shorter courses, but opposed their elimination altogether from the coursework of prospective teachers.

Thank you for bringing this proposal forward.

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