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DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Is there any objection? Is there any objection?

So ordered.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar Number 474.

THE CLERK:

On page 24, Calendar 474, Substitute for Senate Bill Number 438, AN ACT CONCERNING CHARTER SCHOOLS, favorable report of the Committee on Appropriations.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Fleischmann, you have the floor, sir.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I move for acceptance of the joint committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

The motion is for acceptance of the joint committee's favorable report and passage of the bill. Will you remark further, sir?

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Yes, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, the Clerk is in possession of an amendment that is a strike-all amendment, LCO 4726, previously designated Senate "A." I ask that the

Clerk please call and I be given permission to summarize.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Will the Clerk please call LCO 4726, designated Senate Amendment "A."

THE CLERK:

LCO Number 4726, Senate "A" offered by Senator Gaffey and Representative Fleischmann.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

The Representative has asked leave to summarize.

Is there any objection?

Hearing none, please proceed, sir.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, the amendment that stands before us is essentially Connecticut's Race to the Top of education reform legislation for the year.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Madam Speaker, we're without the amendments. If we could hold until we get those.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

The House will stand at ease for a moment.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you.

(Chamber at ease.)

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

The House will please come back to order.

Representative Fleischmann, you still have the floor, sir.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, there's a lot at stake with this measure before us. First, the federal competition known as Race to the Top. Connecticut stands to win from 175 to 195 million dollars if we win Race to the Top, round 2.

In round 1, only two states were given grants, Delaware and Tennessee. And what we did is we went and put together the rubric that was used for scoring and compared how did Connecticut do compared to Delaware and Tennessee.

We analyzed the specific areas where they had

outstripped those. Overall they were about a hundred points ahead of us and the key elements of the amendment now before us, along with the administrative steps that the State Department of Education will take will, we believe, get us the points we need to win in round 2.

But the measure before us is about more than the federal Race to the Top. It's about having an educational system that gives the results that we need for the 21st century. It will allow us to track students' academic growth, to tie teacher and administrator evaluations to academic growth results we see in students, it will allow us to expand access to high-achieving charter schools and to bring our high school curricular requirements in line with not only what colleges are looking for in the 20th -- 21st century, like the state university system, but also workforce needs.

In manufacturing, if you want to go take a job, you have to know how to work complex equipment. In auto shops, you have to know how to work the computers that are now governing the engines in every car. In an office, you normally have to be able to master multiple computer applications.

So what we did is we got together key stakeholders and we made sure that they worked together to come to the measure before us because one of the key criteria of Race to the Top is, to what extent do you have consensus? To what extent do you have buy-in from the different school districts and from the different unions who are affected by school reform?

And so we have the commissioner of education in the room along with people from the teachers unions. We had Representative Doug McCrory from Campaign Learn in the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus. We had Alex Johnson from ConnCAN. We had Joe Cirasuolo from the Connecticut Association of Superintendents. We had the ranking member of the Education Committee, Marilyn Giuliano, invited to every meeting along with our Senate ranking member, Sam Caligiuri. And my cochair, Tom Gaffey, who I must say did a masterful job of helping everyone stay on track and stay focused on the job at hand.

The key elements of this amendment before us are the following: Mechanisms for bringing outstanding administrators and superintendents to the state of Connecticut by the expansion of our educational data

systems, pre-K through 12 and even through grade 16 for those who go to public universities so that we can track each student's academic growth. Removal of attendance caps for charter schools that show that they're integrate academic results.

And last, but not least secondary school reform. There is nothing in this bill that gets us more points in the federal competition than reforming our secondary school system.

It will align our high schools with our workforce and college needs. And I've had questions from people about what will it do to our dropout rate? And I just want to say, the evidence is clear. When you increase standards, dropout rates drop.

San Jose, California increased its high school standards; lowered its dropout rate. Massachusetts has the highest high school graduation requirements and country and has lowered its dropout rate. It's got a lower dropout rate than Connecticut right now. Hartford, Connecticut adopted the very rubric that we have in this bill and has lowered its dropout rate.

Last, but not least, in this bill we have a section on in-school suspension. This is language that was agreed to by Connecticut Voices for Children

and the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education and the Connecticut Association of School Superintendents has also voiced its support for the language here on in-school suspension.

And just to make it clear, the language that we have gives latitude to your local school board to set the policy regarding when a child is going to be in-school suspended and when out of school. There's a basic framework that's laid out by the state of Connecticut, but the details of the framework and how it shall work are left to your locals will board.

So Madam Speaker, with that I conclude my summary and move adoption.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

The question before us is not adoption of Senate Amendment "A."

Will you remark?

Representative Lyddy, you have the floor, sir.

REP. LYDDY (106th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, no longer can we wandered aimlessly through the halls of what seem to be the perpetual halls of a failing education system.

Tonight, Madam Speaker, we chip away at the once

impervious wall -- halls that have too often divided our schools, our communities and our standing as a nation.

Tonight, we reinstate and recommit ourselves to the hope and promise that no child ever has to walk the dark halls of an inadequate education system. Education is not a sprint. It is very much a marathon, Madam Speaker. And in this race to the top we understand that we must take great strides to ensure that we are adequately building a system that propels our students to a bright future.

Just like we did the other night with the achievement gap bill, we focus our efforts tonight on ensuring that our school systems are held accountable to the number one stakeholders: The students, the teachers and, of course, the taxpayers. With the passage of this bill, we are reassuring the citizens of Connecticut that our next generation will be equipped with the capacity and the opportunity to learn, serve and make a difference in our state and around the globe.

Madam Speaker, it's an honor to support this legislation and I personally would like to thank the various teachers from my district who have reached out

and who have given me their feedback and support in this measure. So Madam Speaker, I, too, urge adoption. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Thank you.

Representative Bye, you have the floor, ma'am.

REP. BYE (19th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I, too, stand in support of this amendment and for purposes of legislative intent, I have some questions for the honorable chairman of the Education Committee.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Fleischmann, prepare yourself.

Representative Bye, please proceed.

REP. BYE (19th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, to the proponent of the amendment, on lines 157 to 183, that's where you outlined the various requirements for high school graduation. Is that correct? Through you, madam.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, I believe we may be looking at different LCOs. On LCO 4726, the lines are further down in the amendment, if she'll give me a

moment.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Bye, do you have that?

REP. BYE (19th):

Madam Speaker, the last version I had it on line 1157. If the gentleman from West Hartford could refer me to the proper lines, I can continue with the questions.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Could someone give Representative Bye the LCO.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Yes.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Madam Speaker, I heard 157. Line 1157 is indeed the correct line and I apologize for the confusion, but certainly that is the section that pertains to secondary school reform.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Bye.

REP. BYE (19th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, this represents a change for many of our high schools in the state of

Connecticut and they are coming to grips with what this change is going to mean to them.

And for some districts, this would mean that students would have fewer electives. Is the true? Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, yes. There will be a slightly reduced number of electives.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Bye.

REP. BYE (19th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

And thank you for that answer. Through you, Madam Speaker, as I read this bill I noted some flexibility within some the requirements that would allow for electives. For example, under career and life skills, the language such as is followed by examples of career and life skills listed under this area of study. Is that correct? Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Yes, and that area of the curriculum as in several others, there are a variety of options provided. So that we are making sure students take classes in that area, but giving them flexibility as to which classes they take.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Bye.

REP. BYE (19th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, I believe that's one of the strengths of this bill, building the flexibility.

And just for the purpose of legislative intent, through you, Madam Speaker, as you know, Representative Fleischmann, in West Hartford, many students take multiple credits in the arts, often a minimum of eight credits. And these electives are very demanding, both intellectually and on a performance basis. And also many students from West Hartford go on to work in the area of the arts.

So the question from the gentleman, is could a class in graphic arts or music or stage design, industrial design, music recording, stagecraft and

such other classes meet that requirement? Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, yes.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Bye.

REP. BYE (19th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, to Representative Fleischmann, do you anticipate the Department of Education would develop a waiver process for schools that have specialty areas such as West Hartford's music and arts program? Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, the state Department of Education is going to have to develop guidelines to answer the type of questions that Representative Bye has posed.

And I've spoken with the department about this matter and expect that the commissioner will be including a process for waivers in those guidelines so

that extraordinary programs are able to continue operating and do the great job that they do.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Bye.

REP. BYE (19th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, I commend the chair for his work on this bill and I thank the chairman for his answers.

Like Representative Fleischmann, I'm sure we don't want to do anything to constrict high school programs to such an extent that towns lose their unique programs that have made them unique. And having met with the commissioner and the superintendent and the board of ed chair in West Hartford, I believe the commissioner is committed to making this initiative work and in practice for districts.

I believe there's many opportunities for ongoing feedback for districts and that will be really important. So I thank the gentleman for his answers and patience with the questions and I stand in support of the bill. Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Thank you.

Representative Giuliano, you have the floor.

REP. GIULIANO (23rd):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Some questions through you to the proponent of the amendment.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Fleischmann, prepare yourself.

Representative Giuliano, please proceed.

REP. GIULIANO (23rd):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. If I might ask, the two states that were awarded monies in the first round in the Race to the Top competition, were Delaware and Tennessee.

My question is how many states competed in the first round? Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, there were 40 states that competed in round 1.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Giuliano.

REP. GIULIANO (23rd):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

And where did Connecticut place within the top 40? Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, for round 1 Connecticut was right around the middle of the pack.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Giuliano.

REP. GIULIANO (23rd):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Could my colleague on the Education Committee be a little bit more specific than middle of the pack? If there were 40 in the competition and 2 won, what was the numerical place of Connecticut? Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

In round 1, which reflected where we stood in January prior to any action of the sort we're considering today, we were 25th.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Giuliano.

REP. GIULIANO (23rd):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate that.

My understanding of the Race to the Top competition is that it requires and asks states to create robust, innovative and out-of-the-box solutions to chronic educational problems. And in Connecticut, we know we have a chronic problem with academic achievement.

If I might ask, through you, Madam Speaker, in Section 1, we talk about an alternative route to certification and that certification is targeted at school administrators. School administrators are the leadership; these are the educational leaders who set methodology and curriculum, work with superintendents and boards of education, chart the course of educational success in those districts and have the ultimate responsibility for student success or failure.

If we are to reflect on the alternative route for administrator certification within the amendment, Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the proponent of the amendment, how is the alternative route for certification out-of-the-box and robust? What is

different from what it has been? And let me add, Madam Speaker, that I'm looking at statutory language here, proposed statutory language, that talks about administrators having 40 school months of teaching experience, 10 school months -- I mean, we're talking about people who have been in education.

When I think of robustness and innovation, I'm thinking of people who were coming from other venues of life experience, achievement, success and occupational diversity. Through you, Madam Speaker, if I can have an explanation of the robustness of this alternative route to certification for administrators?

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, well, it's worth noting first of all that right now there is no alternate route to certification for administrators in the state of Connecticut. There's one that's being developed, but there is none that exist.

And there's none that exist, because our current statutory framework was so limiting that when a great alternate route looked at Connecticut and considered coming here, they felt doubt as to whether they'd be

able to operate here.

They would be able to operate under the system created by this bill. Under the section that my good colleague referred to, a person could leave the private sector, spend three years teaching at a fine private school, spent one year teaching in a public school and then head towards a career as an administrator. That, Madam Speaker, is a very different route than the sort of route most administrators take today.

And those who worked on this bill agree that it allowed a lot of programs that are already operating around the country to come to Connecticut and be approved by our State Department of Education and potentially give us some great new educational leaders.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Giuliano.

REP. GIULIANO (23rd):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Another question, through you, to the proponent of the amendment. I think it is authentic to acknowledge that the State Board of Education is close

to adopting what is called a core curriculum and that would set the stage and set the parameters and standards for all of Connecticut's public schools.

My question, through you, is the need to adopt, at this moment in time, this level of statutory reform, particularly secondary reform when our own State Board of Education is on the verge of adopting core curriculum.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, well, there are a few answers to that question. First that core curriculum to which my good ranking member refers is forthcoming ostensibly in July of this year. Our application for race to the top is due June 1 so it would be too little too late for starters.

Second, what we're talking about here is a real commitment to reform that we are putting into statute as our current requirements are in statured. The state Board of Education's new ideas for core curriculum, while I'm sure they'll be interesting, do not have the same kind of weight with people down in

Washington or with folks who run school systems that -- then that the criteria that the State Board of Education will be considering adopting.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Giuliano.

REP. GIULIANO (23rd):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

A question through you. And that is the actual raising of credits in the high school reform section of the proposed amendment, from 20 to 25. That is a (inaudible) change in a pragmatic sense for schools. It embraces a great deal of cost. It embraces a great deal of scheduling complexity. And through you, Madam Speaker, what I would like to ascertain from my colleague is what would be the cost of the raising of credits at the high school level from 20 to 25 in order to participate in the Race to the Top competition? Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, first I'd like to observe that the reforms to the high school curriculum

are exactly the type of out-of-the-box thinking that Representative Giuliano said was needed. They move us into the 21st century in the way our neighbor to the north, Massachusetts, has already done.

In terms of cost, I need to get to my proper part of the fiscal note, but if memory serves, there were costs at both the state and local level. It's hard to say precisely because there's a range depending on how many teachers need to be hired. I recollect a range of 12 to 15 million dollars and actually put in the context of 175 to 195 million dollars that the federal government will send to the state of Connecticut if we are fortunate enough to win the Race to the Top. Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Giuliano.

REP. GIULIANO (23rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker.

I'm looking at the fiscal note and I'm looking at the columns additional staff, salaries, fringe benefits teacher retirement contributions. And the OFA note seems to indicate that the figure would be closer to nearly $21 million.

Let me ask a further question, though, through

you, Madam Speaker, what preparatory stages are proposed in this new amendment that -- which will become the bill that sets the stage for high school reform that includes, not only secondary reform, but elementary and middle school reform as important preemptory preliminary steps to actually execute secondary school reform in Connecticut? Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, first, to return to the previous question I apologize. I didn't have the page in front of me. It's a range of 13.7 to 20.8 million that is offered by our Office of Fiscal Analysis. Obviously, far smaller than the funds we stand to win.

In terms of stages, there are multiple stages. The Department of Education will be developing exams for the various courses that are part of the core curriculum, one exam per year over several of the out years.

The State Department of Education will be hired specialists in teaching and curriculum. And

administration will be going out to our districts to help them implement. The implementation date for the first class that must graduate under these requirements is 2018. So we have left in plenty of time for the State Department and our local boards of education to phase in the sort of changes that we've just discussed. Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Giuliano.

REP. GIULIANO (23rd):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

And there is an important adjunctive cost that I would like to bring to the attention of the chamber and that is the cost for developing guidelines for teacher evaluation programs that includes student growth and district evaluation.

And according to the fiscal note, it would appear that the Office of Fiscal Analysis is indicating that the training cost for what they presume to be 7,000 teachers across the state of Connecticut at about $1,000 per person would result in an additional cost of about $7 million. So if we cobbled together the 21.8 million and 7 million, I think we're getting close to a number of 29 to 30 million dollars for this

particular initiative in this amendment. Through you, Madam Speaker, could my colleague corroborate that figure, please?

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, no, actually.

First of all my good colleague cited an upper bound that was offered by our Office of Fiscal Analysis. We were given bounds of 13.7 to 20.8 million. So if you take the middle of those bounds, 16 million seems like a good guess of the cost of the additional staff, 7 million seems like a good guess for the cost of additional training so that would give us a total of 23.

Twenty-three million, clearly far less than 195 million. That's why our state Department of Education is driving hard toward this goal because we will have plenty of funds to execute this plan when we win Race to the Top. Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Giuliano.

REP. GIULIANO (23rd):

The winning of Race to the Top, Madam Speaker,

through you is contingent upon the accumulation of sufficient number of points, and also Connecticut's clear passage in a large and crowded field of which Connecticut was able to rate as 25th out of 40, which I must say having been a long-time educator in Connecticut, it's remarkable given the types of innovative initiatives that Connecticut is always credited for nationwide, that we would place 25th out of a field of 40.

I have some doubts, Madam Speaker, that all of the performance indicators that have been so purposefully calculated in the framing of this amendment may result in our actually actualizing the monies of 175 million to 195 million. I do wish to point out to the Chamber that are upfront costs regardless of winning or losing are in the neighborhood of about $30 million.

Through you, Madam Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague on the Education Committee, exactly what is the mechanism for linking student growth to teaching methodology? Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, the mechanism and the calculus that will be used to connect student academic growth teacher evaluation and administrator evaluation is left to a performance evaluation council.

And we did this for good reason. The fact is the manner in which you evaluate a music teacher or a gym teacher should be different from how you evaluate someone who is teaching mathematics or biology or reading.

So we are leaving it to this council that is going to have an array of stakeholders with expertise in performance evaluation to go ahead and figure out the proper rubric for evaluating all sorts of teachers and administrators. And we will have the data thanks to the data system that this bill allows us to build. Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Giuliano.

REP. GIULIANO (23rd):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

And that's the part that confuses me because I understand what an evaluation advisory council, what their function is according to the statute -- proposed statutory language. And I also understand about

educational rubrics, but I'm wondering how we will immediately transmit this kind of information to provide the linkage that is required in the Race to the Top criteria. And through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, the bill describes the construction of a data system that allows us to track economic growth and the creation of the council that will figure out how best to link that growth to the evaluation of teachers and administrators.

The details are left to the parties involved and I think that's as it should be and as my good colleague would want it to be. If we were to try and set every single detail into statute we would be engaging in that kind of micromanagement that I think this General Assembly recognizes is not in our best interests.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Giuliano.

REP. GIULIANO (23rd):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

And on the point of micromanagement, I'd like to direct the Chamber to the section in the bill whereby the commissioner has the power to reconstitute the Board of Education in a failing school district.

And actually, the commissioner has the ability to terminate the Board of Education, which is a significant usurpation of powers. And I understand that that is in the -- under the circumstances of a failing school district. But if I might ask, through you, Madam Speaker, the exact criteria that would give the commissioner such full-blown powers to dissolve a duly-elected, by the people, Board of Education? Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, if memory serves, the commissioner would first have to find that he had a school board that was overseeing a school district that was a low-achieving district consistently for several years, and that the board was actually an impediment to moving forward with reforms.

We have something in Connecticut called the CALI Initiative, Connecticut Accountability and Learning

Initiative. It has set forth a whole series of goals for districts that are in need of turnaround. Most boards of ed are working to execute those plans. There are a few that are not.

And so that's why the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education endorsed this section of this bill because they recognize that every once in a while there's a board that's rowing the boat in the wrong direction. And so what this measure says is if that's happening, and I'm not sure if it's happening in Connecticut. It may be happening in one or two spots. The members of the board can be retrained by the State Department of Education. And if after that training that board continues to be an impediment to execution of reforms, then and only then would the commissioner consider reconstituting that board of ed.

If he did so, that would extend only for a period of five years, at which point they would be another election for a new board. Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Giuliano.

REP. GIULIANO (23rd):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

A further question. The proposed statutory

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amendment allows for the reemployment of retired teachers, but this happens with a little bit of a twist. Typically and statutorily at this point, we allow the reemployment of retired teachers for up to one year. This proposed amendment allows for a longer period of time for the reemployment of retired teachers.

And I have to tell you as a long-time educator I understand the kind of experience that a long-time educator brings into the classroom. But I have to ask the question, Madam Speaker, through you, why if we are developing an innovative and robust system, why would we not be looking toward our young college-educated students who are now leaving Connecticut because we don't have work? Why would we be looking toward our retired core of teachers who have a very valuable role to play in this?

But why would the statutory language point to them as opposed to our newly credentialed, energetic, young teachers that we wish to keep in Connecticut that we train here in Connecticut, but who cannot afford to work and live here in Connecticut? Why does this bill looked toward our retired core of esteemed and emeritus teachers versus our fresh, young

teachers?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, here in Connecticut we have hundreds of young, energetic, and talented teachers coming to some of our lowest achieving schools districts, doing their best to turn around the results that they are seeing in the classrooms.

We have Teach for America in Connecticut, working in Hartford and New Haven and Bridgeport, working and getting great results with the children in those districts. And that is all well and good, but the fact is that because we have other districts that are higher performing and can pay better, a lot of these great teachers get lured away.

And so what we're trying to do in this bill is to make sure that in areas where there are shortages, where children might end up in a situation where they have a long-term substitute or someone who just has a durational shortage area permit who's at the front of the classroom, that in lieu of that person they instead get a very experienced teacher.

Everyone who was involved in the writing of this legislation agreed that it really was an advantage to priority school districts to be able to bring back some of those very skilled teachers for two years rather than be stuck with a situation of having a substitute or someone who had a durational shortage area permit.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Giuliano.

REP. GIULIANO (23rd):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Earlier in this colloquy with my colleague from the Education Committee, he mentioned that this would take effect in -- the high school reform section of the proposed would take effect in 20 -- the year 2018. In fact, Madam Speaker, through you, the actual term of the high school student would be 2014 through 2018; 2014 being a rather close state in time and I just wish to clarify and ascertain that. Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, that's correct. This new rubric would apply to the high school class of 2018. They would be freshmen in 2014 in the autumn.

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Giuliano.

REP. GIULIANO (23rd):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, the business of Race to the Top is a very significant competition here in the United States. Connecticut stands to win between 175 and 195 million dollars.

However, as I read the language of this proposed amendment, we, as a state, are being asked to commit approximately $30 million to a competition that may not go our way. Now, I could feel much more comfortable, Madam Speaker, if that commitment of $30 million could be made contingent.

And by that I mean if it's contingent within available appropriations, if it were predicated upon us actually winning the Race to the Top competition, if it were contingent upon at least trying and if we were to fail, as we did in the first round, then we would be able to back off from that commitment.

At this point in time, Madam Speaker, a hundred thousand families in Connecticut have a breadwinner who is without work. This is the highest rate of unemployment we have ever suffered in most of our memories.

Connecticut, this wonderful, splendid and prosperous state is no longer a prosperous state. We are a state, as many states in this nation, a state in trouble, a state in financial trouble.

I have to confess to you, Madam Speaker, I worked in public education for 30 years. I'm embarrassed to have to say that it has been long, but it's the truth Madam Speaker, and have enjoyed my tenure in the public schools as a school psychologist. I believe in our schools and I believe in how we educate students.

And I'm actually rather surprised at the necessity for participating in the Race to the Top, not that we wouldn't win a major contest in terms of federal funding, but rather that Connecticut, for all of its primacy in education for as many years as I have been an educator, that suddenly when we work to win a competition in a field of 40 we come out 25th.

I understand the scramble to take those criteria and to make that up, to boost up and to bolster the

kind of educative experiences that our teachers have that we give to our students that we offer. But I'm someone who already believes in Connecticut.

However, as a realist, I'm looking at the bird in the hand, which is the $30 million that we must spend versus the two birds in the bush, which is the $175 million that might come our way. I'm concerned about a number of dimensions of this bill.

I'm concerned about the absence of robustness. I'm concerned that as we look toward bringing in innovative, out-of-the-box administrators, that we're really putting them through the same gauntlet that all of us in education have already run through. When I think of out of the box, I think of bringing in people from other fields and other ways of thinking and other frames of reference. People who could bring something that is fresh and different to the business of education. And education is a business because achievement is our product.

I'm looking for methodologies that link teacher to student achievement and I must tell you I practice in an elementary school where we've done that. We can plot learning trajectories, but this bill does not speak to those learning trajectories, Madam Speaker.

I'm looking at bringing fresh new vision, fresh new eyes and energy and innovation into education into Connecticut. Why? Because we've always been one of the best nationwide, however, in this competition, Madam Speaker, we have fallen into a place that I never thought I would witness of my tenure as an educator in Connecticut.

Madam Speaker, I had a conversation with a superintendent of schools today and she was very concerned about the cost of this initiative. And her parting comment to me was, Marilyn, this is an unfunded mandate. The money that this race will cost -- and I'm quoting her, will devastate my town and her school district.

Madam Speaker, I think that this proposed amendment has much to offer. And there is much -- there has been much hard work that has gone into its composition. However, Madam Speaker, at this point in time, I think it fails the robustness test. If we're going to be the out-of-the-box, if we're going to really bridge our achievement gap, if we're going to bring in fresh blood, new vision, new leadership, methodology and rubric that will move all of our children, not just some of our children, into the

achievement that I know this state to be capable of, we need a different statutory proposal than what is before this chamber tonight.

And Madam Speaker, I must say that the cost of this initiative without guarantee and without fiscal contingency gives me such great pause that I will not be able to support this measure. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Thank you, Representative.

Representative Walker, you have the floor, ma'am.

REP. WALKER (93rd):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Good evening.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Good evening.

REP. WALKER (93rd):

A few questions to the proponent of the amendment.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Fleischmann, prepare yourself.

Representative Walker, please frame your questions.

REP. WALKER (93rd):

Yes. Good evening.

In Section 3, I see a section that has a requirement for data collection, student data collection. It asks for student/parents educational level, primary language spoken and student attendance and mobility.

Through you, Madam Chairman, I'd like to know -- I mean, Madam Speaker, why do we need this type of data and what do we expect to find out from this?

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, well, first I do expect that there is going to be another amendment called that will strike part of this section that my good colleague has just mentioned. So that parental education data would not be enumerated in the bill.

With regard to the other data, the state of New York, and particularly the City of New York has done tremendous work with collecting data regarding what's happening in their schools and figuring out then how best to evaluate how everyone is doing.

You could have two different classes that are quite different. One has 20 children. The other has three children. One has a lot of turnover in the

children in the classroom. The other has stability. One has a lot of kids who come from homes where English is not spoken and they start off with a small English vocabulary. Others come from homes where they're gifted with large vocabularies early. All of these factors affect outcomes as well as does the effectiveness of the teacher at the front of the classroom.

So what they've found in the state of New York is if they collect as much data as possible, they are best able to figure out what factors are most critical in a child's academic growth and isolate how teachers and administrators are doing. Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Walker.

REP. WALKER (93rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his answer and I was not aware that we were going to have that information removed. I'm very glad to see that because it seems to categorize people not because of their circumstance -- I mean, their ability to learn, but by their circumstance and where they live and who their parents are. And I was very, very

concerned about that.

Through you, Madam Speaker, in Section 6, there is a Section called, innovation schools. Through you, I'd like to know -- I know just a few days ago we passed out a bill, 5491, which reconstituted schools. I'd like to know the difference between this section here in your bill and the other bill that was passed earlier in the week. Thank you. Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, the other measure to which my good colleague refers talked about the same type of innovation school that is described here. It operates under a plan, typically, we foresee with a partner like a college or university or other institution in the community that is working to develop an entirely new plan for a school with the collaboration of the teachers union.

If two thirds of the members of the bargaining unit vote in favor, they can have a longer school day or school hours, et cetera. So it's an out-of-the-box new model for reorganizing a school and matches up

precisely with the model that was described in the other measure that this Chamber passed just a few days ago.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Walker.

REP. WALKER (93rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, when he talked -- when the good gentleman talks about the section, innovation schools, I'd like to know, through you, how exactly are the schools -- are we talking about a decentralized method of operation for the schools from the standards that we've had in most of our local area -- global educational areas?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, no.]

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Walker.

REP. WALKER (93rd):

I thank the gentleman for his answers.

Through you, Madam Speaker, in section -- let me

go through.

In Section -- the one that really concerns me and I -- the good gentlelady from the 23rd also brought this up is the secondary school reform.

The gentleman said that we would be adding five more credits to the high school requirements for the students. I would like to understand how adding the five more credits -- and I know he talked -- touched upon it, but I'd like to know how, especially from my district in New Haven is going to effectively work in improving the quality of students that -- I mean, not the quality -- improving the number of students that are retained in the school. Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, there have been studies done of high school and high school dropout rates. The number one reason dropouts offer for having made their decision is that they were bored.

Let me repeat that. The number one reason offered in every survey of high school dropouts is that they were bored with school.

Now, there's lots of reasons why young people get bored, but one of them is that they have all of these talents, all of these gifts, all of these abilities and we're not challenging them enough. The rubric that's offered here is a challenging one. It has flexibility so that if a student takes algebra I and doesn't want to take algebra II, there are other mathematics tracks they can follow, but it ensures that they have enough math and science and technology to be ready either for the workforce or for college.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Walker.

REP. WALKER (93rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, the good gentleman referred to the fact that most of the children had he had studied for why they dropped out was because they were bored.

I, unfortunately, have not had that response from the children that I have worked with and I work in a school that works with high school students that have dropped out. The majority of my students in my school, the reason why they dropped out is because they had lower educational skills; they had the

inability to read, to do the math, understand the science. They had little understanding of history.

Somehow, to me adding more credits on does not address that population. And in my school we have approximately 464 students that have dropped out of high school. When I talk to my students about why they dropped out or why they ended up in my school, which was an alternative high school, it was because of the fact that the teachers were not able to reach them because the staff of the school was not there to provide them with the services, or it was because they didn't have the parental support to get them there.

Through you, Madam Speaker, I would like to know what studies he read that addressed these students that were bored and how other students were addressed in that study, because I -- through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, the studies are referred to were done by the Education Commission of the States and one of the group called Achieve, Inc., the American Diploma Project Network.

And, you know, I'm not someone who spends his time outside of this chamber doing the studies, but these were done with large networks that they were statistically significant samples, more so than we can get from our anecdotal experience in talking with the students who we encounter daily in our lives.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Walker.

REP. WALKER (93rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, one of the things that I have asked about in the school reform, this high school reform, and have asked numerous times and the good gentleman has heard me ask him, what are we doing exactly for the teacher instruction and training that is needed?

Many of the teachers that I see coming out of the schools now have had very little instruction on how to manage a classroom, how to engage the child even how to -- where the children come from, how to empathize with the things that are going on so that should keep them focused so they aren't bored, so that they stay in the classroom and continue to learn.

So through you, Mr. Speaker, in this package

where do I see teacher development and what are we doing for teacher development?

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, first I'd like to start by saying we already do quite a bit with regard to professional development for teachers. As I think my good colleague is aware, there are professional development credits that are required of all teachers. After a certain period of time working, we expect them to get master's degrees. In getting those degrees, they courses in classroom management as well as subject area expertise.

The measure before us includes a section that involves providing increased professional development and technical support and it does that, not only directly through the State Department of Education, but by empowering the State Department of Education to work with other entities, like our regional educational school centers, like higher education institutions.

Others who have expertise in teaching to go ahead and make sure that our teachers come to these high

schools ready to provide the offerings that we know will make our children ready for the next century. Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Walker.

REP. WALKER (93rd):

I want to thank the good gentleman for his answers. And I do believe he has sincerely been working hard at this and I know that because he's talked to me probably 30 and 40 times about the whole reform, but I seem to not make the message clear.

When you look at the curriculum that a student goes through to become a teacher, they have very limited training in actual classroom management. I think they are required to take maybe one or two classes, and we've talked about this with actually with some of the higher eds that have come up here.

Children have changed. The way they learn have changed. The interests they have changed over the years. And yet, our educational system of training of teachers has not changed. I know one of the things that, when I talk to teachers that do inspire and do motivate children, they're animated. They know about how to make a presentation, how to challenge children

in unusual ways, taking them outside of the classroom, doing things that are beyond what they learn in their educational environment. And I don't see any of that in this bill.

As the good lady from the 23rd District pointed out, we need to have revolutionary things done for our educational system. As the gentleman pointed out, he said that we have professional development, but where has it gotten us? We are at the bottom of the list right now. Obviously, we need to redesign that and that needs to be part of this Race to the Top in the package we go forward with.

Education is critical. We all talk about it, but we've got to do the whole action and we've got to make sure that we provide those innovative programs. We've got to cross-train our teachers and other areas besides just reading, math, history and science.

We've got to make sure that we are providing an environment that engage the families, that allow families to come back to school as well as support their children in this. I don't see that in this package.

If we don't get the money for Race to the Top, where are we? With the same professional development

that we have, with the same curriculum and the same plan. And the plan has not been successful. We've got to reach to other states and the gentleman did talk about the fact that Massachusetts has done a good job in changing and I think we need to look at it and it's not by just adding credits to the curriculum. It is by doing innovative classrooms, providing opportunities for pilot programs, going out and reaching into the communities to pool those resources in there and that's not here.

I'm really concerned about where we're going with this and I think that our children are so important. Our success is going to be measured by how we lead the children that come behind us. So it is so important that we make sure every step that we put in front is going to lead in that direction. I am very concerned about this and I thank the good gentleman and I thank you, Madam Speaker, for the time.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Thank you.

Representative Sawyer, you have the floor, ma'am.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

You know, some of us have spent our lives working

in the education field. Some in this chamber have been teachers. Some have been professors. All of us have been educated to a degree. Many of us have had children that have gone through school systems, some recently, some who are currently in the public school system today. So I guess we could all say that we have an expertise from our experience.

And there are a couple of things that I'd like to bring up about this because we are going down a very different path with this particular bill and what we have here is a situation where we're depending money that what if the money comes in. And we have a situation of what if the money doesn't come in. And the third question, if you go back to the -- part A, is that money going to be enough for the entire state if this bill passes?

A question, through you to the proponent of the bill, please.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Fleischmann, prepare yourself.

Representative Sawyer, please frame your question.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, in the Race to the Top dollars that are coming in, is it your understanding that when those dollars come in, say -- we'll just use a round number of 175 million just to make it easy -- is it your understanding that only half of that money would go to the towns and half of the money would go to the State? Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, no. It's my understanding that there would be more money for the local education areas and less for the State. Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Sawyer.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

And if he could please cite for me what the breakout is?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, I could not find in

the OFA note a precise breakdown of what it would be, but I'm told by the State Department of Education that there are more dollars slated to go out to the school districts than there are to go to the kind of technical support and professional development that some of my good colleagues mentioned this critical a moment ago.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Sawyer.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

I thank the gentleman for his answer.

So let's figure this out here. We have a bump for many districts, for the mandatory minimum then for people to graduate, which means more teachers. We're going to have to have them. There's no question. And oh, by the way, this Race to the Top money, it's not all going back to the towns. It's not. Right now, most of the money that the towns get from the State first goes to the town and then it goes to the boards of education to be able to spend on the students.

But from my understanding, and I asked OLR this question, their understanding was that half the money

would go to the town and half -- the towns, and half of the money would go to the State. So it's not all coming to the towns to be able to bail them out when we put this through.

Okay. So let me describe something else, one of the frustrations that I see, something that I've talked about for a long time. Parents right now, usually when they're talking about -- and we're going to -- we'll direct this specifically to the high school question -- parents usually sit down with the schools or with their child late eighth grade or the very beginning of ninth grade and they set up their child's individual educational plan for four years; what they're planning on taking, what career path they talking about? Is it planning to go to work right after high school? Is it technical that they want to aim towards, a technical education? Or is it a college track? So then the parents will go and sit down looking through the curriculum -- curriculum for the schools and decide which types of courses should their child take.

So when you are looking at a four-year plan and schools are different. Some have seven classes, periods a day and some have eight. Eight makes this

whole thing a lot easier, Madam Speaker. You have that one extra period a day that gives room for electives, that gives room underneath for the decision-making process as to what they're going to take. If they want to make something extra, but ladies and gentlemen let me describe to you what we're doing here. We're not making it easier for students to decide to do something extra, something in their line of interest, something in their direction of their talent, just the opposite.

What we're doing here in this bill is mandating and putting the students into a box, in a box that says, they must perform this way under these tight restrictions. And oh, by the way, if you want a waiver you have to go to the State Department of Education to get it.

It's taking away from the boards of education and, from the schools themselves, the ability to set what they want for their children for the curriculum that they want to offer for their kids. And worse yet, it's mandating what parents are going to have to tell the kids when they're going to have to take.

What kind of kids are we talking about? I'll give you a few examples. What I worry about in this

is that it's making it harder for kids to graduate. Maybe that's not such a bad thing, but I worry that they're going to be mandated to take courses that aren't going to be in the direction of their educational interest.

If you've got a student, say, that is fluent in two languages already. They have a language from home that they've learned -- and I'll use one that someone very dear to me speaks, he speaks Hungarian and he speaks English and he also has a third language, Slovak. He's -- say he's very interested in languages and he wants to take not only Spanish, but he wants to take French and he wants to take Latin because he wants to be a linguist. Madam Speaker, I'd say to you that's a very honorable and desirable personal goal. That's the type of person that might go on to be a translator, that might be a person that goes on to do a significant amount of work translating scientific documents, it could be someone who works on technical manuals. It could be someone who works at the UN and establishes communications between countries. It could be, this person could go on and work for the U.S. military because he has the skill of languages.

But oh no, madam Speaker, this particular child

is going to be mandated to take another year in a course direction he doesn't want to go. Whether it's the extra math, whether it's the extra science.

Now let me paint a different scenario. You have a student that is very mechanical. That student is very interested in everything that has a motor, that has wheels, that makes a noise, that can go fast, that can fly. I'm very familiar with that type of student at my house. And that student wants to take everything scientific, wants to take everything in design, wants to take everything that has to do with the direction of a mechanic. It's A talent seen at age eight and nine, when that child wanted to take apart the clock to see what make it tick. Of course, he couldn't get it back together again, but that was okay. It did help to take apart the lawnmower, and with direction got it to go back together.

But no, that child is going to be mandated to take more humanities. Is going to be mandated away from his desire and talents. Ladies and gentlemen, I'm talking about 11th and 12th grade. I'm talking about your 16 and 17 year olds who are ready to go off in another direction. If you look at the direction that they do in Europe, by that age they are well on

their way to the direction of an educational path that they want to learn. But not in this model, Madam Speaker. Not in this model at all. But there's a waiver, thank you very much, and there's a whole other layer of bureaucracy and it comes through the commissioner, thank you very much.

We didn't -- we're not giving educational freedoms here, ladies and gentlemen. I think it was well-intentioned to do the 25 credits. I was on the board of education when we moved it from 21 to 24 credits in the town of Bolton. And I was one of the leading advocates, but we didn't lock the door on the student as to what he or she had to take because we believed in individualism.

So in this town we're talking about -- I'll use my experience because it's a small town experience -- right now we're looking at how to pay for this year's education and there's a panic for next year, how to pay for next year's education and the year after. How are we going to afford the teachers that we have? We have a one-high school situation in our town. We have a one-art teacher situation in our town and not everybody is mandated to take art. So now what are we going to do? We are going to be mandated to hire more

art teachers. We're going to be mandated to find a way to get all the students through that.

So let's take another example. The situation where you have a student who is fascinated by woodworking. He's grown up in a family of carpenters and his goal is to be a fine cabinetmaker. His father is one; lives two doors away from me. We'll use that as an example, a fine cabinetmaker.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Yes.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Madam Speaker, I question the presence of a quorum.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

The House will stand at ease.

(Chamber at ease.)

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

The House will come back to order. In the opinion of the Chair, we have a quorum.

Representative Sawyer, you have the floor, ma'am.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

You're welcome.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Madam Speaker, going back to the student who has a great interest in woodworking as we look across this magnificent room that we are -- have the honor to be in today, the people at home perhaps can see how beautiful the woodwork is in here and that is done by artisans. And I don't use that word lightly, Madam Speaker. These are people who have had a knowledge, have had an education in woodworking, in design, but some people would say, well, that's not art. Woodworking is not art. That's shop. That's IT. That's not -- that's technology class. That's not art. That changes in this bill that it used to be you could take one, the credit in art or the credit in the technologies. That changes. Woodwork is -- woodworking is not considered a fine art.

So let's go another step. We've described how magnificent woodworking can be, how essential it can be. We know that in home building and what a good living people can make in it.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Sawyer.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Thank you, ma'am.

In the case where you have a student who has an interest in metalworking, a student who would like to be very creative. He's got a, perhaps, a dream in his mind that he's going to build race cars, he's going to actually build them. He wants to be the finest welder he knows, and that's very laudable. And you go outside the Wadsworth Athenaeum, the Museum, a world-renowned museum here in Hartford and you will see one of the most striking examples of metalworking that you will ever see in the Stegosaurus that was built by Calder and it's a magnificent museum piece, an outdoor metal sculptor, but that sculptor had to know how to work metal, but that's not considered art.

Madam Speaker, when you put together a bill like this and you put those trappings so tight for students, there's no flexibility for individual educational programming, unless you get a waiver from the superintendent -- I mean, excuse me, from the commissioner. I totally disagree.

Here are the other questions that come up that

are difficult to answer when you make a box that's too tight, you have a student: He's taken his social studies classes, he's taken his English classes. He's taken his math classes and he wants to take -- he's got other pieces he wants to fill and he wants to take economics. Where does that fit? Is that an elective? Is that a math class? Is that a social studies class?

I'm a big proponent, Madam Speaker, of town rights, rights that belong to each of our communities. And I think it's wrong as a State for us to take those away from the towns, from the parents, from the decision -- decision-making process for each one of those individual children. Worse yet, we're doing these mandates without the guarantee that the money is going to be here, without the money that the guarantee that the money is going to be able to given to the towns and to be given fairly to the towns for the expenses that they're going to have to move forward with, towns that now are dealing with zero percent budgets.

If you have the comfort level that you've spoken to your board of education members, that you've spoken to your board of finance members and they have a comfort level with this, with you mandating this. And

that's what it is, it's a state mandate and better yet, it's an unfunded state mandate whether it's next year or 2014. It's an unfunded state mandate because we don't have a guarantee that we're going to get that money. And you know it's not going to be enough money and it's only going to be for the four years and it's going to dry up. Let's be frank. It is. They did it in the eighties. They promised it for special ed. They promised 40 percent from the federal government for special ed, Madam Speaker, and they only give us eight and that's a big whopping increase from the four that they used to give us. It's not enough and we know that. We've not been able to sort the problem out, how much money the towns need for special education.

This bill has some very good parts to it, parts that we saw in another bill that I voted for, but unfortunately they wrap them together with a piece that I cannot support and I'm very frustrated by that. The right way to do this was as two separate pieces. It gave people the opportunity to divide at the question. The question that gave more opportunities for students, more opportunities for parents to control and move their school forward. That's where

we should have been going, but no, that's get wrapped in with this Race to the Top problem that does not solve the problem. It's a laudable goal. It's the right goal, but it's done in the wrong way.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. And Madam Speaker, when the roll is taken, may it please be taken -- could we have a roll call please, Madam Speaker, when the roll is taken.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Would you repeat that, Representative Sawyer?

REP. SAWYER (55th):

When the vote is taken, would it please be taken by roll call?

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

All those in favor of a roll call vote, please indicate by saying, aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

In the Chair's opinion, the 20 percent has been met.

Representative Sawyer, do you still continue to speak?

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Thank you, ma'am.

I appreciate it and I'll sit down.

DEPUTY SPEAKER KIRKLEY-BEY:

Representative Cafero, you have the floor, sir.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, a few -- just a year ago, no one ever heard of the term "Race to the Top." We didn't know what it meant. Now it's sort of become common jargon.

Maybe your local boards of education will talk about their applications and interest in Race to the Top, and it's almost as if, if you went to a meeting or cocktail party, if you don't know what Race to the Top is, my God, it's like you never heard of global warming. It's the thing to know. It's all the rage. But sometimes you wonder whether people actually understand what it is.

Now it's my understanding that Race to the Top is a federal government program that incents and encourages states to apply for money. And in order to qualify for this money, you have to show certain things. So I think first of all, as we race to the top like in any race, we have to understand what's the

prize? What's the prize and what's the cost?

So first, I'd like to ask again, what is the prize? Through you, Madam -- Mr. Speaker, good evening. Through you, Mr. Speaker, to Representative Fleischmann if I may ask a question?

(Deputy Speaker O'Rourke in the Chair.)

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Please proceed.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, Representative Fleischmann, and I know you said it before, what is the amount of money that the State of Connecticut, the maximum amount of money that we could receive from the federal government if we were to succeed and our application was approved in this Race to the Top?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I believe that's $195 million.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, is that paid over a period of time or all at once?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, that's over a period of four years.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you. So through you, Mr. Speaker, is it paid in equal installments of approximately $50 million per year?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, yes.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, just so we can put this in perspective, how much money does the State of Connecticut give to its local municipalities through the ECS formula in total? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, approximately $2 billion.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Two billion dollars. Right now, we in the state of Connecticut dole out to our 169 towns and cities approximately $2 billion every year. In fact, as I recall in 2007, we made the largest infusion into the ECS system additional monies in the history of the State. It was my recollection that in that one year we put an additional $185 million into the ECS system. And in the following year, we put in on top of that an additional 200 and I believe 45 million dollars into

the system.

So now we have $2 billion that go into this system. And we're racing to the top, this application, if we win it, we will get an additional $50 million a year from the federal government.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, and I know this was asked and I'm sorry if I did not quite get the answer, of this $50 million a year or approximately $195 million over four years, how much is retained by the State of Connecticut and how much is filtered to the 169 towns and cities of the state -- that are located in the state.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that half of the dollars will be going out to the towns immediately through Title I distribution. Another quarter will go out to the towns according to a formula set up by Race to the Top, and the remainder will go to professional development and supports that we've discussed earlier, which are provided through the State and the State's partners, but in effect

provide benefits to our local school systems. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I think it's necessary for all of us to put this in terms that we understand. You know, if you go home right about this time of year, our local boards of education are in -- sometimes battle with the city over their budget. And you pick up the local newspaper and you see, board of ed asks for additional million dollars from city; city declines board budget, cuts it back to 500,000.

And depending on the size of the town, those numbers are relative. Now I come from the sixth largest city in the state of Connecticut. We have approximately 85,000 people, Norwalk. We have approximately 12,000 public school students. Is there anyway that I can calculate and report back to my board of ed how much money we would get if we were fortunate enough as a state to win the Race to the Top application? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, yes.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, how much would we get?

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I have to acknowledge that I do not have in front of me the table that gives the Title I distributions plus the other distributions set up by the Race to the Top formula. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Okay. Fair enough.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we talked about is that in order to get, you've got to give. In order to get, you've got to give. So there's certain things you have to do.

In this battle, on page 36 and it's been talked about by the previous speakers, we are requiring that every high school, by virtue of the fact that we are going to mandate that on a state level, must increase their graduating requirements from 20 credits to 25. That is a 25 percent increase in the amount of credits.

And I believe in the debate or dialogue between Representative Giuliano and Representative Fleischmann, there was a price tag put on what that might cost statewide. Through you, Mr. Speaker, if the good gentleman would be good enough to repeat how much it's estimated that in order for all of our towns and cities, would be mandated to comply with these new increased requirements, how much it would cost in total? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, our Office of Fiscal Analysis provided us with a table which includes upper and lower bounds the likely costs that ours will districts would face. And the lower bound is 13.7 million and the upper bound, 20.8 million.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

And through you, Mr. Speaker, there was another figure as I remember, a $7 million figure. Could the good gentleman explain what that is?

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I believe that cost is for the training of approximately 7,000 individuals who would be involved in making sure we have the sort of professional development and expertise that would be needed for this new curriculum. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you. Through you, Mr. Speaker, who pays that $7 million?

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, that would be paid either by the federal grant that we would win in Race to the Top or by the State of Connecticut. Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, then the municipal cost, what they would have to pay, would be about $23 million. Did I get that right? Through you, Mr. Speaker, with regard to complying with these new higher high school graduate requirements. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker and a little hard for me to tell on the 7 million that it's actually -- it would be a local cost. I think that would be paid for by the state so for our localities it would be that range that I mentioned initially, somewhere between 13.7 and 20.8 million dollars.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

So through you, Mr. Speaker, the total prize over four years is 195 million bucks. But it's going to cost about 23 or 25 million dollars in order to qualify for the 195. And of the 195, the towns and cities don't get that -- all that, they get some of it. I heard a figure bandied around that they might get 50 percent of it.

So that means towns and cities will benefit to the tune -- 169 towns and cities will benefit to the tune possibly of a hundred million dollars, but they've got to expend about 25 million to get it.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, if there's expenditures made with regard to complying with the increased high school credits -- or let me put it this way, is the increased high school credits contingent upon us getting awarded the money from Race to the Top? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, no.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Whoa. So in other words we have to adopt this new criteria, but if we don't get the money, we've still got to pay for the new criteria. Is that correct?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, yes, that is how the bill is written.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, if we don't get the 195 million bucks, where are the towns and cities going to get the $25 million to comply with this new criteria? Does the good gentleman have any answer to that? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned when I brought out the bill out of the high school reform section of the bill is for the high school class of 2018. Those are young people will be entering high school in 2014. So we have four years to figure out what will be the appropriate steps to take if we win Race to the Top or if we don't. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

But through you, Mr. Speaker it's my understanding when we win Race to the Top or not, by 2014, schools must have in place and pay for on their own this new higher criteria calling for 25 percent increased high school credits, which goes along with the fact that they have to have more teachers, more equipment, et cetera. Is that correct? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker. No, that's not how I read the bill.

Section 19 of the bill specifies that for fiscal years ending June 30, 2013 to June 30, 2018, inclusive, the state Department of Education shall, within available appropriations, be providing grants to local and regional school districts to help with implementation. So it's the expectation that one way or another, whether it's federal funds or state funds there will be supports for our local school systems seeking to implement this new curriculum.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've got to tell you something, though, I'm a little worried. You know, we might be doing the budget later on today and we've all heard the stats.

Next year, we're $3.8 billion in deficit -- year after that, $3.8 billion in deficit -- a year after that, about $3.2 billion in deficit, that brings us right smack up to 2014. If we don't win this race, someone is going to have to pay this money. The State doesn't sound like it can pay for it. Guess who's going to pay? Guess who's going to pay?

Mr. Speaker, the good gentleman had referenced the section of the bill that gave the commissioner, with the approval of the State Board of Education, what I would consider extraordinary powers. It's my understanding that the State Board of Education may authorize the commissioner, one man or woman, one person, to reconstitute a local or regional Board of Education, reconstitute a local board of education.

I don't know how many of you were here when the state Legislature took over the Hartford School System. As a former board member, the city of Norwalk Board of Education; one of the hardest votes I ever took in my life was to press that green button to authorize the State of Connecticut to take over a local school board, the entire district.

We kicked out the school board and we came in with state-appointed people and we ran the school for five years. That was tough. That was tough because we take pride great here in New England, and Connecticut in particular, about local control. Citizens electing their representatives on a state level and certainly on a local level; their mayors and first selectman, their legislative body and most importantly, their board of education.

The referendum that people mostly have is at the polling booth. If they believe their Board of Education is failing them because their schools, by some objective standard, is failing year after year after year, theoretically they could take action into their own hands. They could vote them out of. That's democracy.

In the particular case of the Hartford School System the situation was perceived to be so bad that help was sought from this General Assembly, a democratically elected body, a representative body. We debated. We struggled. And we eventually took action.

Earlier this week -- or excuse me, late last week, we as a body voted on the closing of the achievement gap bill. And in that bill, what was of particular interest to me, was what they call or referred to as the "parental trigger." When enough parents have said enough is enough and they've got together and they said, we need to change something in our school system. And that set out a whole process about what they could do.

This bill could be considered in contradiction of that bill. It says, one person, the commissioner of

education can completely eliminate and reconstitute a democratically elected school board in any city that has schools that are failing. Think about that. That is the most extreme measure we could take.

Now I'm not criticizing that because maybe extreme conditions require extreme actions, but let's see how extreme they are. Let's assume for the sake of argument that the State Board of Education is presented with such a case, that a particular town or municipality has a series of failing schools that enact this clause, and the commissioner is going to go in with all good intentions and he's going to change things, because after all, that's the most important thing we could do, the education of our children.

And when he investigates the situation he finds out that the curriculum isn't good.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, can he fire the administrative officers that are at the central office of this given school system when he reconstitutes the board would go through you, Mr. Speaker?

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, first, have to clarify

something that I think has been misconstrued. The power that Representative Cafero has talked about does not reside in any commissioner. It resides in the state Board of Education. That is 11 individuals appointed by the Governor to oversee education in the state of Connecticut. They are the people who select an education commissioner and who give guidance to that commissioner and the state Department of Education. It is that body of 11 people who would have to make a determination as to whether a board needed training or reconstitution.

If they took the step of having a board trained and felt that the board was still failing to serve the failing school system that was supposed to be serving, they could then choose to reconstitute the school board. I think that decision for them would be as difficult as it was for us in this Chamber when we made the decision for Hartford.

If that decision were taken, and I'm sure it wouldn't be taken likely, I believe that at that point, the new school board created under that reconstitution process would have the power to go ahead and hire a new superintendent or other critical administrators as they saw fit in order to turn around

the school system. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Okay. Thank you.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, so this -- all right. Not the commissioner, I guess acting on behalf of the State Board of Education, they go through those steps and they say, look, we've got no choice. We have to reconstitute this school board. And they take over. They're the new school board. And according to Representative Fleischmann, they could hire a new superintendent, fire the old one, hire a new one. They could hire additional administrators as they see fit for the good of the school.

Now to take that a step further, could they fire principals?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I think that would depend on the governing structure of a given school system. Most school systems I'm familiar with do not

have a level of micromanagement where the school board is making decisions of hiring and firing of specific personnel throughout the school system.

Rather the school board chooses a superintendent and top administrators in whom they place trust and then that superintendent makes those personnel decisions to which my good colleague refers. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I must respectfully disagree. I served on the Norwalk Board of Education for six years and as part of that board, we hired our share of principals. In fact, a high school principal can only be recommended by the Superintendent. The Board of Education has to approve it so in this particular case, the new constituted board has the right to hire and fire a principal.

Now I'm wondering, some of the other functions of a board are to set curriculum. Could this new constituted board set a new curriculum for the particular school system in question? Through you,

Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, if this Assembly in its wisdom adopts the bill before us, the high school curriculum would have to align with the standards that we are setting up for the class 2018. The other parts of curriculum and the school district would, I hope, be set up to align so that in elementary school and middle school children were getting the proper preparation to succeed under the new high school rubric. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, under the scenario has contemplated in the bill, remember, we've got a failing school system here.

So now we have this new appointed Board of Education. Could they change the curriculum of the elementary -- let's say, K through 8 grade? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I believe the answer to that question is yes, within bounds. We have certain requirements as a State for K through 8 and then we leave certain things, you know, open for school districts to decide.

So to the extent that there is leeway for school boards to make those decisions, this new board would be able to make such decisions. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, would this new school board be empowered to allocate money given to them by their local municipality in any way they see fit, obviously within the confines of the law?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, within the confines of

our law, which are pretty clear confines. Yes.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

So through you, Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that we have this failing school system and it's the most extreme case. We didn't want to do it. It's with a heavy heart, due deliberation, but they're taking over. And they can hire principals and fire principals and hire administrators and fire administrators. They could change the curriculum. They could expend money.

Could they change the contract, the collective bargaining agreement of the teachers union?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, no.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, was the determination of this new board, that part of the problem of this

new failing school system could be assisted or changed with minor or major changes to the collective bargaining agreement of any bargaining unit within that school system -- you mean to tell me they can change a word of that? Is that correct?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, as the good minority leader knows, collective-bargaining is a process that involves two parties. Management and labor and if there were a contract in place that extended to a certain date, that contract would remain in place.

Now it's my expectation that if you have a good new board that hires a good new superintendent, they might seek to reopen certain contracts in order to get progress or might seek to set up innovation schools or compact schools where two thirds of the teachers in a school themselves vote to change their contract so that they can take new approaches to education, longer school days, perhaps a longer school year to turn things around.

So all those options are out there. However, no

board of education, no superintendent can unilaterally make such changes that's contrary to collective-bargaining law, as I understand it.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Well, through you, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that and that's the rules that I thought. But also thought when you're an elected member of a board of education, you were elected to serve out your term. But there's new rules under the game.

Under this game, if you screw up, this new board could kick you out. That's new. So if they figure that the board is real bad and they've got to go, even though they were elected to maybe a four-year term, out. Get out. Show them the door. You might walk in and see a new superintendent or a principal. He might have a contract. Get out. Fired. Leave.

But if there's some professional staff, teachers or otherwise, or maybe a clause in the contract. Maybe it deals with working hours. Maybe the new board feels that the kids aren't going to school long enough or that the periods within a day aren't long

enough or the class size is too large and they want to shrink it. Or there's not enough prep time or professional time. All of those things are in a collective bargaining agreement. Can they change any one of those things?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

Yes, if they do so through the collective bargaining process.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

You see, folks, if we're going to race to the top, let's race. If we're going to come in and change things and give a board, a new appointed board the ability to change things, to affect change, then let's give them the ability. We can't say, you can do everything, but --

Will that change things? Will that change things? I'm not sure.

Mr. Speaker, the title of this bill is An Act Charter Schools. Now I served as the ranking member of education back in 1995, '96 with Representative Staples as its chair here in the House. And we authored and this Legislature approved the charter school bill. And I was very proud to be a founding member of one of the first group of charter schools, the Side By Side School in Norwalk, Connecticut. I assisted them in their founding, in our establishment and then I served on their board for five years. I have a true love for that school. It's done a wonderful, wonderful job and I know the other successes of charter schools around the state.

So we're racing to the top to get this dough, $195 million. Not all of it is going to come to our schools, however.

How much of that money -- how much of that money is going to go to help our charter schools?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I don't know. I think the answer to that question is going to relate to the

specific application that our commissioner puts together, but I do believe that there will be dollars available for that.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ladies and gentlemen of the Chamber, this piece of legislation is huge. It makes some incredible landmark changes in the way we do business. And there's part of that I really like. I really like that because we have some wonderful, wonderful schools in the state of Connecticut and school districts.

In another month my wife and I will attend my youngest son's graduation from public high school. It will mark the end of 20 consecutive years that we were parents of public school kids; our three kids went through public school. I wouldn't trade that experience for anything in the world. It was wonderful.

Incredible teachers and administrators and facilities and experiences and diversity. It was the greatest experience we could provide our children, but

we also know that there's some inequities in this state, and not every parent might feel that way about their school system. And not every town might be able to boast in the manner I just boasted about my town. In fact, there's members of my town that might not feel the same way.

So change is a good thing. But when you talk about change, that this is the answer, but it only goes halfway and not all the way, then it's somewhat of a misrepresentation, isn't it? We talk about, God forbid we should leave this money on the table and then we realize relative to what we get, it's not all that much money that's going to make such a dramatic change in what we're used to.

We already spend $2 billion to our 169 towns and cities. That doesn't count what they raise on their own. Billions and billions of dollars, and yet, unfortunately we still have our problems.

So is $50 million paid over -- or paid each year for four years, is that going to do the trick? That money goes away. And as I learned today, we don't even -- we, meaning the towns and cities don't get all that money. We might only get about half that money. The other half stays with the State.

Now with all due respect to the State of Connecticut, I bet if you ask your local board or your superintendent, how is all the money the State Board of Education gets, how is that doing for you?

They might say, what are you talking about? I'm scraping for every nickel.

In addition to that, even to get that small amount of money, in fact, whether we get it or not, we're obligated to find -- follow certain mandates in four years that collectively in our state could cost towns and cities $25 million.

Now I mention that because in the course of this session we've done deficit mitigation plans, et cetera. And in some cases there's been provisions that have cut as little as $5 million to all the towns and municipalities. You remember how outraged we were? We look at that run sheet, my God. They're cutting my town 200,000, 5,000, a million, unacceptable.

We know whether we win this or not, we're going to have to spend $25 million to comply with the mandates that are put in this bill, no if, ands or buts.

We also make dramatic change. We give the

ability of a commissioner through the State Board of Education to take over a school district. No longer would that incredibly extraordinary step happen in this General Assembly after due deliberation. It could happen by a vote of 11 board members. That vote could be six to five and all of a sudden, a commissioner could take over a school board; throw them out. But he can't change everything. They can't change everything, because they can't touch the collective bargaining contracts of any of the bargaining units. Not a one. Not a nickel. Not a word without their consent.

So as we vote for this very important piece of legislation we can't just assume, one, that we're going to win or, two, that it represents the massive change for the better that we hoped.

I look forward to listening to the rest of the debate, Mr. Speaker, because there's, as I've learned, there's a lot to learn with regard to this Act Concerning Charter Schools.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

You're welcome.

Will you remark on Senate Amendment "A." Will

you remark?

Representative Reynolds.

REP. REYNOLDS (42nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I rise in support of Senate Amendment "A." Understandably our emphasis today is on Race to the Top, which is the immediate impetus for this legislation and the potential for funding might be the convenient impetus for the legislation before us.

However, I'd like to speak to what I am persuaded is the more compelling and, in the long term, the more strategically important case for this legislation. We know that our structural fiscal crisis will require new revenue through job creation and economic development. We know that education and workforce development is one critical strategy among many for attracting the new jobs in the emerging technologies and industries that will make that job creation possible.

And this bill, and in particular the secondary school reform measures, are the next major step in building that workforce for the coming decades. Without a different workforce than the one we have today, what is now a jobless recovery will only

persist.

The problem is, is that our secondary school infrastructure, in all of its present standards are simply not aligned with the expectations of our colleges and even our workplaces. There is a stark mismatch between the skills and experiences our graduates have and the skills and experiences required of our employers and our higher education institutions.

I know we all may think back to our own middle and high school experiences. And for many of us we may be persuaded that we were well prepared, but the curricular experiences that most of us had are largely irrelevant today. The world we live in, the global economy we compete in, the technologies upon which we depend and the nature of the jobs that will drive our future recovery bear no resemblance to that which existed when we were students.

In the last 25 years the percentage of jobs requiring a high school education has declined 32 percent. And in the same 25 years, the percentage of jobs requiring some college has increased 32 percent. Content standards are the foundation of a legislature's responsibility in education policy. And

that's the reason for our emphasis on graduation requirements and our specific emphasis on new requirements in science, technology, engineering, math and world languages.

But secondary school reform is not just about college. It is equally about workforce readiness for those who are not college-bound or for those going directly to the military. You can't be an ironworker today without knowing algebra. You can't be a sheet-metal worker without knowing geometry. You can't be a draftsman without computer aided technology.

A colleague tonight spoke about a constituent of her's who wanted to build high-speed race cars. Well, you can't build precision instruments without science, technology, engineering and math. And as I walk through my car mechanic's garage, I am constantly amazed at what looks like a NASA flight simulator because of the technology that is required for those mechanics.

And I refuse to accept that our lowest performing students are simply not capable of higher expectations. Two thirds of our dropouts actually go on to earn a high school credential, and half of them

go on to college. The issue is not that they're not capable or that they don't have potential.

Every national survey of dropouts compared to national surveys of college-bound high school graduates consistently show that it's the dropouts and not college-bound graduates who say they were not adequately challenged. So the key question for legislatures all across the nation is, how do we substantially increase the number of college -- or excuse me, high school graduates, while also aligning our high schools and curriculums with the skills and experiences necessary to make this economy competitive? It's a dual agenda.

On the surface it may appear to be a competing agenda, but one half of the states in this nation have already done it. They have already adopted higher standards, new graduation requirements. And it is those states that are experiencing higher achievement levels, who are closing their achievement gaps, who have falling dropout rates. And it is their lowest performing students who are showing the most dramatic growth and achievement. I know this is counterintuitive, but it's the truth.

I'll end with a comment on what are clearly going

to be fiscal implications for this legislation. Sure, we hope that Race to the Top will provide critical funding, but if it does not, my hope is that a new governor and a new legislature will develop a new long-term strategic plan for the State of Connecticut, and within that strategic plan will be a major strand on education and workforce development.

And within that strand on education and workforce development, we would identify our key strategic priorities to accomplish all the things that I've just described and that we would then develop an annual budget that is actually aligned with those key strategic priorities.

And if we did that, which happens in states all across the nation, I'm confident that secondary school reform implementation would be near the top of the list and would not be at the bottom of the list waiting for new funding from the federal government, but rather it would get the first funding because of its strategic relevance to our future economy and that lesser strategic initiatives would be defunded, or funded at lower levels.

So Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to support this amendment and thank all of my colleagues from both

sides of the aisle for making it possible today.

Thank you.

(Deputy Speaker McCluskey and the Chair.)

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Thank you, sir for your remarks.

Will you remark further on Senate Amendment Schedule "A?"

The gentlelady from Greenwich, Representative Gibbons, you have the floor, madam.

REP. GIBBONS (150th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and good evening.

I do hope that the State solves its budget problems soon so we can turn up the heat and we won't be quite so cold in here, but not today.

I guess I've got a couple of questions, first of all, for the proponent of the amendment, if I could, please.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann, please prepare yourself.

REP. GIBBONS (150th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, is the Race to the Top

only a race for the secondary schools, or what about the other schools in our education system?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

I think Race to the Top relates to the entirety of our school statutory structure and governance structure. There is a particular focus on high schools because there are points for charter schools and points for science technology education and engineering and mathematics, but it covers the full spectrum.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Gibbons.

REP. GIBBONS (150th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm glad to hear that. Because certainly, this amendment really deals mostly with secondary schools. And I think some of the points are well taken in there of some of the reforms that were trying to do, but it has been my belief that when children get to secondary

school and are failing in school, they've been failing in school long before they get to secondary school.

I had a long chat with our superintendent in Greenwich a couple of weeks ago as we were sitting waiting for an assembly to begin and he said that if he cannot get children reading by the time they're in third grade, those children are lost to the system.

I suggest that we are -- need to frontload our education. We need to be putting our money into preschool. We need to be putting our money into K through 3. I would totally agree with that. I think children have to be reading on grade level by 3rd grade. They have to learn their multiplication tables in 3rd or 4th grade. They've got to get algebra by the time they're out of elementary school.

And I'm concerned that we've put so much effort into this secondary school reform, both with extra curriculum or extra courses that kids are going to have to take in high school as well as reforms to ensure that they do participate and participate well, that we've forgotten or we haven't done the advanced work to get the kids ready for high school in first place.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, what you -- how do you

feel about this or what do you think we're going to do to get these kids prepared for high school so they can even participate in these new reforms?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, the application for Race to the Top involves a multiplicity of questions. And I know that our commissioner of education is planning to include information on all of the initiatives we're undertaking with early childhood -- mentioned by Representative Gibbons -- in our elementary schools, in our middle schools and our high schools.

We'll be talking about all the different districts that have signed on to collaborate with him in these efforts and that the full spectrum of efforts that we're undertaking in this State will be included in our application.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Gibbons.

REP. GIBBONS (150th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So I understand that, through you, this application is just to get funds for Race to the Top, but the funds are not going to be spent just on the secondary schools. They're going to be spread throughout the K through 12 system. Is not that correct? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann, would you like Representative Gibbons to restate her question or did you get the gist?

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

I think I'm able to respond.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

The answer to that question is no.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Gibbons.

REP. GIBBONS (150th):

Let me talk a little bit about the new high school credits. Were these federal guidelines that listed these credits -- are these credits that the Education Committee came up with, please?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, neither.

There is a blueprint for education reform that has come out recently from the federal US Department of Education. And it just so happens that here in the state we had a task force that was led by folks on our State Board of Education and our commissioner to develop what would be our new high school curriculum that we see here in this bill.

This new curriculum aligns perfectly with the blueprint for reform that has come from the federal government. So we came at this independently with a group of stakeholders who were trying to figure out what was needed for the workforce and for colleges. And it so happens that our model aligns with what the US Department of Education is saying we ought to be doing.

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Gibbons.

REP. GIBBONS (150th):

I thank the Representative for his answer.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, what happens to high schools that have a curriculum that already has higher standards than what is listed here, but may not have these specific courses?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure what my good colleague means by higher standards.

But the bottom line is that these certain basic elements sketched out in this measure will have to be adhered to. And if there are requirements locally that go beyond them, those will stay in place.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Gibbons.

REP. GIBBONS (150th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Let me rephrase it a different way. If I understand this correctly, the average number of high school credits, as set forth by the State Board of Education, to graduate from high school in Connecticut

is 20. And I believe our -- my local high school requires 24.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, is that correct?]

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I know the current requirement in our statutes is 20 credits. And I'm not familiar with my good colleague's district, but if she says 24 credits are required for graduation there, I do believe it.

And I know there are districts in the state of Connecticut that actually have 25 credits required for graduation.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Gibbons.

REP. GIBBONS (150th):

I thank the Representative for his answer.

I guess what I'm getting at is that I think the graduation credits over and above whatever the State Board of Education has mandated should be left up to the local boards of education. And I know my local Board of Education takes that very seriously, as do

the citizens of my town.

And they insist upon four years of English and four years of math, many of which are listed in this amendment. I just wonder how much leeway is going to be given to the local boards to change some of the credits that are the exact courses that are listed in this amendment, or are they going to have to follow it pretty exactly. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, things will go forward exactly as they do today. Mainly, we have statutes that lay out a basic structure with basic requirements and then our local school districts implement with some flexibility that we provide for in statute.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Gibbons.

REP. GIBBONS (150th):

Thank you, Representative.

And again through you, at one point I was just reading at the very beginning of the amendment, under Section 4, it says, the superintendent shall

continuously evaluate or cause to be evaluated the teachers in the classroom.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, how exactly is the superintendent going to continuously evaluate a teacher, or how does that play out, please?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I don't know. That is yet to be determined. That will be, according to guidelines, developed by a performance evaluation council. And then local school districts will be able to get those guidelines from that council and use them as they see fit. So it's yet to be determined.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Gibbons.

REP. GIBBONS (150th):

I thank the Representative for his response.

Again, in the beginning part of the amendment, under Section 3 it says that the students readiness to enter public school at the kindergartener level is supposed to be assessed and documented.

Again, I go back to what I said at the beginning that I think of these children -- are not ready to enter kindergarten and we do not require nursery school or pre-K in this state and not all children have them. I'm not sure what we've accomplished by assessing them in the beginning of kindergarten. What we really want to know is how much have they learned after kindergarten.

Again, in this state, I'm not sure if we even have to have kindergarten at every school. We don't -- certainly don't mandate full-time, full-day kindergarten. I hope that the standards that the this commissioner of education is developing are going to align with and move into the secondary school standards, because otherwise, once again, I keep saying that I think we are putting our points, our emphasis on the wrong end of the school curriculum.

I think the high school and the secondary schools are very important, but I do think we need to make sure that the children not only have some school readiness upon getting into kindergarten, but really are the basics of education in K through 6.

I think that's all I have for right now. I'm not quite sure if I'm going to support this amendment or

not. I think that it's an expensive way to raise standards. I don't really believe ever in engaging in a game just to win if the stakes are much higher than that. And the stakes for our State are really to educate all of our children and I'm not sure if this is going to accomplish it.

The fact that we spend $2 billion in state aid, notwithstanding what the local school district spend on our school education, I'm not sure how 200 million is going to resolve the problem, but I thank the Representative for his answer.

And I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Thank you, madam, for your remarks.

Will you remark further on Senate Amendment Schedule "A?"

The distinguished State Representative from North Branford, Representative Candelora, you have the floor, sir.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, if I may, a few questions to the proponent of the amendment?

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I notice in this provision that we have some waiver requirements, an alternative route to certification for superintendents. And I was just wondering what the rationale for that provision is.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, actually it's an alternate route to certification for administrators not for superintendents. And the rationale is that there are points provided for such an alternate route in the Race to the Top federal competition.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and so the administrators would be, I guess, what we typically understand: principles, superintendents, directors of curriculum, individuals that are not in the classroom.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, the folks who would be applying would have had classroom experience and they would be applying for administrative positions generally outside of the classroom, but I don't believe superintendents would be included.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And if I could just get a clarification on that. So this was driven, or incentivized through the Race to the Top federal legislation. Was that what I had heard?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, yes. And let me correct something I just said. It is for

administrators and superintendents. It was incentivized by the Race to the Top competition.

Personally, it's something that I have sought for a long time. I think that we need to do everything we can to get more new people into school leadership positions. If you look at any study of excellence in education, the two key criteria are great teachers and great school leaders. And an alternate route to certification for school leaders is one of the key criteria for developing great schools.

So as is the case with many elements of this bill, it's good for the federal competition and it's good for reforming our low-achieving schools in Connecticut. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

If I may move to the language dealing with the reconstitution of the board of educations. In lines 538 through 542, part of these provisions, what we're doing is we're not withstanding some of the state statutes and local charters.

And I was just wondering if the good gentleman

could tell me, I guess, generally what those statutes are that we're withstanding.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

You know, I believe Chapter 146 is the chapter of our General Statutes that sets up certain school boards in the state of Connecticut. And the nature of this language is to say that any of these local school boards, if they are presiding over low-achieving school districts and if they are found by the State Board of Education to be entirely ineffective, and if after training of the school board members they continue to be entirely ineffective, the State Board of Education may vote for reconstitution.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Can I get -- and I guess, could the good gentleman point to the area of where the requirement

is that after training, if they're not effective they're replaced?

As I read that trigger mechanism, I see the language in lines 524 that say that if it's a low-achieving school or district, the following authorities are conferred upon the commission. I'm wondering where the language is that also states, after going through a training.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I believe that that language is to be found starting in line 580 of the bill. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

But as I read it in 580 of the board -- 580 of the bill, that provision, as I read it, I believe that provision deals with once the commissioner has made the appointments. Am I correct in that?

I'm reading 523 through 542 as being the trigger

that allows for the reconstitution and allows for the notwithstanding of local charters. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I'll read the relevant language that starts at line 583.

The board shall not grant such authority to the commissioner unless the board has required the local or regional board of education to complete the training described in Subparagraph M of Subdivision 2 of Subsection C of this section.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And the reference to board would be the State Board of Education.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I believe the answer to

that question is yes.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And would the gentleman be able to tell me how a school can be deemed to be low achieving?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, in layman's terms, a low-achieving school district is one that has shown several years in a row no progress whatsoever or, in fact, retrogression on the tests that the children take, the tests in the elementary school, middle school and high school.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So those tests would be, as I understand them, those standardized tests for the elementary level, are

the CMTs. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, yes. CMTs at the lower levels, CAPT at the higher levels.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And specifically, how many years would a school district have to underperform on these tests before they're deemed to be low achieving?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I believe the correct answer to that question is three.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I'm just -- I'm taking a look at the bill and I want to just point the good Representative to lines 50 -- 531 through 533, which seem to indicate two consecutive years. Am I correct in that it would be two years?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, after two consecutive years of low achievement there is a spotlight that is trained on the district. It becomes a low-achieving district if it continues to fail to move forward in that third year.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And if the school district fails after low achieving, my understanding is that the way this benchmark works, is that no child left behind sort of increases the bar each year, that -- so that the schools need to continue to perform at a higher level

incrementally.

So that a school may be deemed to be low achieving, not because necessarily that the kids aren't being educated, but it means that they haven't met those incremental progressions. Am I correct in that? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, that's a fair representation of the current No Child Left Behind Act, which I'm not a big fan of.

The fact is that that act is going to rewritten sometime in the next year or so. And it's my expectation that the description that my good colleague provided of that act will no longer fit the reauthorized version of the federal statute, since it is a model that, to me, and perhaps to my good colleague, doesn't make sense.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that

answer.

And once a school is deemed to be low achieving, as I read this, the mechanism would be that the commissioner would send that board of education to complete a training course. If that board of education completes that training course, as I read this, it seems that the commissioner could then sort of monitor, but would still have the ability to recommend reconstitution of that board of education. Am I correct in that?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I believe that power resides in the State Board of Education, but I think the rest of the characterization was accurate.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And when those appointments, just hypothetically, if those appointments are made where a board is

required to be reconstituted, as I see this we are notwithstanding local charters and the state election laws. Are there any requirements that the commissioner would have in selecting the individuals then to serve on this board of education?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I believe the answer to that question is yes. It's a long bill and I'm not able at this moment to find the precise lines, but the new members of the reconstituted board are to be individuals who have the qualifications to be involved in turning around a school district.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Would there be any requirements that these individuals that are appointed be residents of the town in which the school is located?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I believe the answer to that question is yes.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And I'm wondering where that criteria would be since we're not withstanding local requirements, which typically your charters require residency, and state election laws. I'm wondering if there would be an express requirement, if it's contained in this amendment.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, as I say, it's a long bill. I can't find the line numbers, but I'm pretty sure that the new members of the board of ed would have to come from the community they serve.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And Mr. Speaker, I know in one of my towns that I represent, we have in our charter minority representation requirements on our school board of educations and in our -- on our town councils. In another town that I represent we do not have minority representation requirements. So based on that conclusion, I think that minority representation certainly lies with local charters.

So if we're not withstanding local charters, would there be any requirements then if a town has minority representation, that the commissioner would have to honor that?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure. The one experience I have with this type of reconstitution came in the instance Representative Cafero referenced earlier in this discussion, where we the General

Assembly decided to reconstitute the Board of Education of the City of Hartford, a very difficult decision.

And in that instance, what we did was we tried to be meritocratic. We tried to pick the very best people we could find to help turn around that school district and I think that would be the effort here. But whether these questions of minority representation in the local charter would be maintained or not, I'm not sure.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And Mr. Speaker, when I served on my local town council we had gone through great pains in developing an ethics code for our municipal officials and all of our volunteers on boards and commissions, including our board of education. And it sets out some guidelines that sort of are very carefully crafted to address the issues that we have in my town.

Through you, would those provisions then be not -- be not -- be withstood under this language,

because local ordinances would not seem to apply any longer to this reconstituted board of education?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, no.

I believe my good colleague has misconstrued this language. Those local ethics ordinances would certainly apply to the new board members.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And the reason being is that because only the, I guess, for the purposes of appointment of this board of education, that we're not withstanding these languages, but for the purposes of the operation of the board, local charter and ordinances would apply.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, yes.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I do appreciate that answer because it did concern me and I wanted to get some clarification on it.

Mr. Speaker, I am concerned with that language in particular of us not withstanding local charters and ordinances for the purposes of reconstituting board of educations.

I would hope that this provision would not be used very frequently in this state, and I'm not sure really would be, but the fact here today that we are actually crafting language that seems to be trampling all over home rule in this particular instance gives me very grave concern.

And especially the reason being as we worked regionalization we've looked at ways to save money. I served on one of the panels with some of the Representatives in this Chamber when we discussed what we could do to improve the efficiencies in our towns. And we had discussions about local boards of

educations.

I remember I went to a smart growth seminar in Branford. We had about a hundred people in the room and we went through the list of what you're willing to give up for the sake of regionalization and efficiencies. And people were asked the questions of, would you regionalize your, you know, trash service? And everybody raised their hand.

And when it came to the boards of education, not a single person raised their hands. Their position was they want local control and they're willing to pay for that local control.

My concern is not just with all the unfunded mandates that we're putting in this board -- in this bill, but also if schools are failing, if they have issues, the parents and the students, they mobilize to try to improve those issues. And oftentimes they're their best advocates. They know what's best for their districts. I've seen it time and again.

Years ago when I served on my local town council, I served on a strategic planning board that looked at revamping our entire education system in town. And we looked at curriculum reviews and we had a very successful process that we went through. And we had

buy-in.

We had buy-in on the council level. We had buy-in on the board of education level. We had business leaders here in the community. And I think it was an important process and I would almost encourage models like that. And that's why I supported the parent trigger bill that we saw a few days ago in this Chamber, because that's the sort of model that makes sense to me. It sort of empowers people rather than strips them down.

And what we're doing here, frankly is we're telling the local bodies that, look, your schools are failing and we're going to tell you how to do it best. And I know in my experience in talking with my local officials, they don't feel they get the proper support, not just from the General Assembly in terms of funding, but they don't feel they get the support from the State Board of Education.

And I'm not sure that running a structure like this in the manner in which we're doing it will really give us any beneficial results. I would love to see more of a decentralization rather than pushing the process up.

And I think if you go home and you start

explaining this is the process we're putting in place to our local educators, to our elected officials, I think you're going to find a lot of objection to this bill.

Interestingly, I think that the commissioner begins this process the minute one school fails. And my town experienced having two years of not meeting the qualifications under the No Child Left Behind. So we technically fell into the low achievement gap.

And what we saw in the latest election is that an entire new school board was elected into office. And those group of people have begun working with the new superintendent toward improving that district. And I think that on that level the process is still working and I'd hate to see us take that process away through this amendment.

I'm also concerned with the unfunded mandates that we're putting down on our systems. I don't think any of us really could stand here with a straight face and say that we're going to pass a bill with a 25 million-dollar price tag that may get funded by the federal government, but don't worry, towns. If we don't get the funding from the fed, we're right there behind you.

As Representative Cafero pointed out, in the next three years when these provisions are having to be implemented we're facing multibillion-dollar deficits at this level. I perish the thought of what we're going to be doing to our local boards of education when we start looking at these massive funds like the ECS funding in order to try to balance our budget. I find it very difficult if we're able to maintain the funding levels that we're giving them right now. And what we're doing in this legislation is we're putting another price tag on them. And the problem I have with it is there's no assurances that we will have the ability to make this go away if none of us can pay for it.

And I'm already seeing what our local towns are going through in the budget cycles right now, today. And their funding hasn't even yet been reduced. So I do have concerns in those areas. I certainly don't admit to being an expert on education. My wife is a school teacher, retired already, but I've been involved at the local level somewhat. And I look at this bill and I sort of understand increasing school requirements. That may or may not help, but I sort of start reading through this bill and similar concerns

before; I don't get it. I don't understand why we're going to bring back teachers that have retired to come into our schools. Why we're incentivizing that process.

Why we're incentivizing a whole new track on an alternative route to certifying our administrators? Why aren't we just fixing what we have? If what we have isn't working, why don't we just fix that? Why are we adding on? And that's all this bill seems to do and I'm very troubled with it. If we're going to look for reform, we really need to look for reform. People aren't going to be happy about that reform if we're going to do it right.

And I feel like this bill is trying to make a lot of people happy. And in doing so and coming up with all these compromises to make the teachers happy, to make the administrators happy, to make people in this General Assembly happy we have a very watered down compromised product that isn't going to do it for our education system.

I was extremely perplexed looking at the fact that we have nothing in here at the elementary levels. Having, you know, serving on Approps, we've heard over the past few years if you don't get them at the lower

levels we lose them. That's where we should be focusing on.

So we're creating the reform at this level when it probably makes sense to start at the ground up and work through the entire process and reform it at the elementary level all the way through the high-school level.

But by starting out at this level, yeah, I guess it's a starting point, but what are we going to do? Are we going to turn around and start at the elementary level, trying to make it fit into this high-school model that we're passing today? It just really doesn't make logical sense to me.

So I guess the perspective I'm bringing here tonight is not necessarily an expert as an educator or a member on the Education Committee. I'm just trying to bring some common sense to this. And to me, in reading this particular bill, it really doesn't make sense to me.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Thank you, sir, for your remarks.

Will you remark further on Senate Amendment Schedule "A?"

The dean of the House, Representative Mushinsky, you have the floor, madam.

REP. MUSHINSKY (85th):

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I rise to support Senate "A," which includes secondary school reform Section 17 to 20.

And just to respond to Representative Cafero, who said earlier that the prize is the federal grant, I would respond, the prize is really not the federal grant. The prize is the educated workforce which the state must have so we do not whither away so we thrive in the future.

A number of reports have identified the gap in how well Connecticut is preparing our workforce for future employment. And the Program Review and Investigation Committee spent a whole year on this in our project alignment of post secondary education and employment.

The Connecticut 4th and 8th graders are not scoring as well as students in other New England states. And there are widening performance gaps and a substantial number of Connecticut freshman in college are taking remedial courses, and especially in math.

Representative Gibbons and Representative

Candelora are both correct in that we will have to address this in the lower grades as well. And I think the tightening the high school standards will, of necessity, affect the lower grades.

In New England, an old part of the country, Massachusetts, Vermont and New Hampshire all rank consistently higher than Connecticut on reading and math indicators. So even in our own region of the state -- of the country, we are behind.

Connecticut's student population includes an increasing -- increasingly larger percentage of students belonging to groups with lower achievement. These workers will be almost 40 percent of our young Connecticut workers by 2012, which is only two years away, and they will be 50 percent of our young workers by 2020. This obviously is an ominous problem for the state of Connecticut.

As other than Washington DC, Connecticut scores have the widest gap between higher and lower-income students in the US. There are some other gaps, including gender gaps. Males are scoring higher in math and reading. Females are scoring higher in writing.

Math is the subject that the college students

have the most trouble with when they enter community college. One in five students must go through remedial or developmental math. And 50 percent of these fail the course, the remedial course.

At the state university system, 62 percent of the freshman are enrolled in remedial or developmental math. In our report, Program Review and Investigations, we noted that as representative -- as one of the representatives had said earlier, Connecticut's highly skilled jobs will require workers with postsecondary degrees or certifications. And if you compare our scores with our peers in 30 other industrialized countries, you also can see that we have a problem.

Math and science and literacy scores are down from six years ago. And our students scored 489 on one global test while our competitors in Japan scored 531; german students scored 516; united Kingdom, 515; and Hong Kong and China, 542. So our students are performing under our competitors. This is obviously not a good trend.

Is essential to our state's future that we turn this around and confront this issue as we did in the achievement bill the other night. And I think we

cannot avoid strengthening high school graduation standards. We cannot avoid it to reduce the need for remediation in college and to prepare our young workforce to succeed, the state, this older state depends on a highly trained young workforce. We cannot duck this question. We have to confront it head on.

I hope you will support the amendment.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Thank you, madam, for your remarks.

Will you remark further on Senate Amendment Schedule "A?"

The gentlelady from Yalesville, Representative Fritz, you have the floor, madam.

REP. FRITZ (90th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good evening.

And if I might, Mr. Speaker, in the framework of this amendment, I'd like to take people on a little trip down memory lane.

We've heard about credits over and over and over again today. We've heard about how we need to increase the credits, et cetera. And we've also learned about how in schools who have increased credits that, in fact, the dropout rate has decreased.

I'd like to tell you as a freshman Legislator in 1983, as a member of the Education Committee, I established graduation high school credits. It was only 18. And on the chairman, God rest her soul, was Dorothy Goodwin. And it was -- it gave her many palpitations because our friend Dorothy did not believe in too much structure.

Education was to be freewheeling, but for me, I believe that it was important for there to be actual goals and actual things that had to be achieved. It was 18, and then came Commissioner Torazzi and he raised it to 20. And I believe it's still at that point, but school systems have the discretion to establish as many credits as they want. So that's my little piece of history.

I would like to also associate myself with remarks of the gentlelady from Greenwich. In my life I've been very fortunate. I had a nursery school -- not my own children, others -- for nine years. So I was very involved in early childhood education. And that I was most fortunate to go on and to teach reading under Title I.

I also -- before I left regular teaching, I taught reading to 7th graders. The difference between

the children in the 3rd grade and the children in the 7th grade was monumental.

The children in the 3rd grade grasped things. They were like sponges and they were anxious to learn and they -- it didn't take them very long to get to the point where they could read well, even under title one.

The grade 7 students, it was a completely different story. It was -- there was a certain stand-back approach. They knew they should have known how to read, but they really couldn't. So it was a complete struggle for them all the time. And I must say that some of those young people did not fare very well in their lives.

I have another point to make, too. It troubles me greatly that we talk about how everybody has to have a college education. This has been a dynamic for quite a while in the state of Connecticut. It troubles me greatly because at the end of the day there's a feeling out there. There's a type of a mystique, that if you don't go to college, you're not very smart.

There's also that same mystique that transfers down through the population that if you work with your

hands, you don't have a brain. And that's a terrible way to look at the population of Connecticut, that you're not worthy if you don't go to college.

But let me tell you, folks, what would you do without your plumbers? Your electricians? What would you do without your carpenters? Your road builders, the people who always have jobs?

So when you're talking about workforce, you need to talk about technical education. And unfortunately, we've reached the point where I would say 95 percent of the comprehensive high schools in the state of Connecticut no longer have shops.

So we've gone up one way, and yet we've neglected a whole population the other way. And I think at the end of the day, the state of Connecticut is going to suffer a great loss. Education is education, whether it be technical, whether it be hands on, whether it be book learning. I think we need to realize that and I'm not sure that this amendment does that. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Thank you, madam, for your remarks.

Will you remark further?

The gentlelady from the 112th District,

Representative Hovey, you have the floor, madam.

REP. HOVEY (112th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, through you a couple of questions to the proponent of the amendment.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann, please prepare yourself.

Madam, continue with your questioning.

REP. HOVEY (112th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I'm wondering if the good gentleman knows how many of Connecticut's present -- first, how many school districts do we have presently in the state of Connecticut?

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, that sort of depends on which definition of school district you're using and whether you count in certain magnet and other systems we have. But it's on the order of 180 if you include all of the different types of school systems we have.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Hovey.

REP. HOVEY (112th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And through you, Mr. Speaker, how many of that 180 -- some of those we know are divergent systems within the grosser body of system. But of the 180, how many of those are considered failing schools?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, was the question about failing school systems or failing schools?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Hovey, could you please clarify your question?

REP. HOVEY (112th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And for this particular exercise I guess we would say, failing school systems.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I believe it's around 16 that have been deemed failing pursuant to the guidelines of No Child Left Behind.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Hovey.

REP. HOVEY (112th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And through you, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the good gentleman who is the cochair of the Education Committee remembers an exercise that we did two years ago that identified school systems that were excessively out-of-school suspending students, and how many school districts there were that were considered to be excessive.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, no, I don't recall the numbers there.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Hovey.

REP. HOVEY (112th):

Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And I'm happy to give the good gentleman the information. There were 15 school systems that were considered to be excessively suspending students out of school.

And the reason why I remember that is because as a part of the moderate caucus, or more conservative caucus and in not being excited about mandates, but recognizing the importance of making sure that we have children in school if we are going to try and educate them.

I was one of the people who supported the in-school suspension mandate and then went on to look at how we could then discriminate between school systems that were excessively out-of-school suspending and required them to step up to the mandate. And those school systems that were not behaving in a manner would have had a reprieve from the mandates. So I do know that it was 15 school systems.

So I think that it's ironic that we have approximately -- or not necessarily ironic, but statistically important that we have 16 school

districts that seem to have failing systems and we have 15 school districts that seem to have excessive out-of-school suspensions.

And it then proves the hypotheses that I've maintained all along, that in order to educate children you have to have them within the confines of your four walls. So that -- moving from that point.

So I stand up here this evening being an educator, working in the field of education for many years and presently being an advocate for families who have children who are learning divergent.

So I'm in and out of schools all the time. And I've heard some different things talked about here tonight; some I agree with, some I don't agree with. One of the statistics that was talked about had to do with kids who were considered not measuring up to a standard and they're being bored.

And one of the things I have learned in my lifetime as an educator is that the term "bored" often means that a child is finding the curriculum irrelevant to their life or they're just not getting it. And so that term "bored" is very bothersome to me.

The other thing that I see in this particular

legislation is that once again, it focuses on kids and has some minor tweaks of systems, but it really does not have some of the sweeping changes that we might be looking for within the context of system. And it does not focus on the things that we know research specifically addresses with regards to achieving and helping low achieving students become higher achievements.

And we know that in order for students who are not necessarily achieving to the levels that we would like to see them, that one of the things that we have to put in place for them are strong social support networks and that those social support networks include, not only school, but home, community and family.

There's also a concept called "academic press," which is this idea that students who are lower-achieving students also have to be in environments where the academic press is consistent and rigorous. And I guess to some degree innovative, in that it needs to respond to that individual learner and a way that their education becomes relevant.

And then one of the most important pieces of a successful education is that there have to be combined

efforts, that there have to be a group of people, interdisciplinary teams, parents and the whole constellation needs to come together and believe that the child is actually capable of achieving that excellence.

This whole idea that we're going to take the responsibility away from local school boards, I find disturbing, because I truly believe that those local school boards do know what their students need. And that if they could go back and reconfigure how their systems were actually working -- could intervene in the components of collective bargaining and reorganize the constructs of their schools, they might do something very different. And you might find that school district is responding in a very different and much more academically challenging way.

This whole idea that you're going to increase credits for kids who are already not doing well, we're going to give them more of the same and they're already not doing well with the same -- just doesn't seem to make sense.

And I completely agree with the gentlewoman from New Haven, that this whole idea of really just stacking it up on kids who are already discouraged, on

families that are already overwhelmed is not the way to shorten or close that achievement gap. So here in the state of Connecticut I think we really need to look at what we believe education to be all about.

And the most disturbing thing to me is that we're going to give teachers who have retired two more years to stay in our systems. Not that they aren't able to participate in our systems and don't have a lot to offer our system, but we have young, vital, innovative and highly charged young people coming out of our university systems who are anxious to take on the challenge of working with our children and improving the outcomes for education in the state of Connecticut.

And we're going to discourage them. Kind of, excuse the expression, "bugger" them up by not having the avenues opened up so that they can move into the education field in a timely manner. I just don't think it's appropriate. In this state of Connecticut, we have one of the highest educated workforces that there is. We don't have the jobs for them to keep them in this state.

So I think this bill has a lot of issues and I appreciate everyone's efforts and energies, but again,

it appears to be top down. I believe that the families in the state of Connecticut know what their children need and they need to be at the table and they need to be part of the innovation and the rigor for our educational system.

Thank you, sir.

(Deputy Speaker O'Rourke in the Chair.)

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Thank you, Representative Hovey.

Representative Johnston.

REP. JOHNSTON (51st):

Good evening, Mr. Speaker. And thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, commenting on the amendment before us. I'm sitting here trying to process our Race to the Top, or our applying for the Race to the Top. And the price tag, reading through the fiscal notes and listening to the discussion in the ballpark of about $25 million.

And I'm trying to, I guess, balance that out with an article that I read in the newspaper on Saturday in the Hartford Courant. The title of the article -- it

was on page 1, this Saturday, and the title of the article was: Fear is the Rule.

And it was about a young man who got beat up picking up his younger brother or sister from school; ended up with 12 stitches, hospitalized with a concussion -- was beaten, kicked in the head. And the article goes on to discuss his school, Rosen School in Hartford.

A beautiful, recently renovated school to the price tag of $33 million. One of the parents was quoted as saying that the school is pretty on the outside and hell on the inside.

And when they talked about the school, they talked about -- I had to read the article twice, Mr. Speaker, because I wasn't sure what I was reading -- talked about students having -- engaging in sexual activities in stairwells and isolated areas. The students not able to go to the bathrooms because they were being jumped in the bathrooms non stop.

They went on to talk about -- the police chief actually had to come in and his quote in the paper was, if you have to keep breaking up fights, where is the education going on?

And apparently parent-teacher -- PTOs have been

having meetings to no avail. There's been -- teachers talked about that this is the fifth meeting in the last six weeks and nothing has changed.

And the final quote in the article was from one parent who described the situation as saying -- it's what's going on in that school is, it's very simple. The big fish eat the little ones.

And as I think about where we're going with the budget in the future, and we know we're $3 billion out of whack in each year going out, with maybe some of the new revenue projections may be slightly less than that, and we're going to commit $25 million. And I've read the bill a few times. I don't think any of that $25 million is going to change anything for a student in that school.

And Mr. Speaker, this, when I first read the article, I just assumed that we were talking about a high school. Mr. Speaker, we're not talking about a high school. We're talking about K through 8th grade school. I think about a student sitting in that classroom trying to get an education with a school so out of control that he's worried if his younger sister is having sex in the stairwells, wonders if his little brother is getting beat up today.

And we can change that curriculum, Mr. Speaker. We can spend millions of dollars. We can bring everything in. If we don't have any little tiny bit of common sense, any little tiny bit of control of our homes, or our schools, which are a reflection of our homes; there's no amount of money that we're going to spend that's going to turn it around.

It just -- it boggles my mind that we're going to commit the money to spend in the future when we know in the future of our revenue is going to be horrendously worse than it is today.

We can't commit to our towns what we're going to give them in two years, and yet we're committing to spending more money, yet the problems that we could fix probably with almost no money, by allowing our teachers to take control of their classrooms, by allowing principals to take control of their schools, probably for almost no money we could make a huge difference.

So it's like we can't see the simple things in front of us and if you put dollars attached to something, you say, by God we're going to do a terrific job. We're going to be able to make everything better. Not a part of me believes with

what we're going into and with not first dealing with the real problems and the real issues that you can't solve with throwing money at it, Mr. Speaker.

This may sound nice, but in my mind this doesn't add up at all. It just, in my mind, cannot make sense and for that reason I won't be voting for it tonight.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Thank you, Representative Johnston.

Representative Coutu.

REP. COUTU (47th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I just briefly want to give my opinion on this Race to the Top and this amendment. I recognize that we're in 25th out of 40 applicants who applied and I think if we're going to spend tens of millions in many ways to try to leapfrog some of those states that are ahead of us, I can't imagine that these other states are just going to sit back and say, well, I'm number 11, 12, 13, 14, and I'm going to qualify for whatever number it may be and we're just not going to do anything.

So at the same time that we're spending tens of millions, they would have to do absolutely nothing for

us to gain a hundred, 150 points to really even be in contention for any funding.

And the more I think about the Race to the Top and the more I investigate what it's all about, they consistently talk about being creative, innovative; empowering, in my view, teachers educating in different ways. And I just start thinking more and more. I think it starts younger than in high school. And I don't see the focus in what we're proposing on that.

If everything worked out perfectly and we were somehow to move ahead of 10, 15 states that really beat us in this competition on the first round, we would be rewarded with a four-year, 50 million-dollar grant.

And when you start thinking about money that is, knowing that the State provide somewhere around $2 billion in funding, I know many towns across the state do utilize ECS funding, but they also pay at least 60 percent or more towards their school system.

So if it's 5, 6, 7, 8 billion dollars for our educational system, we've consistently believed that throwing more money at the problem is going to somehow magically improve our educational system. I assume

most people in the state of Connecticut realize that's not working.

But regardless, if you were to win a 50 million-dollar grant and your yearly budget is $8 billion -- $6 billion for the educational system, it's so miniscule. The impact is really not that magnificent, especially when you're spending 20, 30, 40 million just to complete the process to be in competition for the next round.

And like my fellow Representative Johnston said, to me, it just does not add up. I don't see how this is outside the box, creative, innovative. It's definitely, in my view, sort of the same-old, which is spending a lot of money, tail chasing the dog, trying to catch up to a never-ending goal of more money in a system that's struggling.

So Mr. Speaker, I really believe that this is not the solution that all these states are just going to stay stagnant as we jump over them. And I'd like to be optimistic because I think optimism is great, but reality is what we're really talking about tonight.

So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Thank you, Representative Coutu.

Will you remark? If not, staff and guests, to the well of the House. Members take their seats. The machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll call. Members to the chamber. The House is voting Senate Amendment Schedule "A" by roll call. Members to the chamber.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Have all members voted? Please check the board and ensure your vote is properly recorded. If all members have voted the machine will be locked. The Clerk will take a tally. Mr. Clerk, please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

On Senate Amendment Schedule "A" for Senate Bill 438.

Total Number voting	148
Necessary for adoption	75
Those voting Yea	101
Those voting Nay	47
Those absent and not voting	3

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

The amendment is passed.

Will you remark on the bill as amended?

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Clerk has an amendment, LCO 5548. I would ask the Clerk to please call the amendment and that I be granted leave of the Chamber to summarize.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Mr. Clerk, please call LCO 5548, designated as House Amendment "A."

THE CLERK:

LCO Number 5548, House "A," offered by Representatives Fleischmann, Robles, et al.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

The gentleman has asked and is granted leave of the Chamber to summarize.

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this amendment does two things. First, it addresses Subparagraph A of Section 3, and strikes out the first line that deals with data collection. It addresses Representative Walker's

concerns about the education of the parent.

The second thing this amendment does, Mr. Speaker, is it incorporates the entire achievement gap bill that the House passed the other day unanimously 145 votes to zero, which incorporates student governance councils at all failing schools in the state of Connecticut, that deals with online credit recovery, the parent trust fund.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this amendment makes this bill much stronger in terms of dealing with education reform here in the state of Connecticut and I move adoption.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

The motion is on adoption. Will you remark? Will you remark?

Representative Roldan.

REP. ROLDAN (4th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I stand in support of the amendment. A great deal of work has gone into this. A number of members in this Chamber as well as in the Senate have been involved in all of this.

We stand in support, particularly in part of the changes that have been made as it relates to the Race

to the Top. Mr. Speaker (inaudible) as well.

Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Thank you, Representative Roldan.

Will you remark? Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, a couple of questions, through you to the proponent of the amendment.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Bartlett, prepare yourself.

Representative Cafero, please proceed.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, to Representative Bartlett, as you brought out of this bill I had deja vu, because it was just a few days ago that we debated this very bill.

In fact, I remember standing right here facing you when I lent my voice to support this bill, from the bottom of my heart with all my experience in my lifetime from my town. We talked about empowered parents and that achievement gap. And that bill passed by a vast majority.

So I'm wondering, why are we doing it again? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

Representative Cafero, I and all of my colleagues appreciate your support of the achievement gap bill as well as every member of this General Assembly that voted in the affirmative. And we stand behind these, this concept. We stand behind education reform.

What we have before us is the Race to the Top Bill, which is also about education reform and we believe that the concepts that we've put forward in the achievement gap bill should be put forward into this bill, and that's what I ask this Chamber to do.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, what's the difference between this amendment and the bill we passed the other night? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, the difference is lines 3 through 12. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

And through you, Mr. Speaker, for the edification of the Chamber, can you describe the difference between lines 3 through 12 in this amendment versus lines 3 through 12 and the bill that we passed previously?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, we have addressed what we considered a problem in the underlying bill as it relates to tracking the education of a parent. And we have deleted that from the underlying bill.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, is the desire of the proponent of this amendment and the admission to this Chamber that the initial inclusion of that in the prior bill that we all passed, and that has yet to be acted on by the Senate, was incorrect?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I want to just be -- if the -- Representative Cafero could just repeat that so I can understand one more time?

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Cafero, Representative Bartlett asked you to rephrase the question.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

I would be glad to, Mr. Speaker.

In the three or four, or two days that passed since the passage of the achievement gap bill and the offering of this amendment, is it in the wisdom of the proponent of the amendment that the change in this bill reflects an incorrect assumption of the prior bill?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure what an incorrect assumption addresses.

But through you, Mr. Speaker we believe, as I stated earlier, that the achievement gap bill and this bill match and work together and that this is a proper place for the achievement gap bill to be added to, and we move forward.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, that's not what I heard -- not what I heard. You see, I know that Representative Bartlett and others in this Chamber worked real, real hard all session long on the principles contained in this amendment.

And you might say to yourself, why at 12 midnight, on the day before adjournment, with 24 hours to go without a budget done, without so many bills

done, why are we doing the same bill again? Why are we doing the same bill again, when the will of this Chamber was to pass that bill two days ago? Why?

Because the upper Chamber chose not to take that bill up. And the only way we're going to get it is by attaching it to something they want and sending it back to them.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Fleischmann, for what reason do you rise? What is your point, sir?

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Point of order, Mr. Speaker. I believe that we are supposed to speak to the substance of matters before us, not to the motivations of our fellow members, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

The Chamber will stand at ease for just a moment.

(Chamber at ease.)

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

The Chamber will come back to order.

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to withdraw my point of order.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Thank you, Representative Fleischmann.

Without objection, so ordered.

It's getting late here. We've got important legislation before us and we're debating house amendment "A."

Representative Cafero, you had the floor.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

House Amendment "A" is about kids, kids who need help, but we know that because we did it two days ago.

Listen, I understand that we do a lot of things in this place. But when we can jeopardize the achievement of children because of process, that's a sin. And the options choice that many of us are faced with today is that those of us who believed in our heart that the achievement gap bill passed two days ago was the right way to go, now have it combined with a bill that we might not think is the same.

And yet, we're being told that if you want one, you've got to vote for the other. That's a heck of a way to do business, especially when it's about kids.

Because there's a lot of parents and kids who've got nothing and are depending on us with this amendment and the words that are in it. They don't know what we do up here. They don't know about points and motions and transfers and suspension of the rules. They're looking for help. They're looking for help, not games.

It's a shame that the sentiments and principles that are behind this amendment have to be treated with such disrespect.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Thank you, Representative Cafero.

Will you remark?

Representative Holder-Winfield.

REP. HOLDER-WINFIELD (94th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to pick up on a question that was asked by Representative Cafero. He asked about what was going on in lines 3 through 12. I believe that in his questioning he asked about whether this changed the bill that we had passed just a couple of days ago.

I believe that this has to do with the bill that we were looking at, the underlying bill that we're

looking at today.

So through you, Mr. Speaker, is that assumption on my part correct?

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Is that question for Representative Bartlett?

REP. HOLDER-WINFIELD (94th):

Yes, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

Yes, Mr. Speaker. The lines 1 through 8 -- no, 1 through 12 deal with the underlying bill.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER O'ROURKE:

Representative Winfield.

REP. HOLDER-WINFIELD (94th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That clarifies that for me.

To the amendment itself as a whole, which is, for the most part, the bill we passed just a couple of days ago. I have a case of deja vu also and I also have a headache.

We did just pass this bill less than a week ago.

And you know, we passed this bill because hundreds of parents came to the Legislative Office Building and asked us to do some good work. And I think we did that good work. And I think it showed when a hundred plus of us on the board went green, and yet we're here today doing this again. I don't even know what to say about that.

I'm going to vote for this because I think we need to do it. And I guess normally I don't talk about whether I'm happy voting for something or not, but I'm not happy doing this tonight because I don't feel that we should be here doing this, which we just did two days ago. And I'm not going to speak why we're here doing this, but we've done the good work. We sat down and here we are again.

Thank you for your time.

(Speaker Donovan in the Chair.)

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you. Thank you, Representative.

Representative Douglas McCrory.

REP. McCRORY (7th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this amendment. And just what's been echoed by my colleagues just previously, we're here again to do the good work that we already have done.

Now the underlying bill talks about Race to the Top and Race to the Top is an opportunity for the State of Connecticut to go after $175 million that we're supposed to use to improve the quality of education for the children of Connecticut. And that's a good thing if we had a plan to actually do it, if we had a plan to raise the lowest achieving students and get them in competition with those that are doing very well.

Now the reality is by 8th grade, students who are at the bottom are academically four years behind their counterparts who are at the top. And we don't necessarily have a plan to fix that, but I do know that this amendment, this amendment that we have makes our Race to the Top Bill stronger. Because Race to the Top is about turning around failing schools.

The president's administration, I'm sure coming from Chicago, is not about just putting more dollars into education. It's about turning around schools that are failing. That's what it's about.

Until we put this amendment in, in my opinion, we haven't done anything. This gives parents the opportunity at the table with teachers to turn around failing schools. Our application is much stronger when we put this in.

Representative Cafero talked about the politics. Yes. Yes, but we have an obligation here, a moral obligation to fix those failing schools and get those young people who were at the bottom of the well up to their competition.

I don't like being here doing this over again. Everybody in here passed this bill previously and they know it's the right thing to do. They knew it was the right thing to do. Do I believe that secondary school reform is going to help everyone? Personally, no. I don't think so. I -- we believe in high standards. But I believe in high standards for everyone and if I can't get a kid to get to high school -- we are losing so many kids before they even get to high school and we're talking about high school reform.

We've got 50 or 60 percent dropout rates in some of the cities. We've got to start at the bottom. We need "first-dary" school reform, but I'm going to support it because I know this will start the process.

I know it's a good thing to.

So I encourage my colleagues to support this measure, to support this amendment. And I'll tell our parents out there to hold on, just hold on a little stronger and longer because change will come. We have enough people in this General Assembly that know -- what the right thing to do and willing to put their political clout on the line for the children who are failing.

And I encourage all you all to support this measure because it's time to stand up because it's gone on too long and no one has cried out. No one, except those children and those parents and those grandparents in those failing schools, and they finally got our attention. And now we have an opportunity to do something.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

Representative Alberts.

REP. ALBERTS (50th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

If I may, a couple questions to the proponent of the amendment.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. ALBERTS (50th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The first lines that represent the change here to document, and for clarification purposes, in line 6 there's mention of student transcripts and student attendance. I am wondering what is anticipated in terms of what grades for student transcripts. Is that just for a one-year basis or is that the -- several years of performance?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, the Department of Education is developing longitudinal data systems. And so all of these factors will be a part of those longitudinal data systems, which will be over a period of time, or over the course of the child's academic experience.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Alberts.

REP. ALBERTS (50th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So in addition, in line 6, student attendance will be tracked over a matter of years as well?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, the answer would be yes.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Alberts.

REP. ALBERTS (50th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And on line 7, student mobility, is that the reference to students moving from one school system to another?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, yes.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Alberts.

REP. ALBERTS (50th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I, too, stand in support of this amendment that's been presented to us.

I feel very strongly that when our discussion has come to a close, that when the vote be taken, it be taken by roll call.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The question is on a roll call vote. All those in favor of a roll call vote, please indicate by saying, aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

It appears the 20 percent has been met. When the vote is taken it will be taken by roll.

Representative Noujaim.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Good morning, sir.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Mr. Speaker, through you, I do have a few

questions to the proponent of the bill.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Please proceed.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Through you Mr. Speaker to Representative Bartlett, I'd like to ask you a question in reference to line 6 of the amendment. When it says -- 5 and 6, actually -- that includes, but not limited to the primary language spoken at the home of the student.

I am presuming that there will be somebody who is going to be assisting and guiding through the process. What if the person who is responsible is not able or capable to speak the language of the student at the home? How would that be handled?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

This is data collection. Most school districts acquire these various factors as part of their data collection and that is each school system will collect the data and that's how it will go forward.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Noujaim.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And through you, Mr. Speaker, then am I to presume that the data is going to be collected in which languages?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

It -- the data collection will determine if the child speaks a language other than English and that will be incorporated in terms into the data collection. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Noujaim.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And through you, Mr. Speaker, how many other languages would be included in this process?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I can't answer how many languages.

The factor is the primary language spoken at home of a student and the data collection will determine just that.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Noujaim.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

But through you, Mr. Speaker and I'm still struggling with this, because obviously it's a very valid point. What if the student speaks a very difficult language, such as Arabic, per se? Would there be someone who would be able to interpret and read this data and be able to communicate accordingly? And who would that person be?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, the factor does not speak to what language student may speak. Just that he does -- has a primary language that he speaks at home, which is different than English that is spoken in the schools.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Noujaim.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

But if that data is going to be collected at a student's home and obviously the student is not speaking the English language, but some other language that is not commonly used in this country, how would that be interpreted or how would that be collected and who would interpret that language so that that student could be helped?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

The data would be collected at the school, Mr. Speaker, not at the home. The data would be

determined and collected at the school, Mr. Speaker.

Though you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Noujaim.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

But through you, Mr. Speaker, whether it is collected at the home or at the school, someone must interpret that data. And if there is no interpreter who could speak that specific language, how is this data going to be interpreted?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, the only data is what language. It doesn't move beyond what language.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Noujaim.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Okay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And through you, Mr. Speaker, if I may ask a question. In line 7 of the bill, which is page 2, the

top of page 2, at student mobility. Would the good Representative define student mobility?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, student mobility would speak to moving from one school district to another school district, sir.

Through you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Noujaim.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And if I may ask a question in reference to this. I understand that sometimes a student moves from one school to one school to one school several times within a specific annual period. How would this impact this entire process?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, it would just be

tracked that the student was moving, as Representative Noujaim suggested, from one school to another school to another school. The data would reflect that.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Noujaim.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And through you, Mr. Speaker, my final question which is really very intriguing to me as I read it. In line 171 -- where I will give a Representative a second to get to that line.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, in line 171 it says, pursuant of this section, talking about establishing a regional board of education or a school that has been identified as in need, may establish a school governance council for each school to identify.

It says the word "may," but yet it goes later on in the amendment to speak about several other issues and how this is going to be organized. So if it says, "may," and they elect not to do it, does this mean this entire process will be null and void and this amendment will not be taken into consideration?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, lines 169 to 172 define one cohort that is affected within this bill and that is a "may." So some regional board of education may incorporate school governance councils.

As you move through the bill there are "shalls," which speak to the 137 schools that have thus far been identified as failing.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Noujaim.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I truly appreciate the answer, but would this one "may" nullify some of the processes in this amendment?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, no.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Noujaim.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And through you, Mr. Speaker, in line 177 where it talks about mathematics and reading, isn't writing also a part of that process and it's an important part of the equation? Shouldn't writing be also including -- where we always hear that writing, reading and mathematics are the most, you know, the most issues that are as important in the process of a student. Shouldn't writing be included?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, no. We define it with math and reading.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Noujaim.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's funny how at one time I read a story about a principal in New Hampshire. I think the school -- the name of the school was Thayer Middle School. And it

was a failing school and it was primarily an inner-city school, essentially.

And basically the principal of that school talked about four different things: reading, writing, mathematics and responsibility to teach the students. And these are issues that are very, very important insofar as nurturing those kids and making them be a part of our society. And obviously, when we all grow up, those kids are the ones who are going to be taking care of our society and improving our society on our behalf.

So I think writing is also very important, but at this time I would -- I appreciate the answers from the Representative.

And thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your indulgence.

And Mr. Speaker, is Representative (inaudible) distracting you up there?

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Through you, Representative Noujaim, no. He's very helpful.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Will you remark further? Will you remark further

on the bill?

Representative O'Neill.

REP. O'NEILL (69th):

Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

If I may, a few questions through you to the proponent of the amendment.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. O'NEILL (69th):

Thank you.

It was earlier indicated that the main difference between the amendment before us this evening and the bill that we passed a few days ago is to be found in, I believe it's the first 12 or so lines, lines 3 through 12.

And I'd like to focus for a moment on lines 9 and 10, which strike Section 7. And I first want to make sure I understand what they are striking. Section 7 -- is the Section 7 that is stricken here the Section 7 that was in Senate Amendment "A?"

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, the answer is yes.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Bartlett.

Representative O'Neill.

REP. O'NEILL (69th):

Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Now and looking at Section 7, which is a fairly lengthy piece of material and text and it covers a number of different items, I would look at section -- the lines start 478 and 479 of the Section 7, which has now become the bill because of the adoption of Senate "A."

So in 478 and 479 of Senate "A," it talks about the powers of the State -- bear with me a moment.

It looks like it's in that area, talking about the State Department of Education to identify schools for reconstitution as may be phased in by the commissioner as state or local charter schools. That's existing language that preexisted Senate "A."

Then the new language is, established pursuant to Section -- or rather, I'm sorry -- established pursuant to Section 1074G; innovation schools established pursuant to Section 6 of this act, which I assume is the Section 6 of Senate "A."

And so what striking Section 7 does, it seems, to me, is difficult to quite understand in the context of

the Senate "A," Section 6 that creates this concept of innovation schools.

So could the proponent please explain to me what the impact of the deletion of Section 7, but particularly lines 478 and 479 have on the totality of the bill? Why, or what does striking those lines as part of the overall strike of Section 7 do? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, the strike of the section is meant to incorporate the amendment and the underlying bill as it pertains to innovation schools. And it connects them properly so that the draft language conforms.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative O'Neill.

REP. O'NEILL (69th):

I guess I then have to ask, what -- is this being done not related to the rest of the amendment that's before us? Is this meant to be a corrective to section -- to Senate "A" that would have to have been

done regardless of whether the balance of House "A" were being brought forward?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, it's not a correction, but a merge of the language.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative O'Neill.

REP. O'NEILL (69th):

Well, is the effect of lines 478 and 479 recreated somewhere else in house amendment "A?" Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Mr. Speaker, through you, could you ask the Representative --

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative O'Neill, if you could repeat the question, please.

REP. O'NEILL (69th):

Certainly, Mr. Speaker.

If the objective here is to -- and I can't remember the exact word, harmonize or conform, I think it was -- the word was conform -- House "A" and Senate "A" by striking Section 7 and just looking at one portion of Section 7 that existed in Senate "A."

There's this language that seems to authorize the reconstruction of a school as an innovation school established pursuant to Section 6 of the act, which I assume is Section 6 of Senate "A." If we take that language out here, is that language or some similar type of language to be found elsewhere in House "A?"

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, House "A," it appears in lines 67 and lines 68.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative O'Neill.

REP. O'NEILL (69th):

Okay. So then that the language that appears at

478 and 479 of Senate "A" is recreated at 67 and 68 of House "A." Is that correct?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Yes. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative O'Neill.

REP. O'NEILL (69th):

Okay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And then further on in Section 7, at line 504 of Senate "A," there is some language about a directive of the State Board of Education pursuant to -- and this is all existing statutory language -- Subparagraph C, D, E and then new language is G of Subdivision 2 of this subsection. And then it goes on.

Again, is that reproduced someplace else in House "A?" Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, in House "A" it is

recreated in line 93.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative O'Neill.

REP. O'NEILL (69th):

Okay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And then again, in lines 538 through 542, there's language in Senate "A" that says, or to notwithstanding the provisions of Chapter 146, any special act, charter, ordinance; grant the commissioner of education the authority to reconstitute the local or regional board of education for such school district in accordance with the provisions of Subsection G of this Section. And again, is that reproduced elsewhere in House Amendment "A?"

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I would direct the gentleman to lines 127 to 131, through you, Mr. Speaker of House "A."

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative O'Neill.

REP. O'NEILL (69th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And again, going down to line 580, the State Board of Education may authorize the commissioner of education to reconstitute a local or regional board of education pursuant to Subdivision 2 of this subsection D of this section, for a period of not more than five years the board shall not grant such authority to the commissioner unless the board has required the local or regional board of education to complete the training described in Subparagraph M of Subdivision 2 of Subsection C of this section.

Upon such authorization the board -- the commissioner shall terminate the existing local or regional board of education and appoint the members of the new board, a regional board of education.

And it goes on at some length down to line 603 of sub -- of Senate "A," and that language is reproduced somewhere in House "A."

Through you, Mr. Speaker, is that correct?]

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, that is correct.

And it is lines 340 to 363.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative O'Neill.

REP. O'NEILL (69th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And again -- okay. I guess that's the end of Section 7.

And I guess since all of this language is being reproduced apparently word for word, as if it had been in sub -- in Section 7, if I could ask, why was it necessary to, in effect, strike Section 7 and reproduce it in House "A?" I guess I'm a little confused as to why that was done that way. So if you could explain.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, just to make sure that there was conformity, sir.

Through you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative O'Neill.

REP. O'NEILL (69th):

Okay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the gentleman explaining.

I just -- and I apologize for taking the time of the Chamber, but I guess I always have some difficulty following the somewhat convoluted language in some of our education statutes where we have sentences that run on for 10 and 15 and 20 lines at a stretch.

And I think it's one of those things where, for me at least, to try to marry these two things together to make sure that I understand what's going on here. It's -- I appreciate the efforts on the part of the gentleman to help me out here.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative O'Neill.

Representative Rowe.

REP. ROWE (123rd):

Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Good morning, sir.

REP. ROWE (123rd):

If I could, a few questions to the kind gentleman

from Bethel.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. ROWE (123rd):

And I understand that we're on Amendment "A."

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

That is correct.

REP. ROWE (123rd):

And there's been some efforts to clarify where we are and perhaps why we're here and I just -- the synapses may not be clicking as they were 12 hours ago.

But I understand that we did the so-called trigger bill a day or two ago. And that, as you brought up, that went unanimously 144-ish to zip. And we sent it along with the hopes that the folks upstairs would take care of it. Is that correct?

Through you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, every time we pass a bill we hope that the Senate passes our bills, I believe.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Rowe.

REP. ROWE (123rd):

Unless we vote against it. Some of us -- that we might not hope but -- So I'll take it that was a yes.

So then is my understanding correct that something happened between then and today which led us to believe that the 144 that -- to nothing trigger that went up to the Senate wasn't going to come out of the Senate successfully.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I can't answer that question for the gentleman.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Rowe.

REP. ROWE (123rd):

Okay. Well, I guess then I understand there's some small changes, but why are we doing this? I know it's been asked, but why are we doing this Amendment "A?"

Through you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, the underlying bill is about education reform and I believe that the amendment addresses education reform.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Rowe.

REP. ROWE (123rd):

But if we have done this already, almost -- if we've done this, essentially, this amendment already, passed almost in the same form already, and we've got 23 hours and 25 minutes left, why are we doing this now?

Through you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, as I've stated, we have the changes in regards to the data collection and we have the achievement gap bill in its various concepts, that we are amending the underlying bill with and that

this will increase, as Representative McCrory has stated, will improve that bill and achieve true education reform here in the state of Connecticut. I believe it would be quite historic.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Rowe.

REP. ROWE (123rd):

Well, I appreciate the historic nature if we do get this through. But didn't we know all this 48 hours ago and if this is -- if "A" is what we should have done all along --

I mean, this has been vetted. This has been the subject of a lot of debate about how a lot of work, public hearings and such. You know, why wasn't this what went into the trigger a couple days ago if this is the actual best solution?

Through you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, actually the strike of lines 1 through 12 were really identified within the caucus and amongst a number of people just in the last

day or so.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Rowe.

REP. ROWE (123rd):

Okay. Forgive me. I heard the last part and the first part, but not the middle part. Can you just repeat that answer?

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, lines 1 through 8, in terms of correcting the underlying bill were just identified within the last 24 hours.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Rowe.

REP. ROWE (123rd):

Okay. And can you -- was consideration given to the changes that are made in lines 3 through 8 previous, or was this an epiphany that some folks had over the past few days, that this really needs to be included in "A?"

Through you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I'm not capable of describing others' awareness in that category.

Through you, sir.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Rowe.

REP. ROWE (123rd):

Thank you.

Can you, for the Chamber's edification, and you did this before to a point, and maybe you did in full, but can you just explain in layman's terms why this helps us -- why this makes it better, and if I can have a compound question, how this connects to success in the ultimate efforts in the Race to the Top?

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I think the idea of parental involvement and empowerment in terms of making changes in education and the achievement gap are -- is a concept that fits very well in this bill. This bill also talks about reconstituting boards of

education and gives power to the commissioner in the State Board of Ed to look at school districts that are failing.

And our -- school governance councils approach failing schools from another -- with another approach, but still trying to get at the same problem. So I believe that they -- the concepts fit quite nicely.

Through you, sir.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Rowe.

REP. ROWE (123rd):

Thank you. And those are all concepts that were included in the original trigger bill from a couple days ago. Correct?

Through you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the school governance councils, yes. The language is the same.

Through you, sir.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Rowe.

REP. ROWE (123rd):

Thank you.

And when we talk about -- and Representative Noujaim had a line of questioning in this regard -- but when we talk about in line 3, performance on statewide mastery examinations pursuant to Sub B. And we talk about, I think it's four or five -- four elements of -- well, that the data will include. You talk about the primary language and I think that was gone into by student transcripts.

I mean, this just -- am I correct that that simply sets forth that there will be some sort of review, comprehensive or otherwise of individual student's transcripts?

Through you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Yes. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Rowe.

REP. ROWE (123rd):

And when we talk about -- student attendance speaks for itself, but the student mobility, can you -- is that a term of art? Or what do we mean by

student mobility in subparagraph -- well, line 7 actually, student mobility?

Through you.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Rowe, that question has been asked several times this evening.

REP. ROWE (123rd):

I may have been on the dais at the time.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

I don't believe you were, but Representative Bartlett, if you choose to answer that question?

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, student mobility addresses when students move from one school to another school or one school system to another school system. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Rowe.

REP. ROWE (123rd):

And the -- in 4, we talk about reliable and valid assessments of a student's readiness to enter into the public school at the kindergarten level. Are those -- the assessments that are being done, are those -- are there standard federal guidelines that are looked at

when evaluating of those standards have been satisfied?

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, the State Department of Education is developing that factor.

Through you, sir.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Rowe.

REP. ROWE (123rd):

Thank you.

I appreciate the questions and I'm sorry if a couple of them were repetitive. You did help me understand it better.

You know, I think what we passed the other night was very important and I suppose I wish that I had more confidence that it was just going to go forward in the Senate. And for the reasons you've set forth, we need to do this and I think you make a fair argument that the changes that we have here may even make what we did the other night better.

I'll listen to the debate. I don't know how much debate there will be, but I appreciate the gentleman

indulging me in the questions.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Thank you, Representative.

Representative Klarides.

REP. KLARIDES (114th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, through you a few questions.

(Deputy Speaker McCluskey in the Chair.)

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Please proceed, madam.

REP. KLARIDES (114th):

Oh, that was a quick switch. Threw me off.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I know that some of these questions have been -- may have been asked. And please feel free to let me know that they have been, if they have been. I have not been in the chamber the entire time.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, in lines 169 through 172, we talk about -- we start talking about on or after July 1, 2010, what -- the local or regional board of education for a school that has been

identified in need would be allowed to establish a school governance council.

I know this may be a little specific, but through you how much -- is there a timeframe after July 1st? Or is there a time limit after July 1st, and since this is on or after, that they would be allowed to do this?

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, there is no time limit.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Klarides.

REP. KLARIDES (114th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And when we talk about the local or regional board of education for a school, are the -- is a local board of ed treated any differently than a regional board of ed?

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, no.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Klarides.

REP. KLARIDES (114th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And through you, for example, in my town I have a regional high school and middle school system and a local board of education in the town of Woodbridge that covers the grammar school.

In that scenario how would that work, when we would -- if we choose, for example, to -- or a town that was similar to mine, an area that's similar to mine, how would a school governance council be formed? Would there be two school governance councils if they chose to, or how would that work?

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, there would be one school governance council per school.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Klarides.

REP. KLARIDES (114th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So just so I can get it straight, if the Woodbridge Board of Ed only covers our grammar school -- we have one grammar school -- so if that board of ed believed that the grammar school was -- if they fell into the parameters of the failing school, then that school would have a school governance council.

And if Amity School District, for example, which is regional, they believe that that school system, and that would include the high school and the middle schools, or would it just have to be one actual school building? Through you, would it be -- I'm not -- I'm just not clear how that would work.

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, it would be one school governance council per building.

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Klarides.

REP. KLARIDES (114th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And I think I've asked this before when we discussed some of these issues, but just for clarification on line 170, when we identify the schools as in need of improvement, that relates to Subsection A of this section. Is that correct?

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, yes.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Klarides.

REP. KLARIDES (114th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And in Subsection B, starting in line 173, in talking about low-achieving schools I know that we have a method by which we determine if they're low achieving. If the gentleman could briefly explain that to me?

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, they use Connecticut Mastery and CAPT tests.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Klarides.

REP. KLARIDES (114th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And I do actually recall that answer from another time. Thank you.

But through you, Mr. Speaker, in line 176, as far as adequate yearly progress is concerned, that is a standard formula, I'm assuming similar to the mastery test standard.

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, yes.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Klarides.

REP. KLARIDES (114th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going forward to lines 257, when we talk about the schools requiring an improvement

plan. In that section, Subsection 4, a little further down it talks about and contemplates the improvement plan being prepared in accordance with Subsection A of this section and to provide advice to principal of the school prior to submission of the report.

I would presume that the advice is clearly on whether the school should be reconstituted or what the issues might be in relation to the reconstitution of the school, but it seems broad to me.

Mr. Speaker, through you, if the proponent can explain if there are parameters on what that advice would be?

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, this is line 257 A, is the question.

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Klarides, could you rephrase your question?

REP. KLARIDES (114th):

Yes, Mr. Speaker. It is line 257 A.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, the school governance councils would be able to have input in terms of the accountability plans that are submitted to the State of Connecticut. And they would also be asked to evaluate those accountability plans as they move forward as to whether or not the school was meeting the goals that were put forth and that's what that subsection refers to.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Klarides.

REP. KLARIDES (114th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Yes, we -- we're referring to the Section which began with line 257. And then in line 260 is where the actual language, provide advice to the principal of the school, is.

And then in lines 263 and 264, assist the principal of the school in developing such plan. Further down, work with the principal of the school. And further down in 268, provide advice on any other major policy matters affecting the school to the

principal of the school.

Now through you, Mr. Speaker, I understand the first three examples I gave, those first three lines. That advice, assistance and working with the principle to develop the plan -- to develop the report, excuse me -- seems pretty clear in relation to whether the school should be reconstituted and what the issues might be. So I understand that.

But in line 269, providing advice on any other major policy matters affecting the school to the principal, that seems exceptionally broad. I mean, that would mean to me budgets, contract negotiations. I mean, I can only imagine a whole host of other items that would be.

Through you, if the proponent can specify that.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, it is intentionally broad. It is a catchall phrase. It provides advice. It's not a "shall." It is a "may."

Through you, sir.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Klarides.

REP. KLARIDES (114th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I do understand it being written in that way, but there are a lot of parts of this amendment that I certainly find to be laudable and important. And it is an amendment in other forms that I have supported.

You know, but I'd just like it noted for legislative intent that providing advice on any other major policy matter certainly opens up that school governance council and the members of that to talk about anything that has to do with that school, anything at all.

And I think that unfortunately, if the goal of this bill is to have a separate entity work with the boards of education and do what's best for the kids in that school, whatever that result may be, talking about any other major policy matters I don't really think is the intent of this bill. I may be wrong, but that's my reading of it.

Mr. Speaker, through you, if we could go forward to line 274, Subsection 5; the local or regional board of education shall provide appropriate training and instruction to members of the school governance council to aid them in the execution of their duties.

What type of appropriate training and instruction are we talking about?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, just to assist parents in terms of interpreting data.

And we have, I know, in school districts modules that are used for, for example, board of education members that may be appropriate in terms of sharing or offering to school governance councils.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Klarides.

REP. KLARIDES (114th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Once again, I understand the point of the language. But that's also very broad and I think that the point of the governance councils, as I mentioned, laudable and important, but we have to be very careful when we look at legislative intent of this amendment and therefore, the bill and any other discussion we've had on similar matters.

There has to be a very specific area that these school governance councils interact with the board of education and the boards of education, and that is specifically whether if the schools are failing and they may or may not be reconstituted. If they should, what the option would be and what's best for that school.

I don't mean to say that there will be questions, and you say, I can't answer those questions, but this is not about opening a can of worms so anything is up for grabs.

Mr. Speaker, in lines 277, section -- Subsection 6, we talk about the reconstitution of the school into one of the following models. That section begins that way.

When we go further down to lines 295 and further, the board shall meet with such school governance council, discuss an agreement on which alternative to adopt not later than ten days, and it goes on.

Ultimately, as I'm reading this bill -- and if I'm wrong, please correct -- if after 45 days after the last meeting, no agreement -- or it's ten days after the vote of the board, if an agreement cannot be achieved, the commissioner of education has the

control of making a decision. Is that accurate?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

(Deputy Speaker McCluskey in the Chair.)

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Sorry, Representative Klarides.

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, yes.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Klarides.

REP. KLARIDES (114th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And through you, if the commissioner of education can make the ultimate decision, then what is the point of the school governance council?

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, the school governance council triggered the reconstitution and that is their function and made the recommendation as to what the

turnaround model for that school should be.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Klarides.

REP. KLARIDES (114th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Once again, I understand the intention and the school governance council triggering that, also I understand. It makes sense to me. But if the end of the day the state commissioner of education can make that determination unilaterally, which is basically what this is saying.

Because of the governance council and the Board of Education cannot come to an agreement the commissioner steps in. It just seems inconsistent to me because it's my understanding from the proponents of this bill and the people who thought this bill was important and the reason why it was important, I understood that.

Schools that are not succeeding should have the option of finding a way to succeed and the parental involvement in that, I do believe is important. How we get to the success, to me, is not important. It's getting to the success.

But I guess if the parents and school governance council do not find that the school board, which is ultimately governed by the State Board of Education, is certainly an umbrella over that. I find it difficult to understand and I find it inconsistent for the commissioner of education to be making the ultimate decision. And I was just wondering how the proponent can reconcile that.

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Represented a Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, a lot of thought was given to the process. One of the things that we wanted to make sure of was that educators in the end had the most say over what a turnaround model would look like for a school system.

So although our parents will be trained, and although our parents will have every good intention in terms of asking for change, they may not know what the best model for the school is and they would put forward their recommendation. They would work with the board of education to then put forward their recommendation and hopefully, the two will collaborate

and make this decision on a local level.

But if they are in conflict, that is the school governance council and the board of education, then an independent arbiter who would be, in this case the commissioner of education, who should be qualified to make these kinds of decisions and have the experience to make these kinds of decisions, will hear all of the arguments, both from the parents, from the teachers, from the local board of education and do what is right and in the interests of the children of that school.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Klarides.

REP. KLARIDES (114th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I thank the gentleman for that answer. But I guess my concern is that the whole reasoning for this bill and the impetus for the group that pushed for it, and rightly so, was because the parents and the community and community leaders and whoever other members of the school governance council didn't believe that whomever the powers may be, the local board of education, the regional board of education, ultimately the State Board of Education, that they

were making the proper decisions for their kids in that school district because the schools were failing and they weren't doing anything about it.

And I guess my problem is, if that school governance council cannot make a decision, and meaning they are split, that means one side thinks it should be A, and one side thinks it should be B.

Now I understand if there is -- somebody has got to make the decision and I see the proponent, and that's his explanation and I do understand that. However, to me that ends up right back at the beginning, because that means there will be winners and losers in the minds of the school governance council, as it is from the beginning in a sense.

People believe that the school is not being run the way it should to the best for the -- and the looking at the best for their children.

So I guess through you, my question is, if it gets to the point where the school governance council is split, they cannot make a decision, the ultimate arbiter is the State Board of Education commissioner, what happens then?

The commissioner makes a decision. What happens if the people on that school governance council are

not happy? Because as we said, somebody will not be happy. It will either be group A or group B. Do they have any recourse? Is there any appeal available to them and what do they do next?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, the commissioner will make a decision and the decision will be implemented in the next school year.

Through you, sir.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Klarides.

REP. KLARIDES (114th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

But I understand that, but I -- what I'm wondering is -- the commissioner makes that decision, does the school governance council that is in place that couldn't decide when they were voting, do they have any recourse as to what that decision is? Or do they have to live with that decision?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, they have no recourse. The decision is final.

Through you, sir.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Klarides.

REP. KLARIDES (114th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And since the decision is final and they have no recourse, would they be able to constitute another school governance council at some point in the future and start the process from the beginning?

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, the school governance council stays in place.

Through you, sir.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Klarides.

REP. KLARIDES (114th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And if the school governance council stays in place, can they start this process from the beginning at some point, I guess, is what I'm wondering? Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Yes. Through you, sir.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Klarides.

REP. KLARIDES (114th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And how long is there -- is there a timeframe which they have to wait? Is there a waiting period? Can they do that immediately? How does that process work?

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, it's three years forward would be the same process that's laid out in the bill.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Klarides.

REP. KLARIDES (114th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank the gentleman for his answers in that regard.

I, as I mentioned before, I think my concern is as parents and community leaders and people who will be part of that school governance council may not be happy with the performance of their children, the performance of the school that would lead them to become interested in being part of the school governance council and being proactive in that regard.

My concern is if they cannot come to a conclusion, because we all have different thoughts and opinions as to if some -- if we believe something is not working properly, what the answer might be to fix that. And if they cannot agree and the state commissioner has to get involved, then it just seems to me that it just churns and churns again for the next three years. And the discontent that those parents or community leaders may have will continue to grow and would not be positive for that school district, but I thank him for those answers.

If I may, I have a few other questions before I

finish. Mr. Speaker, through you, in line 320, '21 and '22, a school governance council shall be considered a component of parental involvement for purposes of No Child Left Behind. I am not as intimately familiar as I'm sure the proponent is on what that might be. If he may briefly explain.

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, and those lines refer to Title I schools and each Title I school has to have parental involvement as part of their -- as part of what they have to do for their funding and that addresses using Title I funds for the school governance councils, which would complete that obligation.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Klarides.

REP. KLARIDES (114th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, through you, is there a limit on that funding?

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, the funding is based on students and they have to use a percentage of their funding for parental involvement.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Klarides.

REP. KLARIDES (114th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, through you, on line 333, we talk about the department not allowing more than 25 schools per school year to reconstitute. Was there a reason why that number was chosen?

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, it was just a number in terms of how much the State Department of Education could facilitate and could handle in any given year.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Klarides.

REP. KLARIDES (114th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And when this language was contemplated, was it also contemplated that somewhere further down the road because of budgetary issues we may have to lessen that number or increase that number at some point?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, the number was thought of as we addressed the number of failing schools that we have identified, which is 137. How many -- some of which would be making progress on without having to reconstitute. And this number was a workable number that the state department could assist in terms of turning around the school.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Klarides.

REP. KLARIDES (114th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

One final question. In line 350 -- lines 352,

353, it mentions, the Department of Education shall offer to the members of the new -- shall offer training, excuse me, to the new -- to the members of the new Board of Education. How does that work? What kind of training is it? You know, how long does it take? Are there specific subject matters? Is it objective? Subjective? How does that work?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, this section refers actually to the underlying bill as it relates to the commissioner reconstituting Board of Education members.

And so this says that the -- if that reconstitution takes place, that the State Board of Ed is obligated to train those new board members that they appoint to that board of ed.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Klarides.

REP. KLARIDES (114th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his answers. I know he has been up for a while. And I think I've articulated the concerns I have with this bill. I admire the initiative of the proponents of this particular amendment. As I mentioned the other day when we debated the same thing, I do find it important.

I think that the goal for all of us in this building is our children succeeding and for our children to succeed our schools have to succeed. And I think most of us don't care how we get there, don't care what that -- how -- where that road comes from as long as the road ends in the proper place.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Thank you, madam, for your remarks.

Will you remark further on House Amendment Schedule "A?"

The honorable gentleman from North Branford, Representative Candelora, you have the floor, sir.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

If I may, some questions to the proponent of the amendment.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I had supported a similar version to this amendment a couple -- well, maybe last night or I've lost track of time here. But I'm concerned what this amendment does and Representative Klarides sort of begin to touch on it. And that being in terms of how this parent trigger is now going to play. The school board governance is going to play into the commissioner's ability to reconstitute a board of education.

My question is, I guess, first why we are going the route of a blend of having the commissioner reconstitute board of educations at the same time of supporting a school governance council when schools are low performing?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

I think that, if I'm understanding your question,

there's really two issues here. One is the school itself and should it be reconstituted? And that is -- that processes is being addressed by the governance councils.

And the trigger, as you suggested, in one is a systemwide, district-wide, dysfunctional boards of education that we may have, in that they have so many failing schools within their district. And so the commissioner is being empowered through the State Board of Education to identify that and to try to offer a solution.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In lines 112 through 113, which discusses the State Board of Education's trigger to reconstitute a board of education, it seems that the language that gives rise to this trigger would be a low-achieving school or district.

So under those circumstances, as I read this, if one school in a district is not achieving the benchmarks that are set forth, that one school could

cause the ball rolling for the commissioner to seek reconstitution of the board of education. Am I correct?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, my understanding is it would have to have more than one failing school in order for it to be a failing district.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And if -- could the good gentleman point to language in this provision that would require it to be more than one?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I would refer the gentleman to lines 115 and 118 of that section and the

State Board of Education has set guidelines for failing districts.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And as I read this, I guess I'm a little bit unclear because the measurement of when a school district is low achieving, according to the No Child Left Behind, those measurements are on a per school basis. Am I correct?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, those measurements are by the school and also by the district.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So in lines 118 through 123, that speaks to if a

district fails to make acceptable progress toward meeting the benchmarks for two consecutive years, in lines 122, while designated as a low-achieving school district, then am I to read that all of the schools need to be failing or two of the schools need to be failing in order for the district to be labeled? If I could just get clarification.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker the number of schools are identified in the guidelines. I'm not able to offer you the number myself at this time.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that.

So if the gentleman could then explain what the parent -- or the school governance council, under what circumstances then would a school governance council be able to form under this amendment?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, school governance councils will form after a year has -- after a school has failed to net -- to meet annual yearly progress for three years.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And in this amendment, lines 15 through 20 as, you know, it refers to different references, but it seems as if lines 15 through 20 and lines 37 through 42, is that the language that would sort of be the triggering mechanism for a school governance council to be able to be formed?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, this is language that is already in statute and it is part of the No Child

Left Behind language that has been on the books for some time.

So the school governance councils are a part of our accountability language that begins later in this section.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm just trying to reconcile how this works, because in lines 169 through 172 it states that on or after July 1st, the local or regional board of education for a school that has been identified as in need of improvement, pursuant to A of this section, may establish a school governance council for each school so identified.

And so I, just to be clear, I want to make sure that that reference back of subsection A in line 171, that reference would be to the subsection that's identified in lines 15 through 20. Am I correct?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, yes.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And in these lines 169 through 172, the language is a little bit different. There seems to be a little bit different trigger than the one that we spoke to previously with the commissioner being able to step in and take over a board of education. This language speaks to that the school is in need of improvement.

Is that measurement the same where we're looking at standardized school tests and underperformance over a two-year period, and in the third year they could take over?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, on lines 169 to 172, in need of improvement is after one year and that addresses that. And that's a "may." And lines 173 to 178, in need of improvement is for three years and

that identifies that cohort of schools.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's helpful.

So that the way I'm seeing this now, if a school under these standards, a school is falling below a threshold, the school governance council can be formed and that would be at a local option, essentially.

If we had multiple schools that may be failing, then each of those schools that are failing would be required to form a governance council.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, it's not multiple schools. If one school was failing for three years, they would be mandated to have a school governance council. So each school that fails for three years would then be mandated.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

So if we have multiple schools failing in a district, and say, even for multiple years then, as I read this amendment, each of those schools, if they're failing for three years or more, each of those schools would be required to form a school governance council.

And then at some point because of those failures they may be hitting the other trigger that would then necessitate the commissioner to take a look and form their training program. And at that point, that's when they could reconstitute the board of education. Am I correct?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, the school governance councils can only reconstitute a school. And the commissioner of education would reconstitute boards of education.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And how would, as we discussed in a "may" situation, where a school might be failing in one year, how would a school governance council be formed?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, either with the permission of the principal or the board of education of that district.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And Mr. Speaker, if there are multiple schools failing in a district and each of those schools had been failing for three years or more, how would those schools be formed -- or excuse me how would a school governance council be formed?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, with passage of this legislation they would have to be formed by January of next year.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And I guess once they had to be formed under this legislation, who would actually be forming these? What would that mechanism be?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, the principal of the school and the administration would help facilitate the election of the parents and the teachers to the school governance councils.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And I guess one of my concerns here, and I'm trying to get the dynamic between what we're doing with a school governance board and how it interacts now with the commissioner being able to reconstitute a board of education.

One of the concerns I have, you know, that's been alluded to is I did support this amendment before. But there's a very dramatic change in that what we're doing here is we are creating sort of a bifurcated process, where a school governance board could be formed by its local board of education, as I read it in lines -- well, it was in the lines 169, I guess, all the way through 178.

It seems as if the -- those boards of education have an active role in this governance process in tandem with the parents, which makes sense. I'm concerned with the latter section that is reincorporating language that would allow the State Board of Education to step in and reconstitute the very board of education that might be working with the governance council to try and improve that particular

school.

And I'm wondering if the good gentleman could sort of try to viciate my concern how these two would interact sort of in harmony with each other, because it seems to me that they would very much be at odds.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I believe that the school governance councils would be -- they're in the schools and they would function in the school. Boards of education are district-wide. I don't see the processes colliding at all.

A particular school and the governance council may be working on the school and maybe showing some improvement, and at some point may come to the conclusion that the school should be reconstituted and that would be its own independent process. And I don't -- I do not believe that it would be affected by the board of education in terms of the commissioner identifying that board of education and determining that it needed to be reconstituted.

The powers of the governance council and the

process that is set would be set up in statute; would remain the same and I see them working quite well.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And if the commissioner -- if we got to the point where a Board of Education was constituted -- I spoke before the notwithstanding language were sort of local control disappears.

And as I read this, and to be clear if that did happen, these school governance boards would still be able to operate, I guess, independent from that local board of education that's reconstituted by the commissioner.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, we always, in terms of setting up the process, thought of it as a collaborative one whether it be a reconstituted board of education or the board of education that is

currently serving. So we would hope that the new board of education would collaboratively work with the existing governance council.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And I guess would they be required, though, to work with the school governance council under this amendment?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, under this amendment the school governance councils would be in place and have the same powers and be asked to perform the same functions whether or not the school board was reconstituted or not.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In lines 312 through 319, I'm wondering if I could just get a little bit of an explanation of what that provision is doing.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, this grants the school governance councils the authority to reconstitute the school.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

-- or recommend.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And I guess those definitional sections, when we see reconstitute referenced in concert with the school governance council, that has nothing to do with the reconstitution of a board of education. It's only referencing the reconstitution of schools.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, that is correct.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And in lines 320 through 322, I assume that language was in the previous version from a couple days ago. But what is that provision seeking to do?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora, I believe Representative Klarides asked Representative Bartlett that question earlier in the debate.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

I apologize, Mr. Speaker. I didn't catch that question then.

And then finally, in lines 333 through 334 we have a limitation on how many schools may be reconstituted pursuant to this subsection. In those situations that limitation is really referring to the schools that are underachieving that have governance

councils that are recommending reconstitution.

It does not serve as a limitation under Section H, which allows the commissioner to reconstitute the board of education.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, that is correct. They are two separate issues, sir.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Candelora.

REP. CANDELORA (86th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I appreciate the good gentleman's answers to my questions.

Mr. Speaker, I did support this, a version of this bill that came before us. I am concerned of the form that it's in right now, because as I spoke to the underlying amendment, or Senate Amendment "A," I really am concerned about allowing the State Board of Education, through the commissioner, to be able to reconstitute our board of educations and to not

withstand our charters, our ordinances, our election laws, those items that I think are very important to our New England state.

Home rule has been, I think, a very important component for Connecticut. And while I don't believe that that particular provision might be invoked very often, I think it really sets a dangerous precedent for us to be going. I think that most of us find local control to be a critical element to our schools.

I personally believe that parental control is a critical component to our schools, and that's why I had supported, I think, the purer form of this school governance council. This amendment, right now as it stands, while it has laudable provisions in it that's encouraging the communities to get together, empowering them to help their particular schools working in concert with the principals, the people that are there every day that understand the issues; I think that's a very powerful tool for our local authorities.

And I really believe that we've tainted this amendment by dragging the type of language into it that allows us to operate from top down. I've seen it time and again. I don't believe it's the way to go.

I think really from the bottom up is the way that our systems thrive.

I have some very strong reservations. I said -- is what the implications are in notwithstanding our election laws, our charters, our ordinances. With allowing the commissioner to make these appointments, in looking a little bit more into the statutes that we're not withstanding, I'm not sure that these board of education members that the commissioner chooses even has to be a resident in the town that the -- where the schools are affected.

I think that our constituents, our people, you know, students and parents in the communities would certainly take issue with legislation that may be authorizing our state commissioner to be appointing individuals that have no connection to the town whatsoever. And certainly, they may have the expertise in education on sort of a theoretical level, but they certainly wouldn't have the experiences that the local level would have.

I'm somewhat comforted that these school governance boards may be in place to sort of offset a board of education that may be reconstituted. So you might have a bunch of bored of ed members that are

bureaucrats that are serving on this board. They may have PhDs and they could analyze on sort of a theoretical sterile level on what's best for our schools, and hopefully we'll have that school governance board in place that could push to make sure that the students and the parents and the teachers voices are heard. But I'm not sure and I think potentially we are setting up a conflict through this amendment.

So I'm disappointed that we've had to put this type of an amendment forward. I understand the rationale and I appreciate it, but I have strong reservations how it is currently written.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Thank you, sir, for your remarks. Will you remark further House Amendment Schedule "A?"

The distinguished (inaudible) from Fairfield. Representative Hwang, you have the floor, sir.

REP. HWANG (134th):

Good morning Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Thank you, sir.

REP. HWANG (134th):

A few questions, through you, sir.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Please proceed.

REP. HWANG (134th):

Well, as a strong supporter and proponent of this bill, I do have a couple questions.

Through you, sir, as an appropriations education subcommittee member we deliberated over the cost of data collection. Do you have a fiscal note for such a data collection and analysis?

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I believe the fiscal note matches the underlying -- is in part of the underlying bill that is addressed for that section.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Hwang.

REP. HWANG (134th):

Through you, sir, as it relates to this bill, I thought it was added in.

Through you, sir.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, no. It just strikes the first section of this section and substitutes -- and gives this substitute language.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Hwang.

REP. HWANG (134th):

Thank you.

The second question: beginning in line 194 as it relates to the composition of the school governance council for elementary and middle schools, where two members should be community leaders within the school district; who fits under the definition of community leader? Is it political influence? Economic influence? How do you define it?

Through you, sir.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, we don't define it.

Oftentimes schools have community leaders that are working with the schools currently such as

religious pastors, religious leaders in the community, nonprofit heads, a variety of businesses, for example. So they can be nominated by the school governance council and determined by them.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Hwang.

REP. HWANG (134th):

Through you, sir.

If hypothetically, the School District of Union, Connecticut, with about 750 residence total, the smallest school district in the state, would the statue of the flexibility of going outside the school district if the population did not afford the chance to find the appropriate community leaders?

Through you, sir.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, yes.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Hwang.

REP. HWANG (134th):

Through you, I don't see it in the statute

anywhere.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, there's no definition for the community leader in statute.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Hwang.

REP. HWANG (134th):

Through you, sir. In statute, it says, within the school district. So you're looking to go outside of the school district. And my concern is that is not cited here.

Thank you, sir.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I must have not heard that part. You're correct, that it does say the community leader needs to be within the school district.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Hwang.

REP. HWANG (134th):

Through you, sir, any resolutions, any considerations for that in the statute?

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, the definition is in statute. There's no resolutions or other that I'm aware of.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Hwang.

REP. HWANG (134th):

Through you, sir.

What do we do? What do we do?

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Hwang, it's --

REP. HWANG (134th):

Well, let me clarify, sir.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Yes, please. Could you add a little more specificity?

REP. HWANG (134th):

So if that was to occur, are there any statutes

guiding that?

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

If what was -- through you, Mr. Speaker, if what was to occur?

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Hwang.

REP. HWANG (134th):

If there were not an appropriate community, defined community leader in such a small population within the school district, what would you do if you had to go outside of the school district?

Through you, sir.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, there are plenty of community people that may not have children in the school that would be eligible in every community in the state of Connecticut.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Hwang.

REP. HWANG (134th):

Through you, so what I'm hearing is regardless of composition, regardless of definition, you're looking to take someone within that school district, however small the population.

Through you, sir.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Yes. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Hwang.

REP. HWANG (134th):

Through you, sir, would that somehow defeat the -- I'll phrase that again. Would that somehow defeat the idea if there were not appropriate people drawing from such a small population that it may not serve in the best interests of the governance of that group?

Through you, sir.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Bartlett.

REP. BARTLETT (2nd):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, it's not for me to

decide the appropriateness of community leaders. That would be left to the school governance council to nominate and elect those leaders.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Hwang.

REP. HWANG (134th):

Through you, sir.

I thank the gentleman for his questions -- for his answers. And it is a long night.

Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Thank you, sir, for your remarks.

Will you remark further on House Amendment Schedule "A?" Will you remark further on House Amendment Schedule "A?" If not, will staff and guests please come to the well of the House. Will members please take their seats. The machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll call. Members to the chamber. The House is voting House Amendment Schedule "A" by roll call. Members to the chamber.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Have all the members voted? Have all the members voted? Will the members please check the board to determine if your vote has properly cast. If all the members have voted, the machine will be locked. Will the Clerk please take and announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

House Amendment Schedule "A" for House Bill Number 43 -- Senate Bill 438.

Total Number voting	145
Necessary for adoption	73
Those voting Yea	145
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	6

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

House "A" passes.

Will you remark further on the bill as amended? Will you remark further on the bill as amended?

Representative Coutu, you have the floor, sir.

REP. COUTU (47th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What a wonderful morning this is.

Mr. Speaker, I've spent much of my life going to schools teaching, educating and advising students. I've also spent a lot of time visiting schools across

the state and talking to them and motivating students to take action on things they believe in. Get a solid through education and make a difference in the world we live in.

And tonight I feel like we are making a difference. The last amendment was very important and I'm glad to see it passed unanimously, but when I start thinking about my home district, we, like everyone, have challenges. We have 36 languages within the city of Norwich. We have public charter, nonpublic schools and a lot of diversity. And we all know the fiscal situation we're in with budgets being cut, transportation funding being cut and in general, municipal educational budgets being flat.

And when I hear us talking about Race to the Top and we're recognizing that we are basically number 25 out of 40, something is wrong. Something is really wrong. And I know the objective tonight is trying to figure out how we can move up and qualify for more educational funding from this federal grant. And in the bill, Section 6 in the underlying amendment talks about priority school districts.

And as I started to review the Race to the Top application -- some of the states who qualified for

the finals, I recognized there were some common trends. Many of the finalists were focused on priority and failing school districts. They use new innovative creative ideas to empower students to excel in education and life.

One of these ideas that is thinking out of the box is student scholarships for priority school districts. These scholarships help students from low and middle-income families continue their education. More importantly, this funding is making sure nonpublic schools are not being closed and preventing public schools' class sizes from expanding.

The more I looked into this, in the Race to the Top, the more I recognize that of the seven states who utilize scholarships, four of them qualified as finalists in this Race to the Top program. This program; these scholarships empowered students in priority school districts, students in low to middle-income families; they truly are helping them accomplish their educational goals. And that's what the Race to the Top is all about.

Mr. Speaker, the Clerk has in his possession LCO Number 5151. I would ask that it be called and I be given leave of the Chamber to summarize.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Will the Clerk please call LCO 5151 to be designated House Amendment Schedule "B."

THE CLERK:

LCO Number 5151, House "B," offered by Representative Coutu, et al.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

The member has asked leave of the Chamber to summarize his amendment. Is there objection? Is there objection? If not, sir, please summarize your amendment.

REP. COUTU (47th):

Mr. Speaker, this amendment allows the establishment of a pilot scholarship program for students from low to middle income families who attend nonpublic schools. This pilot program will be capped at $500,000 and funded by business credits.

I move adoption.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

The question before the chamber is adoption of House "B."

Will you remark, sir?

REP. COUTU (47th):

Yes, Mr. Speaker.

This amendment compliments the bill as amended. This amendment was driven by the current educational challenges that we face across Connecticut. Across the state it was recently announced that over 2,000 teachers potentially will lose their jobs. Public schools across the state are closing.

More specifically, within my district, within the city of Norwich, we're laying off 80 teachers. Two public schools are closing and they are actually shifting a couple thousand students from different schools to try to restructure our whole school system. What makes this even more challenging is the fact that we're also losing one of our largest nonpublic schools.

Recently we -- we're not the only city in the state, or town, to lose a nonpublic school. Over the past two months, it has been an educational crisis within the nonpublic school system where six large nonpublic schools have closed or are on the brink of closing. And what I believe would greatly help them was us implementing a student scholarship program for lower to middle-income students. And this program is currently in place in seven states, including Rhode Island and Pennsylvania.

Milwaukee has had a similar program since the mid seventies. And most recently the City of Baltimore, which had 12 nonpublic schools recently fail, has passed a similar bill in the Senate and currently has 75 members of their House of Representatives on board. Other cities and states across the country are looking into these creative, innovative ideas to help them win the Race to the Top grant and also to help their whole school system.

This nonpublic school system is very important for the State of Connecticut. 67,000 students go to this nonpublic school system and it saves the State of Connecticut, taxpayers, municipalities over $700 million.

Over the past 18 months, there's actually been ten large public -- nonpublic school systems who have announced they probably will close. And over the past ten years, their total population of students attending these schools has dipped from a hundred thousand students to 67,000 students.

Some of the cities that have been affected by these school closures include: Hartford, Derby, Milford, Norwich, Manchester, Fairfield, Griswold, New Haven, Torrington, Waterbury, New Britain, and many

more. So obviously, this is affecting municipalities, towns and cities across the state.

Two examples that I briefly want to talk about are South Catholic. There's many stories that talk about when this school closed and how, for the most part, the entire neighborhood and many other neighborhoods around it really just went downhill.

They lost, in many ways, the center of that community, a school that over the course of 50, 60, 70 years educated thousands of students. And not only did that community lose all those students who went to that school -- and all the students in the future who will never have the opportunity to attend that school.

In Norwich I recently had the experience of visiting St. Joseph's Elementary School. And as you can imagine, we're facing economic challenges right now. Many parents are actually -- they've gotten their jobs -- they've been cut back a few hours. Some have lost their jobs and the enrollment in the school has dipped from 150 down to about 110.

And there's many factors why this has happened, but the bottom line is this school recently announced that they'll be closing. And I'm not sure if any of you experienced a school closure or have been involved

with this, but it's a horrible feeling for that student, for that family and for that community. This school has been around for 108 years, and the bottom line is it's going to hurt the city of Norwich and it is going to hurt our educational system.

There's also dozens of other independent schools who have closed the last few years. But the bottom line is, Mr. Speaker, these schools save Connecticut taxpayers $700 million a year. And the support that I've been able to gather of hopeful leaders, that we're going to do something about this impending crisis ranges from mayors across the state: Torrington, Danbury, Ansonia, New Haven, Bridgeport, Middletown, Stratford, Hartford, New Britain and Waterbury.

We have almost 50 cosponsors within the House and Senate and many more have told me their children go to these schools and they've been involved with these schools and they've graduated from these schools. We also have organizations such as the NAACP, the Metro Hartford alliance, the Connecticut Association of Independent Schools, the Connecticut Christian Schools Association, the Connecticut Federation of Catholic School Parents, Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations

of America, the Urban League of Greater Hartford and Western New England Jewish Forum.

Most importantly, Mr. Speaker, we have 67,000 students, who tonight, I feel I'm going to represent them and their interests. And at the end of the day I think we have to recognize that this system, if it continues to lose 3 to 5 percent a year, these students are going into a public school system and it puts more and more pressure on a system that has less and less resources.

So I hope that we can look at this as part of the solution, part of the big picture and together I think this will improve the underlying amendment.

And I would ask for a roll call, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

The question before the Chamber is a roll call vote. All those in favor of a roll call vote please signify by saying, aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

The requisite 20 percent has been met. When the vote is to be taken, it will be taken by roll.

Will you remark further on House Amendment

Schedule "B."

The distinguished gentleman from Shelton, Representative Perillo, you have the floor, sir.

REP. PERILLO (113th):

Mr. Speaker, good morning and thank you very much.

If I could, through you, a few questions to the proponent of the amendment.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. PERILLO (113th):

Representative, through you, Mr. Speaker, I understand that the program is capped at $500,000 in terms of the credit, but Mr. Speaker, through you to the gentleman, does that mean that there's a cap on what corporations can actually put into this in terms of scholarships? Or could a corporation actually give more even if it would trigger a credit that's higher than 500,000? Through you, sir.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Coutu.

REP. COUTU (47th):

The amendment is focused on a pilot program that is in multiple cities, distressed municipalities. And

the -- it's capped at $500,000.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Perillo.

REP. PERILLO (113th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm specifically referring, for the gentleman's benefit, to lines 12 and 13. I understand that there is a cap of $500,000 for the credit itself.

My question is, could a corporation choose to give more towards the scholarships, but the State simply capping the credit at $500,000? So conceivably, could this program actually enable corporations to give more than what we have stated here in the amendment? It appears to me that they could. I just wanted to clarify your intent.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Coutu.

REP. COUTU (47th):

The program -- each business can donate up to 50 -- well, they can donate more than $50,000, but they'll actually only be able to receive 70 percent of a credit for that donation. So the maximum amount

they could get -- would be on a 50,000-dollar donation, $35,000 for a credit but they could donate more.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Perillo.

REP. PERILLO (113th):

Thank you very much.

A couple more questions if I could. Specifically, in line 21 of your amendment, it references nonpublic school approved by the State Board of Education. And I'm just wondering exactly what types of schools those would include. You know, Montessori Schools, private schools, parochials come to mind. And I'm just wondering, what is the full gamut of those schools that could possibly fall within the category of nonpublic school approved by the State Board of Education?

Through you, sir.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Coutu.

REP. COUTU (47th):

In general, there's somewhere between 300 and 400 schools. These are accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. You're looking

at parochial, nonpublic schools, different religious schools and that's pretty much it.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Perillo.

REP. PERILLO (113th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Another question, if I could. In lines 30 through 35, you've listed out a number of different school districts, most of which appear to be priority school districts. I noticed one which is not and that is the district in Wallingford. And I'm wondering why that is included.

It would seem that perhaps that's to show that a program would work and in a nonpriority school district, but if you could explain that a little bit further that would be helpful.

Through you, sir.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Coutu.

REP. COUTU (47th):

We thought it would be very important to focus on priority districts. We have them across the state. There was other requirements we. Wanted to make sure we had local support, including most of these

municipalities have support from the mayors. They had to be distressed municipalities and we had to make sure there was obviously some nonpublic schools within that municipality.

The town of Wallingford, we want one school system that is outside of a nonpriority school district. Once again, this is a pilot program, so we want to see how this works, not only within the priority school districts, but also a town outside of a priority district.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Perillo.

REP. PERILLO (113th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Another question, if I could. You know, this is sort of an innovative topic. You know, I think it's been talked about here in the State, but I've, in my short time here, I've not had the opportunity to vote on something like this.

Is this done in other states? Have other states seen success in programs like this? Have they found that corporations participate? What has been seen, through you, Mr. Speaker, in other states or if there are other states?

Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Perillo, I believe he did mention that in his opening remarks on bringing out his amendment, however I'll let Representative Coutu respond.

Please proceed, sir.

REP. COUTU (47th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, currently there are seven states: Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island. And the response has been strong from the business community. They have actually empowered over 75,000 students to stay within the current system that they're in, which is the nonpublic school system. This has saved billions of dollars in these states when you add up year after year in educational costs to the taxpayers.

It also, as I pointed out, four of these seven were finalists in the Race to the Top initiative, which is just another example of how important this is in the overall process of them grading states and understanding that they want innovative, creative, new ideas.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Perillo.

REP. PERILLO (113th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I apologize for my repetition of a statement already made by the proponent of the amendment.

Another question I have, though, as it pertains to those states that have participated, how have they actually measured the impact? Has there been any measurement in terms of student achievement? And if so, how would we leverage those experiences in other states here?

The goal obviously is to be able to ensure that we're improving student achievement. So my question is, how do we replicate that? How do we actually determine whether or not this program, if implemented, is actually working in the state of Connecticut.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Coutu.

REP. COUTU (47th):

Through you, I mean -- I thank the gentleman for his question. The high schools in the nonpublic

school system have a 99 percent graduation rate. That's something that's quite impressive.

They have performed above average state and national ratings on their SATs. The elementary schools who take the Iowa test perform one to three grade levels above their peers.

So in general, there they have excelled in these schools. That's why they have the accredited national accreditation and there's no sign that these schools are performing any less than any other school system.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Perillo.

REP. PERILLO (113th):

Thank you very much.

That answers a number of my questions. It seems to me here with the amendment that's before us, this offers the kind of choice and the opportunity for low and middle-income students that the other amendments and bills that we've talked about are attempting to offer.

This is, in my opinion, a tremendous opportunity for us here in the State of Connecticut to help students and families and communities really thrive and really succeed and really achieve. And I admire

the gentleman's work on this. He's clearly done, you know, quite a bit of homework and he's clearly built quite a coalition that supports this amendment.

And, you know, I can relate to, you know, to my own community. I live just down the street from a Catholic school and of course, I frequently am there and I speak with the folks there and I speak with the principal.

And in a lot of these parochial schools, these private schools that are really trying to serve a niche, enrollment census by one, two, three students makes or breaks that school. And to me this is an opportunity, not only to help the students it's trying to help, but also to help those schools continue to develop the kind of teaching, the kind of training, the kind of character building, the kind of excellence that they try to achieve.

And if we can help students become enrolled in these schools and if we can give opportunity where opportunity did not exist before, that to me is something that's tremendous and really can't be traded in. And if I look at the amendments we've seen before and I look at the votes we've seen on the amendments and they've had broad support, this is one of those

amendments that deserves our broad support as well.

It is consistent with the mission. It's consistent with what we tried to do here. And again, I thank the gentleman for his time in answering my questions and I thank him for his effort in this.

And Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your time in indulging. Thank you, sir.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Thank you, sir for your remarks.

Will you remark further House Amendment Schedule "B?"

The distinguished Chair of the Education Committee, Representative Fleischmann, you have the floor, sir.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, a few questions to the proponent of the amendment.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Representative, you have mentioned on a number of occasions as you've been discussing this amendment, priority school districts. Not all of the districts

listed in this amendment are priority school districts. Could you explain why that might be?

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Coutu.

REP. COUTU (47th):

Well, we have multiple priority school districts: Danbury, New Haven, Bridgeport, Hartford, New Britain, Bristol, Norwich, New London and Waterbury.

We do have Wallingford because this is a pilot program. We wanted to make sure that it was not just priority school districts, that there was one other school -- one other district, Wallingford, that was a town that's not a priority school district, to see how this worked.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

And through you, Mr. Speaker, there are priority school districts not included in your amendment: Ansonia, East Hartford, Meriden, Norwalk, Stamford, Windham; on what basis did you exclude these areas from your amendment?

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Coutu.

REP. COUTU (47th):

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Part of it was actually that we had strong local support for most of these priority school districts. Some of the mayors from some of the cities that you talked about were not -- the mayors were not on board.

We didn't contact every mayor in the state, but we contacted quite a few and these were the cities that came back to us with the strongest support and that's why we have them listed here.

And once again, this is a pilot program. We want to make sure that it works with the population that we have. And if it works and excels, then we can talk about adding other priority school districts.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

And through you, Mr. Speaker, the priority school district designation relates to public schools. It has to do with the resources that we give taxpayer dollars to public schools.

Could the proponent explain to me what is the nexus between the priority school district designation for public schools and this amendment, which seems to

be solely about private and parochial schools?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Coutu.

REP. COUTU (47th):

The nexus is the priority school districts for the public schools are within these cities. So if they're within these cities and we know that these schools, the nonpublic schools are part of that system, including Norwich, when we have a school -- we have multiple schools that have up to 400, 500 students in them in the nonpublic school system.

And when I look at the holistic approach here and realize that these schools, when they close, these students end up in the public school system and there's also a large increase in the cost to their local municipality if you add a hundred to 500 students.

And knowing in my city that two of the four large nonpublic schools have -- one of which is closing this year. Another one which was about to close a few years ago and two other ones, which if the economy remains down, their parents of these fine students will potentially have to remove these students from

the schools.

And at the end of the day there is an indirect connection when that student -- and that school closes and they're put in the public school system in a priority district.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I heard you talk about layoffs of school teachers and challenges faced by these municipalities and school systems. Am I correct in understanding that none of the dollars directed by this amendment would go to public schools in these priority school districts?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Coutu.

REP. COUTU (47th):

The pilot program, once again for the ranking member of the Education Committee, is for nonpublic school schools. And that the $500,000 will be potentially allocated to students from low to middle income families within these municipalities.

Once again, the program itself is actually capped

at $2500 per student. Many times these students, if their parents are struggling financially for whatever reason, they would unfortunately have to pull their student out of their school. So --

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

So, through you, Mr. Speaker, as a simple yes or no, do any dollars allocated in this amendment go to help the public schools in these priority school districts?

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Coutu.

REP. COUTU (47th):

Well, what I would say is, Mr. Speaker, we'd be shortsighted to not view, as these schools close, that more students are put into the public school system, that there isn't a cost associated with that.

So the answer is all funding for this pilot program will go to students who attend nonpublic school systems.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

So as I understand it, no dollars will be going to public schools. Thank you.

And then last, but not least, so this pilot program, this would cost $500,000. Is that correct?

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Coutu.

REP. COUTU (47th):

The cost would be through credits for businesses that want to donate scholarship money to low to middle income families and indirectly, what I potentially propose with the way the bill is drafted is we have -- Currently we send out a lot of mail and we all know this funding for this program, legislative mailings, if you took 25 percent of that cost we could help a system that educates 67,000 students.

And I can't think of a better way to educate the future of this great state by taking a 25-cent cut in our legislative mailing.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And I thank the good member for his answer. I have noticed big boxes of mail out there as I've tried

to walk through some of the halls of the capital. And I actually agree that too much money is spent on that.

But through you, Mr. Speaker --

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Coutu --

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

If I could finish.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Please proceed.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

What we're talking about here is diverting $500,000 of public taxpayer funds to private and parochial schools. Now do I have any problem with cutting dollars from mailings? Absolutely not. I actually think that's quite a good idea and I'd be happy to work with the good Representative on that.

But to take $500,000 of public funds and send them off to private and parochial schools through the indirect means of the tax credits that the good member has mentioned, to me, is outrageous in the midst of this budget crisis.

We have members sitting here representing priority school districts where public-school teachers are getting laid off, administrators are getting laid

off. Children are having trouble getting the supplies they need. To take public resources out of the public treasury and send them off to private schools at this moment of fiscal crisis for our local school systems and our state, to me, is -- it's just hard for me to believe that's been proposed. I strongly oppose this amendment and I hope my colleagues will join me in opposing it.

I'll end with this analogy. You know, centuries ago they used to believe that when a patient was gravely ill, if only they did some bloodletting the patient would get better. And that theory, it was kind of discredited and let go of a couple of centuries ago.

Funding is the lifeblood of our public schools and this is talking about taking funds away from the public treasury and redirecting those dollars to private and parochial schools. I don't believe in bloodletting and I don't believe in this amendment. And I hope members will join in opposing it.

Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Thank you, sir, for your remarks. Will you remark further on House Amendment Schedule "B?"

Our distinguished Deputy Minority Leader from Terryville, Representative Hamzy, you have the floor, sir.

REP. HAMZY (78th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this amendment. And if you think of this amendment as sort of the final piece of this puzzle that's being presented to us tonight. I think that is probably the best context that you could give it.

Because, what are we talking about? We're talking about, number one, improving schools in school districts that are not meeting the goals as set out for them. Obviously, that process takes time. And in that time, my fear is that there are students who are in those schools who are not being served in the best manner possible.

And so if you look at this tax credit as an opportunity for those students that are -- that have the misfortune, if you will, of being stuck in those schools that are not meeting our objectives, this is a perfect form of immediate relief for those students to get a good education while we are achieving the goal of improving the schools and school districts that

this bill as amended presents.

So I hope people in this Chamber will think of this amendment in that context and appreciate the fact that this complements the underlying bill as amended. It does not compete with the goals as established by the underlying bill as amended. It complements it.

And it allows those students to have a chance to further their education and succeed in our society, which I believe is a shared goal of everyone in this Chamber.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Thank you, sir, for your remarks.

Will you remark further on House Amendment Schedule "B?"

The distinguished gentleman from Waterbury, Representative Noujaim, you have the floor, sir.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and good morning, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to agree and disagree. I strongly agree with the amendment and I strongly support it. And I strongly disagree with the comment that was made by our colleague, Representative

Fleischmann, about the fact that it's outrageous to contribute any funds to parochial schools. And allow me to tell you why I disagree, Mr. Speaker.

Numerous years ago, when I was not even elected, I was just a community member of the community of the great city of Waterbury -- and still am, think God -- the mayor at the time wanted to cut transportation to parochial schools.

So I marched down to his office and asked to meet with him and I was objecting to the cut. And the mayor said to me, well, we really don't have any money in the program or in the budget of the City of Waterbury to contribute to transportation and to special education and parochial schools.

And I said to the mayor, that's fine, Mayor. Just go ahead and close them all. At the time, there were about 2,600 students attending parochial schools in Waterbury. I said, close them all. Close all of the schools. What are we going to do with all those students?

At the rate of $12,000 per year to educate a student, how many teachers, the infrastructure, putting public schools together, building new buildings -- how much is it going to cost the State of

Connecticut to do this?

The parochial schools fulfill a mission and take a great deal of responsibility and liability from the public school system and do not drain the State of Connecticut and the resources of the State of Connecticut.

I'm totally, totally displeased with the comment that was made, Mr. Speaker, because the parochial schools play a role in our state. And therefore, I would like to support this amendment and I urge my colleagues to reconsider and support the amendment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Thank you, sir, for your remarks.

Will you remark further on House Amendment Schedule "B?"

The distinguished gentleman from Southbury, Representative O'Neill, you have the floor, sir.

REP. O'NEILL (69th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I will try to be brief.

I think that this amendment, which talks about something less than half a million -- or talks about a half a million dollars that would be used to encourage

donations of private funds to private schools to provide scholarships for students does not deprive any public school student of one penny of support.

The money that we're talking about being used to offset the loss of -- to the treasury for the tax credit would be money that would come from the mailings that we as Legislators send out. And I can't think of any way that that money would be made available to public school students if this amendment does not pass.

That money will be used to send out fliers that, from most people's perspective, are mostly concerned about promoting the political interests and the careers of those of us in this Chamber and the other Chamber. The money that we're talking about may make the difference between keeping schools open, schools that provide a high-quality education to students.

And the concern really should not be about whether we're helping public schools or helping private schools. What we should be concerned about, what all this bill and all the legislation we're talking about here tonight should be concerned about is helping the students, not the school systems, not the administrators, whether they're private or public,

but of making sure that the students receive the highest possible education, quality education that they can get.

And even the underlying bill before us talks about making changes that will not really start to have an effect until the year 2014. For many of these students that will be too late.

The money that we're talking about in this amendment will be made available almost immediately and it can make the difference as to whether these students will get a good education and have a chance at a better life or not.

It's a tiny amount of money considering that we're spending $2 billion on the public school system. We're talking about a half a million dollars that might be aiding students in the private school system. And what it does is leverage a total of $700,000 if it's all used to help those students.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Thank you, sir, for your brief remarks.

Will you care to comment further on House Amendment Schedule "B?"

The distinguished gentleman from Litchfield,

Representative Miner, you have the floor, sir.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

If I might, just a few questions to the chairman of the Education Committee.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

The gentleman is not in the chamber, sir. Would you care to redirect your question to anyone else in the Chamber?

REP. MINER (66th):

I would actually try Representative Rowe, but I'm afraid he probably wouldn't know the answer to the question. Why don't I just --

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Perhaps you can inquire to the gentleman who has submitted the amendment, sir.

REP. MINER (66th):

Well, actually my question, Mr. Speaker -- and maybe the gentleman that offered the amendment does know the answer to the question -- I've reviewed the information that I believe he quoted from. And my question is, if there was federal money that came to the State of Connecticut as a result of a better application, which may, in fact, be true if this was

adopted, would any of those federal dollars flow through to private schools?

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Coutu.

REP. COUTU (47th):

I believe no, but I'm not a hundred percent sure, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I don't know whether this helps the application or not. My guess is that we didn't fare very well if the statistics I hear are true, actually are true. I would like us to be as high up on that list as we can get. And if this data from the US Department of Education is accurate, and I don't have any reason to believe that it's not, it would appear that there are states that included this type of language in their application and they fared better than we did.

So I guess I would ask the members of the Chamber, if the dollars were going to be spent on publication and the amendment redirects the dollars to enhance our application, and the dollars that we might

get from the federal government are going to improve our public education, who loses? I just don't see a loser in this amendment.

And so I would ask the Chamber to support the amendment, not because it's ours, but because it might actually benefit all of our children.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Thank you, sir, for your remarks. Will you remark further on the House Amendment Schedule "B?"

The distinguished gentleman from Bridgeport, Representative Caruso, you have the floor, sir.

REP. CARUSO (126th):

Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Good morning, sir.

REP. CARUSO (126th):

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this amendment and I would ask everyone in this Chamber to roundly defeat this amendment.

This is a cruel hoax that repeatedly is played on children in poverty. This bill amendment would not pick up the entire cost of a child to go to a parochial school. It would pay for a portion of it

and people who live in poverty have enough time and difficulty in supporting themselves, whether it be putting food on the table or pharmaceutical needs or other responsibilities. So to put the burden of additional cost for a child to go to a parochial private school is unfair.

In addition, it does not allow every child within the public school system to have an opportunity to get a so-called quality education. So that's why I refer to it as a hoax.

And as members of the General Assembly, we have to stop dancing around the issue. If our public school systems are not working, in particular, within our urban and rural communities, we have to be about changing that. We have to be about holding people accountable within those systems and making that -- those schools work.

The proposal this evening by the Black and Hispanic Caucus that passed unanimously in this Chamber has long been overdue, and I believe will set us on a course of holding those responsible for providing a quality education for our children.

But this proposal this evening, again, is nothing more than a voucher system. We call it a scholarship,

but it's a voucher system and to deprive the public school system of much-needed funds and resources is a disservice to all of those children.

Why do parochial non -- or private school systems have higher education or quality, I should say? It's because of smaller class sizes. Everything that a public school wants to thrive for, but can't because of a lack of resources or funding. And this would begin the process of pulling the rug completely out from the public school system.

If we want to be serious about doing what's right then let's provide the necessary resources. The policies in this State over the years have effectively warehoused the poor within our cities. We have created the socioeconomic problems that exist. And now we want to pretend that we can correct those problems by rerouting the responsibilities and resources to the parochial or private institutions. We have to be about correcting the problem, because education is only one problem within an urban community and if not properly addressed it usually leads to many other problems.

So if we want to be fair to every child in this state, if we want to be responsible adults and give

every child the quality education that they deserve, then we have to be establishing policies in this State that treat the children in our cities and our rural communities as we do in our suburban communities.

And tonight, by passing this amendment, again would be nothing more than a cruel hoax placed upon those children in those communities. And for that reason, I would ask this body to soundly defeat this amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Thank you, sir, for your remarks.

Will you remark further on House Amendment Schedule "B?"

The gentlelady from Naugatuck, Representative Rebimbas, you have the floor, madam.

REP. REBIMBAS (70th):

Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Good morning, madam.

REP. REBIMBAS (70th):

Mr. Speaker, I rise and support of this amendment and I would like to commend proponent of the amendment for the hard work and thought process that was dedicated to putting this together.

I stand here before everyone and I say that this is not a hoax, but it's once again a creative thought process in trying to deal with the situation that we're currently in, in trying to improve the educational system for all of our children of the state of Connecticut.

We could not -- and I repeat that, we could not afford to pay for public education for every child in the state of Connecticut. Thank goodness we do have people that have the means to send their children to private schools. It's a considerable savings on our public school system.

And I can assure you that there are people who unfortunately, cannot afford private schools, but what those parents may be able to do is save each and every penny, sacrifice themselves in working in more than one job, give up vacations; because they know the importance of a private education that they see fit for their children.

So I offer to you that it is possible for children of less means to be able to attend school and this is one more opportunity that we're providing these children that otherwise would not have that opportunity.

We are not taking money away from our public school systems. We're giving our children an additional education. We're allowing another option and another ability for these parents to provide this type of education for their children.

I stand before you having gone to a private college, but having grown up through a public school system, but that's only because my parents sacrificed a lot and it was with the ability of different grants and scholarships and opportunities.

We are providing one more opportunity before us and if we're truly here to provide educational opportunity, no matter how little it may or may not be, but the difference that it's going to make a child's life is great, then I stand before this Chamber and I ask for support on this amendment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Thank you, madam, for your remarks.

Will you remark further on House "B?" Will you remark further on House "B?" If not, will staff and guests please come to the well of the House. Will the members please take their seats. The machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll call. Members to the chamber. The voting is -- the House is voting House Amendment Schedule "B" by roll call. Members to the Chamber.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Have all the members voted? Have all the members voted? Will the members please check the board to determine whether your vote has been properly cast. If all the members voted, the machine will be locked. Will the Clerk please take and announce the tally.

Oh, I'm sorry, Mr. Clerk. Would you please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

On House "B" for Senate Bill 438.

Total Number voting	142
Necessary for adoption	72
Those voting Yea	44
Those voting Nay	98
Those absent and not voting	9

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

House "B" fails.

Will the Clerk -- excuse me. Will you remark further on the bill as amended? Will you remark

further on the bill as amended? If not, will staff and guests please come to the well --

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, a question through you to the proponent of the bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann, please prepare yourself.

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll make it quick. Through you, Mr. Speaker, to Representative Fleischmann, is the passage of this bill -- would it require any money in the budget that we hope to take up later on tomorrow -- or today, I guess?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I don't know.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Well, through you, Mr. Speaker, maybe I misstated the question. Does this bill have a fiscal note to it that makes it need to be funded?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, the fiscal note on the bill that is now before us involves dollars that are in out years. So they're not in any way involved with a budget that we're working to deal with for FY '11. And we're hopeful that out years will be dealt with by winning the Race to the Top.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Will you remark further on the bill as amended?

Will you remark further on the bill as amended?

The distinguished gentleman from Norwalk, Representative Morris, you have the floor, sir.

REP. MORRIS (140th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

A question of the proponent of the underlying bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. MORRIS (140th):

The underlying bill in terms of secondary school reform requires local boards of education to provide remedial services for students unable to meet the requirements.

It's a good idea, but my concern is some of those things are online credit. Who would pay for those online credits that -- the courses that students would take?

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, it's our hope that those courses would be funded through the Race to the Top federal funds.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Morris.

REP. MORRIS (140th):

So it is our hope. It isn't certain that that would happen.

In terms of equity, do all students have an equal opportunity to take advantage of those courses?

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I believe the answer is yes. We've worked to build availability to and access to online coursework throughout the state of Connecticut. And I believe we have achieved that goal at this point.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Morris.

REP. MORRIS (140th):

So does that mean to imply that if a student chose to take that, whether it was through state money or Race to the Top money, that it would be provided free to any student who chose to use that method?

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I believe the answer to that question is yes.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Morris.

REP. MORRIS (140th):

Another alternative for remedial was summer school. Who pays for summer school?

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker if the bill as amended before us passes, I believe that would be covered through federal and state funds.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Morris.

REP. MORRIS (140th):

And if not, then we can assume that either the municipality or the State would have to take that, correct?

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I believe it would become a state responsibility.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Morris.

REP. MORRIS (140th):

And we should also be able to expect that after the Race to the Top monies are gone, that the State or municipality would have to continue funding said remedial support. Am I correct?

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, the State Department of Education has set up a system whereby it plans to continue the sorts of funding that would be initiated through Race to the Top.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Morris.

REP. MORRIS (140th):

Am I to -- I'm not certain if I understood your answer correctly. Are you saying that the Connecticut

State Department of Education already has a plan whereby they would continue to fund those supports?

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, yes. They have the outlines of the plan. Obviously, it would be in the hands of future general assemblies to go ahead and fill out and flesh out that plan and fund it.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Morris.

REP. MORRIS (140th):

Okay. Thank you.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, that's really the end of my question, my purpose for asking these questions. And I delayed my questions. I did not bring them out when the first amendment was given, although I had these concerns.

In terms of secondary school reform, while I certainly support the rigor that is being required in the bill, I certainly support the goals that are in Race to the Top, however the piece that I'm addressing in terms of support; if the real support is not given

there, and particularly if Race to the Top does not happen -- if it does not happen and we require these additional courses, if students, regardless of the fact that we were told earlier that there's all this research, that if you raise these expectations, kids are going to -- they're going to succeed, I'm of the mindset that, no. Without support, you can raise the bar, but if you do not give kids support to make it, they're going to fail. Our dropout rate is going to go up.

So the concern is, or what I just want to give of a mindset to just be on the record with, is that if we do not get Race to the Top dollars, that this body will have to seriously consider coming back and getting rid of these graduation requirements. Because if we cannot provide the remedial support for kids --

Right now, the way this bill is written, it says, at grade seven, beginning of 2012. Now, fortunately we're getting good budget numbers right now, but if that does not happen, the beginning of 2012, we're saying that's when we're going to start beginning to give this support to kids.

If we do not do that to kids, then we are the largest achievement gap in the country. That gap is

going to increase. And the reason I wanted to say more about this is because we have attached this to another bill. And there was previous comment on -- given on it, but I will be very brief in saying, I find that problematic.

If there's no real certainty that we are going to make certain that the kids who are at the bottom have the remedial support, we've done a travesty in justice in using this process this way. The process is wrong. We have bill that we've already voted upon. I concur with the statements that were made earlier. These should have stayed separate as issues and each one of them sunk or swam on their own.

Again, I do laud the goals of Race to the top and there's hope that we will be able to do those things.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Thank you, sir, for your remarks.

Will you remark further?

The distinguished gentleman from our capital city, Representative Green, you have the floor, sir.

REP. GREEN (1st):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat troubled by the

process this evening. I think that I and my colleagues, we're concerned about our children, we're concerned about the educational attainment of our children. And I think that we want to try to have policies and processes that make sure that all of our children succeed.

What we did tonight is that we took a bill that was passed by us to try to address the achievement gap. The achievement gap, which is the largest, the -- Connecticut's achievement gap as it relates to persons of colors and persons of certain incomes; it's the largest between certain races and those in higher incomes and lower incomes.

And so there was a strategy for that to say that, you know what? All of our children should succeed and we have to close the achievement gap. And so closing the achievement gap -- if you listen to those words, closing the achievement gap. They said, gap. There appeared to be a problem.

And then we have bill that says, Race to the Top. And we're saying we're going to increase and improve the standards for a bill that talks about Race to the Top. Now, meanwhile, we're going to race to the top knowing that we already have the largest achievement

gap. We already know that some children are being left behind and some people -- some students are already racing to the top.

If you look at some other statistics of the students in Connecticut, if you look at when they graduate from school, when you look at when they take SATs, when you look at how they do on advanced placement tests, we do very well. We usually come in the top three of our high school students overall -- in the state, coming in the top three on our reading abilities, our math ability, on standardized testing across the nation.

So on one hand, we already are at the top. Now, whether or not we write a particular kind of proposal to the federal government to get funds is a different story. But we also recognize because we also have some of the highest test scores, some of the highest graduation rates, highest number of students who graduate from our high schools and go on to college, we also know that we have the largest achievement gap.

Two different bills with two different goals to address two different things. Then we have a political process that says, a House bill starts here, goes up to the Senate. A Senate Bill comes here --

comes -- starts in the Senate, comes to here. Two different goals, laudable goals on each one, but not the same goals. Not the same bill. Not the same strategies. Not the same target population. Not the same solutions to deal with the problem, but both have good solutions. Both create some opportunities for local schools, for the State to be creative about how it provides education for its students.

Both of the bills talk about if schools continue to fail, that there's ways to reconstitute. Both bills -- which I think the achievement gap bill involves parents and communities a little bit more. The Race to the Top involves more of the state department goals, of where they want to see and how they want to respond to our Race to the Top grant.

Different kind of goals, but very laudable. They should not have been mixed. We -- I can't recall -- I just can't recall in my neediest year at the capital that a bill that passed overwhelmingly -- I continue to hear the number of 145 to zero, out of the House or the Senate, that we debated, unfortunately -- unfortunately debated for close to four hours a bill we've already voted on. Let's say about two hours, because it was about two hours on the other bill.

The discussion should have been separate. We had already had the discussion. This is not how it's supposed to work. It is disheartening for me to be here, speaking right now after such a debate, but this was really the only opportunity.

I did not speak on the bill when it came about the achievement gap. A number of people made the comments. The bill passed and I had not intended it. I did want to make comments on the Race to the Top Bill, if we were going to discuss that here. And I wanted to have a focused discussion on the Race to the Top.

But at this hour with the concerns, which people have already flushed that out -- not the opportunity to do that. Our process is about all of us as colleagues with equal responsibility to have the opportunity to address the bills that concern us in a deliberate, cautious way on the benefits of our constituents. We should allow ourselves to be given that opportunity. I don't feel I was given an opportunity.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Thank you, sir, for your remarks.

Will you remark further on the bill as amended?

The distinguished gentleman from New Haven, Representative Holder-Winfield, you have the floor, sir.

REP. HOLDER-WINFIELD (94th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Just a couple of quick questions. I'm looking in lines 554, where it says -- it begins at the end of the line. It says, the commissioner determines that it would be in the best educational interests of the school or school district to have any of the programs which are described in the language before that.

And the programs are full-day kindergarten classes, Summer school extended, school day weekend classes. I'm just wondering, because commissioners do change, is there a definition for best interests of these schools anywhere in the bill?

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I believe there's a definition in statute. The language that my good colleague is citing is existing statute and I believe the terms are defined in existing statute.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Holder-Winfield.

REP. HOLDER-WINFIELD (94th):

Thank you.

And I'm just trying to make sure that -- because I did vote against the bill earlier. I'm just trying to make sure I understand it.

Continuing on a little bit later in line 558 after the comma, it says, the commissioner may limit the offering of the program to the subgroups of students that have failed to achieve proficiency as determined by this subsection.

And so I'm just wondering does that allow for the extension of something like the school day to only a subgroup?

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm not sure, but what I'd like to point out is that the language that's being brought up is currently in statute. And so it's not something that is contemplated to be changed in any way by passage of

this bill. Only the underlying language at the bottom of the page moving forward would change current statute.

And these are powers that we gave to the commissioner about three years ago that have led to the Connecticut Accountability and Learning Initiative.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Holder-Winfield.

REP. HOLDER-WINFIELD (94th):

And I thank you for that answer.

And one -- I think one more question. Earlier when we were talking about secondary education reform, the comment was made that when the standards are raised young people have achieved.

And San Jose, Massachusetts, and Hartford were mentioned. And I've had the opportunity to talk about secondary education reform and I am of the opinion that we need to increase the standards on all ends. And so I'm wondering in San Jose and Massachusetts, and I won't include Hartford, have we -- is it that secondary -- there was an increase in standards on the secondary side or was it more across the whole system?

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I probably don't know as much about those cases as I should, but I know for certain that in both San Jose and the state of Massachusetts there was a major shift in the requirements at the high school level.

And then I believe there are concomitant changes made at the middle school and elementary levels to prepare children for those high school requirements. But the high school changes were the first step in the reform in both those sates to my knowledge.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Holder-Winfield.

REP. HOLDER-WINFIELD (94th):

And I would ask the question, and perhaps you may not know the answer to this. In Massachusetts and San Jose, do you know when this happened?

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Were presented Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I -- those dates are buried somewhere in my notes here. And so I don't

know offhand. I do know that Massachusetts began the moment towards higher standards in the nineties and San Jose was in this more recent decade.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Holder-Winfield.

REP. HOLDER-WINFIELD (94th):

And I will finish up by saying that I was trying to find out specifically about Massachusetts because I know Massachusetts had an overhaul of its system, which I thought happened currently in all parts of the system.

And it would make sense with the way that I think that if you do that, if you raise the standards from the beginning the child will probably succeed. But I thank you for your answers.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Thank you, sir, for your remarks.

Will you remark further on the bill as amended? Will you remark further on the bill as amended? If not, will staff and guests please come to the well of the House. Will the members take their seats. The machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll call. Members to the chamber. Members to the chamber. The House is voting by roll call.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Have all the members voted? Have all the members voted? Will the members please check the board to determine whether your vote has been properly cast. If all the members voted the machine will be locked. Will the Clerk please take and announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

Senate Bill Number 438 as amended by Senate "A" House "A."

Total Number voting	144
Necessary for adoption	73
Those voting Yea	106
Those voting Nay	38
Those absent and not voting	07

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

The bill as amended is passed.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER McCLUSKEY:

Representative Cafero, for what purpose do you

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CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SENATE

PROCEEDINGS
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orders of the day, Numbered 1 and 2. We will then be marking additional items, thereafter. The first item, Mr. President, is Calendar page 9, Calendar 422, Senate Bill Number 438, AN ACT CONCERNING CHARTER SCHOOLS. That should be called as the first item of the day -- first order of the day.

Second, Mr. President, appears on Calendar page 10, Calendar 432, Senate Bill Number 25, AN ACT AUTHORIZING AND ADJUSTING BONDS OF THE STATE FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND OTHER PURPOSES.

Thank, you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Looney.

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

Calling from Senate Calendar for Friday, April 30, 2010, favorable reports, Calendar page 9.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gaffey.

THE CLERK:

Calendar Number 422, File Number 593, substitute for Senate Bill 438, AN ACT CONCERNING CHARTER SCHOOLS. Favorable report of the Committee on Education and Appropriations.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Mr. Clerk.

And now, Senator Gaffey.

SENATOR GAFFEY:

Good afternoon, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Good afternoon, Senator.

SENATOR GAFFEY:

Mr. President, I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

On acceptance, the passage or remark, sir.

SENATOR GAFFEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

The Clerk is in possession of Amendment LCO Number 4726. If the Clerk would please call the amendment and I be granted leave of the chamber to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk, would you please call LCO 4726?

THE CLERK:

LCO 4726, which will be designated Senate Amendment Schedule A is offered by Senator Gaffey of the 13th District.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gaffey.

SENATOR GAFFEY:

Move -- I move adoption, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

On adoption, will you remark further?

SENATOR GAFFEY:

Yes, Mr. President. Thank you.

Mr. President, and members of the Senate, the amendment is a strike-all amendment. The amendment becomes the bill. What this amendment focuses on is changes to our education statutes to respond to the -- to the criteria in the application for federal funding for education, the so-called "Race to the Top" program of President Barack Obama's Administration.

Mr. President, the State of Connecticut submitted an application in Round 1 of Race to the Top. We wound up in the middle of the pack of the states that submitted applications. We had total points on our application of 344.6 out of 500. The State of Tennessee, who was the winner of the first Round, had 443.4 points. Delaware had come in second; they had 433 points. So we are just about 100 points from being in the winner's circle on the Race to the Top.

The State of Tennessee was granted one-half a billion dollars from the federal government in this Race to the Top program. The State of Delaware received $100 million. So, Mr. President, and members of the Senate, the money that's associated with the Race to the Top challenge is quite significant, even more significant for us here in Connecticut and most states around the nation because of the economy and the slow economy's impact on our revenues. We can greatly use this money for our education system, Mr. President.

There's another round of Race to the Top, and that round commences with the applications that are due June 1st. We received quite a bit of guidance and an education in analyzing the comments on our Round 1 application, and we know what changes that we have to make in our statutes to be successful in Round 2.

Mr. President, when the news came out that we were not in the final 16 states in Round 1, I was quite upset by that. And that day I got on the phone and I called Commissioner Mark McQuillan, and I told him that I'd like to convene a group of stakeholders, including himself and his staff, to sit down and grind out what we needed to do as a General Assembly, as the

State of Connecticut, to change our laws so that we were better suited to win in Round 2. That day and the day after, I called many of the stakeholders, and I was happy that they all agreed to participate. So for the last seven weeks, Mr. President, we have sat in a room and hammered out a consensus that is represented in the amendment before the Chamber right now.

Now, the folks who participated in these negotiations, the "working group," as I call them, they typically don't agree on many issues. We had the Commissioner, Mark McQuillan. We had his staff lawyer, Jen Wildness, who sat in for the Commissioner from time to time. We had John Yrchik, from the Connecticut Education Association, and Sharon Palmer from the Federation of Teachers, who was assisted by Jenifer Berigan. We had Alex Johnston from ConnCAN, and he was assisted by Jessica Stram; ConnCAN are the charter school people. And we also had Roch Girard from the Administrators' Union, and Representative Doug McCrory represented the Black and Hispanic Caucus on this working group. So it was a very diverse group of people, particularly in the opinions and beliefs that they hold with regard to public education.

And, Mr. President, I have to just take a moment and thank my House Co Chair. This was a grueling process, and Representative Andrew Fleischmann has gone through another grueling process of his own for the past several months. And I think the world of him because of his steadfast commitment to this job of legislating, even when he wasn't feeling well. And he's back on his feet; he's got a bounce to his step; he's looking good, and we're very, very excited that his health is back on track. But he attended every meeting, even when he wasn't feeling well at times. And I just want to point that out because, in my view, Andy Fleischmann is one of the most courageous people I know, having dealt what he's had to deal with and -- and participate in these meeting for hours upon hours and contribute and do an excellent job.

So, Mr. President, we met for seven weeks and hammered out this consensus. Nobody walked away from the table completely happy or satisfied with what the bill now will contain. And usually when that happens, you've done the job of drawing the consensus.

As I speak, other states are dropping out of the race, Indiana, Kansas. Massachusetts is in trouble because their teachers have withdrawn their support.

And Cal -- Colorado, and Louisiana have the exact same problem.

This bill gives Connecticut the kick we need to sprint to the finish line and lean for the tape to win in Round 2. It is the product of a number of bills that the Education Committee had public hearings on and those seven weeks of hard negotiations. It was a collaborative effort, and I want to thank each and every one of those members that participated, particularly Joe Cirasuolo, from the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents.

Joe was the Superintendent of Wallingford Public School District for quite a long time, and Joe was invaluable in this process. He is extremely learned in the education field, and he always at the right opportunity would raise his pen to be recognized, as he does all the time, and would make a point that would help us get the -- the conversation back on track and ultimately reach consensus. I -- I would really like to thank Joe Cirasuolo for his efforts.

Now to the content, Mr. President, of the amendment. There's a point system that I referred to earlier, on Race to the Top. These applications are judged by learned educators who look at every single

part of the application and grade the application. Section 1 of this amendment has to do with an alternative route to certification for school administrators. Members of the Senate may remember that just last year we passed a teacher certification bill, and we've done alternative routes to certification for teachers. We now will do an alternative route for certification for administrators.

Connecticut, in the first round received a hundred -- I'm sorry -- received 95.2 points out of 138 points. So we have 43 points to make up. We knew we needed to change our statutes relative to allowing teachers to become administrators on a faster track process. We do that in this bill. This bill requires the State Department of Education to review and approve proposals for school administrator alternative route certification programs according to the criteria in the bill. This will provide us with the principals and vice principals that we need to lead our schools.

Mr. President, Section 3 has an expanded public school information system. Connecticut in the first round won 29 points out of a total of 47 points. What this will do, Mr. President, is track and report to

the state the performance growth, the academic performance growth of our students and our teachers in our schools. We have a unique identifier system for each student in the State of Connecticut in a database right now. This bill will have a unique identifier for teachers. So while we track the students' academic growth, we now are also going to track teacher data, teacher credentials such as their degrees, teacher assessments as to whether a teacher is considered highly qualified under the federal No Child Left Behind Act or meets any other designations established by federal law to measure the equitable distribution of instructional staff. That was a key point in the comments that we read, that we need to prove that we are going to have a method of insuring that we have equitable distribution of instructional staff.

We also want to look at the presence of substitute teachers in a teacher's classroom, how often did -- did -- was there a need for a substitute teacher. The class size is a critical component when you're analyzing what's going on in a school, if there's -- if the classes are too crowded. Look at the teacher's absenteeism. Look at whether there is a

teacher aide present or not. This is the type of data that we're going to track that will provide context to what is actually going on in a particular classroom, in a particular school.

This bill will not just rely upon test data. Assessment data is critical but it is not the be-all, end-all in understanding the performance of teachers in a classroom and the performance of a whole school. You have to consider the context, some of which I just mentioned, when you're looking at the performance of teachers and the schools.

Mr. President, for the first time, teachers will be evaluated under this bill, pursuant to the academic growth of the student, and the teacher evaluations will have to address the teachers' strengths, the areas needing improvement, and improvement strategy. And now this bill has the requirement that evaluations also address the academic growth of the teachers' student. The bill requires the State Board of Education, by July 1, 2013, and in consultation with a Performance Evaluation Advisory Council that the bill establishes, to develop model teacher evaluation program guidelines.

Section 6 of the bill establishes innovation

schools, Mr. President, and these will be new schools in Connecticut that operate under an innovation plan which articulates area of autonomy and flexibility in curriculum, budget, school schedule, calendar, staffing policies and procedures, professional development, waivers from -- well, waivers from or modifications to union contracts.

The members of the Senate may recall that just last fall there was an agreement in principle established between the teachers' union in the City of New Haven and Mayor DeStefano to do just what I'm talking about, having autonomy and flexibility in a -- in a compact school that will have different hours the teachers will work, different waivers or modifications to the contract. And this is another area where the federal government is looking for districts to be flexible and insuring ways to improve student achievement.

The bill enhances also, Mr. President, the State Boards of Education's authority to replace a Board of Education if, in fact, after being designated as a low-achieving district fails for two consecutive years to make adequate progress towards meeting the requirements. Current law requires the Commissioner

of Education to come and seek a vote of the Legislature to be able to do this. This bill changes that and empowers the Commissioner of Education when, in fact, we have a consistently failing school district to go in and make changes to the Board of Education.

It allows -- the bill allows employment of retired teachers, expands the opportunities for a school district to reemploy retired teachers who are collecting pensions from the teachers' retirement system, and it also allow any certified teacher or administrator employed in a local or regional board of education in a priority school district, which are the poorest school districts in the State of Connecticut, and who previously had tenure with another board of education in this state in or another state to attain tenure after ten months of employment in the priority school district, rather than the currently required 20 months. This is an incentive to attract teachers to our priority schools districts, again, our poorest school districts in Connecticut.

The bill eliminates the requirement, Mr. President, currently in law, that when the State Board of Education issues charters for state and local

charter schools, they do so only within available appropriations. It allows the State Board of Education to approve and issue charters to applicants that meet the statutory requirements without taking the state application for -- I'm sorry -- the state appropriation for operating charter schools into consideration.

The bill requires the State Board of Ed to waive enrollment limits for state charter schools that demonstrate a record of student achievement. The enrollment caps in our statute, that is another area where we had to get agreement to be able to waive those so that we can expand access to our charter schools. That was another issue in the application and in their criteria that the Obama administration was looking at, clearly that they wanted more opportunity or they didn't -- I'm sorry -- they didn't want states to have restrictions on -- on charter schools. So we made this change also.

It also, in the bill, Mr. President, makes the Charter School Facility Grant Program current. It was only available in -- during FY '08 and Fiscal Year '09. This will make that grant program permanent for the charter schools. That grant helps the charter

schools build, buy, replace or carry out major alterations to facilities, replace windows, doors, boilers, and other heating and ventilation system components. So that will be a big assist to the -- to charter schools.

Mr. President, the bill also tackles the issue of secondary school reform. We passed secondary school reform in this Senate last session. Unfortunately, the House ran out of time. This is a critical part of the application, and it's even more important than the application, it's more -- it's critical to the State of Connecticut. What we do with the secondary school reform is we increase the rigor of the curriculum in high school. We increase the requirements on mathematics and science and technology and foreign language. If our students are going to be prepared to work in a global economy, we have to make sure our students here in Connecticut are better prepared, particularly in the sciences and in mathematics.

Mr. President, that concludes, except for -- I'm sorry -- one more section, the last section of the bill. There's been quite a bit of communication and discussion and some would say consternation over the issue of in-school suspensions. While the Connecticut

Association of Public Schools Superintendents actually came out in support of the current law going into effect July 1, they changed their position that this was really not as big a deal as it was thought to be. And there position is that the current law should go into effect July 1. Connecticut Association of Boards of Education was still a little bit uncomfortable, so we worked out some language that changes the in-school suspension law.

I want to point out to the members of the Senate, even the current statute gives school districts a very wide berth as far as making the determination of which students should be excluded from school in an out-of-school suspension and which students should remain in in-school suspension. The -- the committee over the years has -- has heard hours of testimony with regard to students who were being sent for out-of-school suspensions just because of a school policy rule issue. They were wearing sandals or they had a baseball cap on or one student walked in with an iPod. Just, you know, rules that are -- important to have rules -- but in our mind not that egregious, by any stretch of the imagination, to send a child home from school.

And I want to point out that we had an informational hearing, three -- three Fridays ago, three weeks from today, actually, and we had testimony from Cromwell, from East Hartford, from the School Superintendents' Association and overwhelming testimony as to the need for in-school suspension. And I know people were throwing some cost figures out of what the impact of this law would be at the school districts, although no one was ever able to verify any cost estimates to the committee.

The fact of the matter is there are programs that have been up and running now for a couple of years that are working very, very well. Berlin High School, Cromwell High School, my school district does it. East Hartford has a great program. There's a number of school districts who are doing -- that are doing this and doing it well. But we added some language to make it even a little bit more flexible for the districts when they're making their determination of a student who would be serving an out-of-school suspension or a student that they would decide would be serving an in-school suspension.

Mr. President, that concludes my -- my outline of the bill and would appreciate the Chamber's support of

the amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Will you remark further?

Senator Caligiuri.

SENATOR CALIGIURI:

Thank you, very much, Mr. President.

If I may, through you, Mr. President, I'm going to have some questions for the proponent of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gaffey.

SENATOR CALIGIURI:

I'm sorry --

THE CHAIR:

Senator --

SENATOR CALIGIURI:

-- Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Caligiuri is (inaudible).

SENATOR CALIGIURI:

(Inaudible.)

THE CHAIR:

The Ranking Member is going to ask some questions.

SENATOR CALIGIURI:

Thank

THE CHAIR:

Senator Caligiuri.

SENATOR CALIGIURI:

Thank -- no, not at all. Thank you, Mr. President, and thanks, Senator Gaffey.

First of all, I rise ultimately in support of this amendment, which will become the underlying bill. And to the point that Senator Gaffey made earlier, this does really represent the work of a real collaboration, and it was a pleasure to have an opportunity, at the invitation of Senator Gaffey and Representative Fleischmann, to be a part of this along with my counterpart in the House of Representatives. And I know that every effort was made in order to make this as collaborative an effort as humanly possible. And as Senator Gaffey indicated, getting agreement and consensus on an issue as important but detailed as this can be very difficult to do.

As I study the amendment before us, it -- it occurs to me that this represents the compilation of -- of five separate bills that we adopted separately, and in the case of four of them, unanimously at the

Education Committee. And only with the exception of the Secondary School Reform Bill were there any dissenting votes, if memory serves. So I think that the work product that's in front of us is something that represents a work product that in its individual pieces at the Education Committee, most if not all of us agreed with in large part.

When I look at some of the differences, though, between the amendment before us and what was adopted in the Education Committee, I'm focussed in particular on the teacher performance aspects of the bills. And Sections 3, 4, and 5 of the amendment before us, I believe corresponds to what had been Senate Bill 440, which was adopted unanimously in the Education Committee. And as we were trying to compare the changes that were made to what was originally adopted unanimously, I noticed a few changes. And because ultimately what we're trying to do is not only improve education in Connecticut -- and I believe this bill does that -- but also to make sure that we maximize our opportunity to successfully compete for Race to the Top dollars, I have a question about some of the changes that had been made in the amendment before us.

And in I may, through you, Mr. President, draw

Senator Gaffey's attention to Lines 230 through 231 of the amendment that's before us, the that language talks about the evaluation that is required to be made, as laid out earlier in Section 4 of the bill, and talks about student performance and, quote, multiple indicators of student academic growth as being one of the factors that considered in student performance -- or a teacher performance.

When I compare that to what was originally adopted in the Education Committee, the language that we used at that point was focussed not on multiple indicators of student academic growth but on academic growth of such teachers, students, without any reference to multiple indicators.

And my first question to Senator Gaffey, through you, Mr. President, is does this represent in Senator Gaffey's judgment a weakening of the standards that were first adopted in the Education Committee bill in Section -- in Senate Bill 440? Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gaffey.

SENATOR GAFFEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

And thank you, Senator Caligiuri. The answer is no. And the answer is no because you have to understand the context of what's going on in a classroom beyond -- behind and beyond the test data; you have to understand what's the class size, what's the -- what's the educational attainment level of the students' parents. There's a lot of issues that go on behind the scenes of test data.

The -- Fred -- Fred Carstensen, the professor up at UConn, he wrote a lengthy article about this, that looking at just simple, raw numbers of taste -- test data that basically has -- is a snapshot in time doesn't -- is not a fair way to evaluate teachers, and you have to include the context of what's going on, also, in the classroom to be able to have a fair evaluation of teachers. And, of course, we formed the Performance Advisory Council, which will consist of teachers and administrators and parents to -- to determine what the -- how the program should work. But the answer to the question is no. I do not believe this weakens the bill at all.

And I will also point out that while we were on deadline at the committee, we decided to move that bill forward, the bill that Senator Caligiuri referred

to. But like many committees in the Legislature, when we're on deadline and we really just don't have the time, particularly in the short session to get in and negotiate the details of the bill, we move the bill on knowing that there will be negotiations, there will be work done on that bill. And in this case, we knew that we were going to be combining a lot of bills into one bill that would be our so-called "Race to the Top" bill. So that is why that bill was reported out unanimously. It's not because everyone was in love with that bill, certainly, because there were a lot of people who opposed it, but we felt that it was important to move it out as a point of reference in our negotiations and language in there that we would need to include in the bill that's -- the amendment that's before us now. Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Caligiuri.

SENATOR CALIGIURI:

Thank you, very much, Mr. President, and I thank Senator Gaffey for that response.

Along the same lines, there is another section of the bill that had talked about model teacher evaluation programs -- this is the bill that was

adopted in the Education Committee -- incorporating the use of data and indicators on student academic growth as a, quote, significant factor in rating teacher performance. And I'm focussing in particular on the words "significant factor," because when I look at the current amendment before us in that language when we're talking about the model teacher evaluation guidelines incorporating the use of data and indicators on student academic growth, the amendment before us eliminates the reference to this data as being a, quote, significant factor in rating teacher performance.

And my question, through you, Mr. President, to Senator Gaffey is why did we delete the reference to this data as being a significant factor and does Senator Gaffey believe this will in any way harm our application to the federal government? Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gaffey.

SENATOR GAFFEY:

Through you, Mr. President, the answer, again, sir, is -- is no. The Performance Evaluation Advisory Council in Section 5 will make a determination of what

the significant factor means. So we felt -- the group felt and, again, not everybody was in agreement. I mean, when you're trying to form consensus on a major bill, as I said, people walked away from the room on the last day; I mean, basically everybody was unhappy for some thing or another, as it related to the bill. But in this component, it was decided that the -- the best way to tackle that issue was to have the Performance Evaluation Advisory Councils determine that. Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Caligiuri.

SENATOR CALIGIURI:

Thank you, Mr. President. I thank Senator Gaffey.

I will have some additional questions, I believe, and we may be offering an amendment later in the process, but at the moment, I will -- I will not have any further questions at the moment for Senator Gaffey.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Will you remark further? Will you remark

further?

Senator Roraback.

SENATOR RORABACK:

Thank you, Mr. President. And if I may, through you, just a couple of questions to Senator Gaffey.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gaffey, please prepare yourself.

Senator Roraback, okay.

SENATOR RORABACK:

Thank you, Mr. President. Actually, Mr. President, I will allow for a vote on the amendment before I go forward with some question, if I may. Thank you.

False alarm for Senator Gaffey; thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Okay. Thank you, Senator Roraback.

Will you remark further? Will you remark further?

If not, I'll try your minds. All those in favor of Senate Amendment A, please signify by saying aye.

SENATORS:

Aye.

THE CHAIR:

All those opposed, nay.

The ayes have it. Senate A is adopted.

Will you remark further on the bill as amended?

Senator Meyer.

SENATOR MEYER:

This is really a historical moment. If you put this in the history of school policy and school governance and you look back ten years ago, you would never have seen a bill like this. You would never have seen the kind of remarks that Senator Gaffey just made. Teacher -- measuring teacher performance, increase in charter schools, high school reform, in the United States 10, 50 years ago, that was not the direction we were going in. The teachers' union, the superintendents, and elected officials, particularly Democratic elected officials were driving us toward the improvement of the public schools. Every human and financial resource went into the public schools and -- and teachers were never being measured by the outcomes of their students because that would be unfair to teachers. This is a revolution in so many ways from 10 years ago, what's happening today and what Senator Gaffey just told us.

I remember a conversation I had, in about 1990,

with a great teacher leader, Al Shanker, and we were discussing measuring teacher performance by by their students' performance. And he said, we have to do it but don't ever quote me on this. Don't ever quote me, he said. I -- we're not -- we're not there yet. It would -- it would hurt my ability within the teachers' union, within the American Federation of Teachers, which he headed at that time.

So today, because of a confluens of events, we are in a revolution as this bill represents. The public schools have -- have not done as well as we expected them to do. We've had an enormous achievement gap, not just in Connecticut but in many, many parts of the country you've had this kind of an achievement gap between the urban students and the suburban students. And often the urban students' achievements problems are allied with rural students' achievement problems. And we realize that the -- the public school system has not always worked as well as we hoped.

For the last ten years there have been some lone voices calling for a major increase in the charter schools, independent schools, and what these -- what this bills calls the "innovation schools." We're now

there. That -- that sun has really set on that new movement and recognition that education for our children, for our grandchildren is something greater than the way we've done it in the past.

I -- I had lunch today with Marian Wright Edelman. You remember her; she's director of the children's fund in Washington, DC and actually a Representative of the District of Columbia in the Congress of the United States. And we had a chance at lunch to talk about the charter school movement, which she, like me, ten years ago would have strongly opposed. She said two things at lunch today about charter schools. She said, first, remember charter schools are public schools. And the second thing she said is that charter schools are an important part of the answer.

When we look at a great charter school in New Haven like the Amistad School, we know she's right. And I just urge enthusiastic support of this bill. It's going into the future in the best direction for our state and for the country.

Thanks, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Will you remark further?

Senator Roraback.

SENATOR RORABACK:

Thank you, Mr. President. And this time I would ask Senate Gaffey to prepare himself for a longer exchange than we enjoyed in the last time out. If I may, through you, Mr. President a -- a question --

THE CHAIR:

All right.

SENATOR RORABACK:

-- through to Senator Gaffey.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gaffey.

Senator Roraback.

SENATOR RORABACK:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Through you, to Senator Gaffey, I -- I don't now serve on the Education Committee, but I once had the pleasure of serving on that committee and I retain an abiding interest in participating in Connecticut's forward march in the -- in the area of education. And taking a global look at this issue in the context of what's taking place in Washington, Mr. President, and through you to Senator Gaffey, I'm wondering if

Senator Gaffey might explain to the circle how he would have drafted this bill if its sole purpose were to give Connecticut the greatest possible chance to secure federal funding in the Second Round of the Race to the Top competition? And -- and I'm not -- I'm looking in -- in broad strokes, what areas of the bill might be different; how might they be different, and why might they be different?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gaffey.

SENATOR RORABACK:

Through you, Mr. President, to Senator Gaffey.

SENATOR GAFFEY:

Through you, Mr. President, I can honestly say I would have drafted it just like this. There is -- there are a lot of good exchanges with regard to each section of this bill. And as Representative Fleischmann and I sat at a table and acted more like referees sometimes and then as a judge, I could tell you honestly that this bill, the way it's drafted is how I -- well, how I ultimately would have come down in drafting the bill. Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Roraback.

SENATOR RORABACK:

Thank you, Mr. President. And -- and I appreciate Senator Gaffey's answer. I guess what I'm taking from it is that Senator Gaffey is saying is if he had been sent to a corner room and said don't come out until you've drafted a bill which positions Connecticut to make the strongest possible application for Race to the Top funding, that what we have before us is very close if not identical to the product that he would have produced towards that end. Through you, Mr. President, to Senator Gaffey.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gaffey.

SENATOR GAFFEY:

Through you, Mr. President, I was sent to the corner room first and I spent a lot of hours in there with a -- with a good group of people. And I, again, would say that my -- my ultimate draft would have looked very similar to what we have before us today, Senator. Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Roraback.

SENATOR RORABACK:

Thank you, Mr. President.

And by that I guess I'm -- I could or would it be fair for me to presume that Senate Gaffey therefore believes that the tone being set in Washington, the goals being articulated, the standards being advanced represent sound public policy, not only for us as a nation but for the State of Connecticut as a state? Mr. President, through you to -- to Senator Gaffey.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gaffey.

SENATOR GAFFEY:

Through you, Mr. President, I believe the goals in Washington that have been articulated by Arne Duncan, Secretary of Education and his staff, and what's being articulated here in Connecticut by Commissioner McQuillan and his staff and the Committee on Education in the General Assembly are all solid, public policy goals and solid public policy overall that will move this country ahead because it will produce a better-educated work -- workforce to keep us at the top of competition globally for many years to come. Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Roraback.

SENATOR RORABACK:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I -- I appreciate Senator Gaffey's answers. I appreciate the work that he's put into this bill. It's my sincere hope that this bill will put us at the top of the heap when it comes time for evaluations to be conducted for the second round of funding for Race to the Top. And I'm grateful for the education that Senator Gaffey has provided me.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Will you remark further?

Senator Prague.

SENATOR PRAGUE:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, through you, I'd like to ask Senator Gaffey a couple of questions.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Senator Gaffey, please prepare yourself.

Senator Prague.

SENATOR PRAGUE:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Senator Gaffey, as I came into the chamber, I

heard you talking about teachers will be judged by the accomplishments of the kids in their classes. I'd like to ask you if there are teachers in the urban -- so there are teachers in the urban areas teaching high school kids, you know, it's a lot more difficult to teach under those circumstances with kids who, you know, have been disadvantaged and are having a hard time staying in school as it is. Is there any provision in your bill to help teachers overcome the difficulties that the students are dealing with in their own, personal lives and they bring some of those problems with them into the classroom?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gaffey.

SENATOR GAFFEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Through you, sir, to Senator Prague. Thank you for that question, Senator Prague because you -- you've hit on an issue, a very good issue, and that is the challenge that our teachers in urban areas have every, single day. I -- I doubt many of us -- now, you're a former teacher -- I doubt many of us would have the patience and the perseverance to be able to do that job, day in and day out. The bill does have

context, as I talked about before, behind -- beyond just assessment data. So beyond the Connecticut Mastery Test and the scores that the students receive on those tests, there'll be other methods for assessing student academic growth and a consideration of certain factors that will be tracked, including student mobility. There are many urban districts that have transient -- transient students; students are in and out of the system. Sometimes within the year, they are in and out of the system. You have to consider that. So we will look at student mobility, and we will look at other issues such as what's the class size. We'll look at what is the educational attainment level in a home; what's the language spoken in the home; is there a language barrier; different types of impediments that students may have. Not -- not any fault of their own, but certainly they occur.

I have -- I'm fond of saying there's law and then there's reality. The reality in a classroom in Hartford, Connecticut or Meriden, Connecticut or New Britain, Connecticut or any of our urban areas is that this is a very, very difficult job because some of the students, some of these kids, they come to school with personal baggage, no fault of their own, but it has an

absolute nexus to tracking their academic performance and progress and cannot be ignored. And that's what Professor Carstensen up at UConn urged in the paper that he wrote. Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Prague.

SENATOR PRAGUE:

Well, Mr. President, I'm glad to hear that these difficult situations will be dealt with, I'm assuming, on a one-to-one basis, a teacher who has a difficult classroom is teaching in -- under difficult circumstances will be judged accordingly, that it doesn't make her a bad teacher if the kids aren't accomplishing as much as maybe the principal thinks they ought to be.

I'm sort of standing in defense of teachers. I have a daughter who's a teacher. I'm a former teacher. I just wanted to make sure -- and I know that the accomplishment of kids is critically important -- I just wanted to make sure that some of the circumstances under which kids come to the classroom is taken into consideration.

Thank you. And through you, thank you, Senator Gaffey.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL:

Thank you, very much, Mr. President, great to see you up there again this afternoon.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir.

SENATOR KISSEL:

No questions to the good Chair of the Education Committee, but when it comes to educational issues, certainly I believe that I have some bona fides as well. A lot of my colleagues here in the circle probably don't realize this, but once upon a time I did attend UConn and graduated from the School of Education there and pursued a dual certification in Secondary Social Studies and English and actually had the pleasure of student teaching at Coventry High School before I changed my mind and then pursued a career in law.

And, indeed, right now I can tell you that my wife has decided to fulfill a dream, and she's in the process of going back to college. And it may take several years, and we understand that as a family, but

her dream is to become a teacher, and so she is going back and she's taking these courses right now. And hopefully in four or five or six years, she'll have all the qualifications.

And, also, once upon a time, in the mid-1990s, I did serve on the Education Committee and had an opportunity to work with folks from the Connecticut Education Association and under interested parties in reforming some of our education laws in a very positive way, I believe, and I believe established a very good rapport with folks throughout the education community.

And, last, as Co-Chair of the Program of Review and Investigations Committee and as a member of that committee, not too long ago we helped make some great changes for new teachers in the State of Connecticut, moving away from an evaluation that was rather cumbersome with videotapes and -- and a lot of extra work to brand-new teachers to a mentoring system that I think is much more positive for the system of education that we have in the State of Connecticut.

I wanted to state those things on the record as a predicate, because it seems like everybody here is very positive about this bill, and unfortunately, I

don't share that optimism, and -- and let me tell you why. It is not because I believe that Representative Fleischmann or Senator Gaffey or Senator Caligiuri have not worked hard on trying to make this the very best bill possible, it's because I have an inherent distrust of what comes down from -- or up, rather geographically from Washington, DC.

You know, there's an old saying, fool me once, shame on you, fool me twice, shame on me. Let's look at the history of educational policy emanating from Washington. Well, it wasn't that long ago that No Child Left Behind was passed by the federal government and I have to believe that that was never adequately funded, to this day. I haven't heard that anything has changed dramatically, and for years and years and years, as much as that was very aspirational and had good goals, there were problems with that federal policy in terms of testing requirements being superimposed on the State of Connecticut, and there's not an adequate amount of funding streams and revenues to go along with those requirements. It's a similar kind of situation that the towns look to us as a state in saying do not pass unfunded mandates.

I'd also like to believe that while we have

strident requirements regarding Special Education in the State of Connecticut and much of that underpinned by federal laws and regulations, there has never in my mind been adequate funding for Special Education needs in the State of Connecticut. So Washington is great about setting policy, but I don't believe that they follow through on their promises.

So where does that leave us here with Race to the Top? I have spoken to some of my educational leaders, my town councils, my boards of selectmen and boards of finance in my communities, and they are concerned that we are going to put ourselves down a path where to try to get federal funds, we have to make a certain financial commitment ourselves. And they look to me and they say, Senator Kissel, you're not adequately funding us now and you want to pursue another, albeit excellent course to enhance our educational system, but if you're not paying for the commitments right now, how do you expect us to move down a path and take on more responsibilities with the promise that that will help -- hopefully be supplemented by federal funds?

And I've got to tell you that at this point in time, I don't believe it's in the best interest of the

people of the State of Connecticut to consistently and continually be chasing Washington dollars. I have stated on debates regarding other bills that I believe our nation is overextended, borrowing, going into deficit, more in one year than in the previous eight, being beholden to countries like China and India and other countries that do not have our best national interest at heart. They have their own national interest at heart, and God forbid the day ever comes where they start calling in the loans. And I do read the news, whether it's on the Web or newspapers, magazines, television, radio, and there has been no lack, every couple of weeks, especially from China where it's either their finance minister or their foreign minister or their premier stating, America, you need to get your financial house in order.

Well, with all of that in the background, here we are chasing after dollars from the federal government with no guarantees that these applications are going to be successful. And what's at the end of the road? Delaware, a hundred million dollars; Tennessee, $500 million.

But is this going to be similar to other programs, such as putting police officers on the beat

in our cities such that yeah, we go, we do the hires, we get everything up and going and for a couple years it's great. And then the federal money then dwindles away and we have to make that stark decision; do we leave them on the beat or -- and may for that or do we take them off?

How I can go to my municipal leaders and say this is a great thing, we're going to start implementing these changes, Race to the Top, it's good for your -- our children, when we are not adequately funding education now?

I've talked about this with my friends and colleagues, and they've said this is really exciting, this is really important. And I try to tell them that in talking to my constituents and my -- and the folks that I serve in my district, they're not -- they're not engrossed in this stuff. They're concerned about the direction of Washington of a lot of new federal programs, but there's not dedicated resources in the long term, and they're saying what about the State of Connecticut right now?

I just had a town hall meeting in the Town of Suffield on Monday, and I had the charts and graphs in my hand. It's great to be talking about this right

now, but those charts and graphs indicate a huge revenue short fall and continued spending increases. And we are unable at this time, for whatever reason, to get our arms around those difficult, difficult decisions. That hasn't changed. This doesn't change. By putting the financial obligations out a few years, and I -- you know, people have pushed back on me with things like the Bradley Development Zone, where I'm talking about a million dollars, and we've actually targeting funding, a funding pool where those -- that money can be found. There's no funding stream for the additional monies that are going to be involved with us as a state and in this process, because we had a similar bill in the Program Review and Investigations Committee, where I serve as Co-Chair, and where ultimately we voted it down. Why did we vote it down? We asked on the JF deadline day to communicate with the Department of Education and we said can our commitment as a state be predicated on the federal funding or do we have to put in motion a promise to do this program with no promise by the federal government that they will adequately fund it? And the word came down from the Department of Education, if you put in language in the bill before Program Review and

Investigation that says the State of Connecticut will not go down this path regarding Race to the Top unless the federal government guarantees funding, it will fail. You will make an application that is destined to fail.

So let's think about that. What is the federal government asking us to do? Because they're -- they're being touted here, as an equal partner. Well, an equal partner says if I go halfway, you go halfway. I'm not seeing that here. What I'm seeing here is they're dangling a carrot in front of us and say come this way, come this way, promise you're going to do all of these things, X, Y, and Z, A, B, and, C. Don't say that you're going to back down. You make the commitment, State of Connecticut, and then we'll decide. We'll decide if you're in the top tier and then we'll decide how much money you get. That's not a fair bargaining position. Once burned, shame on you, second burned, shame on me. We've been down this path before with the federal government. I don't trust them. They're not bargaining with us in good faith, I don't believe.

It's typical and, indeed, we pass programs where we have incentives for communities to do certain

things. I'm not saying there's a nefarious motive here. I'm not saying that they're not being completely up front. But what I'm saying is that they are pushing off their decision making and their responsibility, so we have no mechanism to hold them accountable, yet they are lording this money, the hope of this money over our heads to make sure that we comply with what they desire. And that would be okay if we had an escape hatch, if we could put in there we're not going to do this, federal government, unless you're an equal partner and you guarantee the funding stream. But that doesn't seem like that's the way it's going.

It seems that we have to make certain moves, put certain things in statute, proceed along a path where I believe we will get to a point where we cannot withdraw. There will be too many institutionalized changes in our educational system; teachers and students will have different expectations; all of that infrastructure change, the paradigm shifts will occur. And if at that time all of a sudden the federal government is in a financial predicament or if all of a sudden at that time they change their mind while we're in Round 4 or 5 of this application process and

the money is reduced, we're on the hook. We are on the hook.

And now what do I tell my boards of education, my first selectmen, my boards of selectmen, my boards of finance, my town councils, my mayors? What do I tell them? Yes, we've done a miserable job in funding you for the last several years. Oh, we've helped maybe portions of the education budget sacrosanct, but we've been whacking you on the Mashantucket Pequot Fund. We've been whacking you on the Town Aid Road. We've been taking away so that ultimately -- and you know my town leaders have told me this, because I've talked to all of them -- don't say that you're protecting one area of the -- the state aid to towns where -- whereas you're reducing the other one, because we deal with the whole bushel basket of money. You could say that you're carving out this education component and keeping it sacrosanct, but if you're whacking us on all our other fund streams, we've got to make it up somehow. And so ultimately that does put pressure on the education side of the equation; right? It's the state and the towns. It's all of our funding to the municipalities. That's how they look at it and that's how I look at it. I have a concern about chasing

money in Washington.

And I don't want to minimize the debate that we're having here this afternoon, but I recall this really sort of funny movie from 1963 called It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World. And in the beginning of that movie, Jimmy Durante is dying on the side of the road and he goes, There's this money under the big W. And then he dies and he kicks the can, and then he literally kicks the can and it rolls down the hill. And then the next one hour and two hours of the movie is these people doing anything and everything to try to find the "big W" and get that money, anything and everything. It just possesses them. Excuse me, Kevin.

Well, have we as states turned into those five couples that watched Jimmy Durante pass away knowing that there's $350,000, which, by the way, I checked and in today's value, $350,000 would be $3.2 million; so that's what they were really going after, $3.2 million. Would any of us want to do whatever we could if there was $3.2 million buried under a big W in the Santa Rosita State Park in Southern California? We probably would. Would it be as crazy as that movie? Hopefully not. But it shows to what extent

individuals would do in trying to get money.

And I think the federal government understands that states are in a bind right now. Our budgets are flowing with red ink. We have this yawning $725 million deficit right now, and then around the corner is 3.2, 3.3, 3.4 -- I don't know what the exact number is going to land on -- but that's billions of dollars followed by another 3.2, 3.4 billions of dollars. And right now I'm hearing folks discussing borrowing another billion dollars and sending it out into the future, as if the future doesn't come. The future does come.

The most that I can do for my municipalities is allow them to plan. So at this point in time, despite the very great efforts made by all the stakeholders regarding the educational community, I appreciate the fact that they all got around the table, ironed out their differences, and that we are optimistic that we are going to apply for this funding and we're going to get it. And if you get it, that's great. We're all happy. But I'm not confident that Washington will be as responsive tomorrow as they appear to want to be today, and that is based upon a rational look-back over the years as to how we as a state have been

treated historically on other education initiatives that Washington has felt are important, No Child Left Behind, Special Education, all of these other things where the funding appears for a few years and then disappears.

So at this time, my commitment is to my municipalities. I am not going to send you down another path with the promise that perhaps should we be a big winner, we will have enough funding to do these things from the federal government, because heretofore historically, that has not been the pattern.

And with that, Mr. President, I wanted to articulate that. I care very strongly about public education in the State of Connecticut. I think that we need to reshore up our commitment to what's in place right now before we go down a path where we don't know what the future holds, and it's going to commit more dollars that we're struggling to find right now for current programs as opposed to new and advanced programs. You know, let's -- let's get our house in order now before we start building another wing to it. And that's my position.

Thank you, very much, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Will you remark further?

Senator Gaffey.

SENATOR GAFFEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, just in response to Senator Kissel's comments on -- on the bill -- and I -- I appreciate, Senator, where you're coming from. As a student of Jefferson, I'm a believer in state rights also, but I have to point out that if it hadn't been for the Obama administration providing us with $550 million, the municipalities who you care dearly about, as do all of us, would have been laying off thousands of teachers because that money was used to put into the ECS formula to distribute education dollars out to our school districts. And be it not for that, the school districts in the cities and towns would have been in for a world of hurt.

I agree with you, though, Senator Kissel, that it shouldn't just be about the money and it truly isn't. This bill is about good education policy; that's what this bill implements, very, very good education policy that will help our students in Connecticut achieve,

will prepare them far better for a global economy and what they're going to have to compete in, in their race for a job some day. And that's why I believed in this bill.

I stood before this Senate last year and I took out the secondary school reform, and I was hesitant at first when the Commissioner brought that to me. But then when I looked at the data and I read the articles and I looked at other states and -- and what happened when they did a similar, secondary school reform and what it meant to the students in those states, I -- I became more and more convinced this is what we need to do as a state. This is what we need to do to help our students become better educated. So it's about the policy not the dollars. I'm -- I'm totally with you on that.

I appreciate the fact, though, that in enacting good education policy, which this bill does, that the State of Connecticut will have a chance to compete for the dollars that have been put forward by the Obama administration that certainly has been held out there to motivate states to change their laws and policies to better-off education overall throughout the nation, hopefully. So I -- I concur with your points, I just

want to make sure that the folks back home don't have a misunderstanding that if we hadn't been the willing recipient of those dollars that the Governor put into the ECS formula -- formula in her budget for two years, we would have really been strapped here in the State of Connecticut.

I'll also agree with you, Senator, when you talked about Special Ed. Now, Special Ed is one of the largest -- before No Child Left Behind -- the largest federal mandate that's ever been handed down to us from Washington. But then, again, it's good public policy. There are kids that without Special Education would never be able to proceed through the ranks in school. It's good law.

Now, where they didn't treat us very well is when they promised us they were going to give us 50 percent of the funds and right now the State of Connecticut has about 7 percent, and we are left as a state to deal with that.

No Child Left Behind was an even bigger mandate. To require the State of Connecticut, which I would submit had an excellent testing program of testing in the 4th grade, 6th grade, and 8th grade, and then to go and have to now include the 3rd, the 5th, and the

7th, and when we all knew -- those of us that look at this a lot -- that you're really not going to find much more out about how the kids are doing by adding those extra -- extra years. But, you know, they passed it, and unfortunately, I don't believe with all due deference to our friends down in Washington that the -- that they give as good a review of the legislation as we do here in the State of Connecticut in our various screening committees and bill review committees. It's a -- it's a big process down there that I think is largely staff driven.

But, you know, we're -- we're trying to make all of this work so that we have a better educational opportunity -- no, an excellent educational opportunity -- for all of the students in the State of Connecticut, and I think that in this case, it's worth doing. It's not about the money, it's about the policy. It's about helping kids do better in school, and I hope the Chamber will join with me and support the underlying bill.

Thank you, very much, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I think that a very strong effort has been made this session to try to focus ourselves again on educational quality, and I am grateful that the Race to the Top has reenergized and focussed us on many important things that the State of Connecticut should and must do. I wish I could be as confident that this particular effort will get us closer to attaining the funds that are desperately needed here in a competition that's going out throughout the country.

Connecticut historically has been the state where education was its hallmark and what makes our Connecticut one of the best states to live and to work and why many of us actually even began our public service that led us to Hartford. Because so many of these advocates, including our Chairmans of the Education Committee and a couple of different commissioners that I've had the pleasure of working with -- and Governors -- worked on real ground-breaking legislation, things that required, for example, in Hartford for a period of time that required the arbitration process to consider the best

interest of the child rather than other factors that they were considering in the past, things like reducing social promotion, reforming bilingual education, providing free preschool education for disadvantaged children, and really improving and toughening our standards and curriculum.

And in the late nineties and the early two hundreds, it was really a wonderful time to be an educational advocate in Connecticut because Connecticut was number one in the country. But we have fallen precipitously behind, not just one or two places, but over the few years, as many as ten places behind. And only in the last year or so have we tried to climb our way back.

And when we talk about the kind of barriers that our children have, there is no question that they do, children living in poverty, Special Education, and other barriers to success. But you have to remember that all of the other states we compete with also have those barriers, children in Mississippi and Arkansas and Alabama, and in Washington, DC, wherein Washington, DC they have made great strides in accountability. In fact, they've made it so far that they're actually paying teachers for performance.

They're evaluating teachers. They're being allowed to move teachers out that are not performing and elevate teachers that are performing.

Now, we have to ask why we have fallen behind and why we have not yet made it to the Race to the Top and if, in fact, this reform package before us is going to get us further ahead. I think there is going to be a problem because in order to win that Race to the Top, it's not merely that we've reached a consensus with various groups, but more importantly, did we do any real reforms? And I'm afraid that this bill does not get us there.

I am concerned about that, and yet I think our neighboring State of New York and others -- and although we have put in some good portions, and I -- I must say there's good news in this package, as well, which will probably lead me to actually support this bill because we do improve our standards. We do include certain higher requirements for graduation in the sciences, in the mathematical area, in technology, and also in the arts, I might add. This is very good news.

And there's also some good news in there with regards to charter schools, where there does make an

attempt to recognize the wonderful successes they are having. In fact, their successes are so good that they're expansion and their attraction is going to other states like New York where, in fact, they are looking at -- at growing 10 to 15 schools in New York City with the help of some of the great expertise that really developed and began right here in the State of Connecticut.

They're doing it because they don't have their hands tied in that state. And I would remark that our charter legislation has often been analyzed to be one of the most difficult ones to work within in any of the states in the country. We have a lot of -- of barriers to actual flexibility to be able to function independently in -- in our charter schools.

So, as I said, I think that we have made some good moves in this particular bill, some that can be highly supported, even if the funding stream is not certain, as it's obvious here. I am incredibly concerned that the real reforms that they are seeking nationally are just not there. We just couldn't get there. And there are vested interests that work so hard at -- at keeping the status quo here that we can't seem to -- to get beyond that for the sake of

our children, for the sake of our education, to catapult us back to what has been our hallmark, and that is Connecticut being the education state not just in our higher education but in our elementary schools throughout the State of Connecticut.

So I stand and support a good portion of what we tried to do here. I am disappointed with a lot of other aspects to this. I am hoping that we will have some good ideas that will come forward that will help to address those particular important areas that should be addressed, and maybe -- maybe we can just do that right here in the Senate.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT IN THE CHAIR

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, ma'am.

Senator Caligiuri.

SENATOR CALIGIURI:

Thank you, very much, Mr. President.

Mr. President, good afternoon.

THE CHAIR:

Good afternoon, sir.

SENATOR CALIGIURI:

And I rise for purposes of an amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR CALIGIURI:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, the Clerk is in possession of Amendment LCO Number 4634. I would ask that the Clerk call the amendment and that I be given leave to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

LCO 4634 to be designated Senate Amendment Schedule B. It's offered by Senator Roraback of the 30th, et al.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Caligiuri.

SENATOR CALIGIURI:

Thank you, Mr. President. I move adoption.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR CALIGIURI:

Thank you. And I would request a roll call vote,

also.

THE CHAIR:

Roll call vote will be ordered, sir.

SENATOR CALIGIURI:

Thank you, very much, Mr. President.

Mr. President, going back to a number of points that were made during the course of the discussion on the bill and to an exchange that Senator Gaffey and I were having, really, to cut to the heart of it, what the amendment does is restore to Sections 3, 4, and 5 of the bill before us today language that was in Senate Bill 440 that was adopted unanimously by the Education Committee, some weeks ago.

And the reason that we believe, those of us who support the amendment that this is worthy of the circle's support is because we believe it strengthens our education policy both as a matter of policy and also for purposes of the Race to the Top application.

Senator Gaffey and Senator Kissel had a very good exchange about is this about the money that the state is seeking from the federal government; is it about education policy. What I took from their excellent exchange is that it's really about both. As a practical matter, part of what we're trying to

accomplish with this bill is to be as competitive as we possibly can be as a state for purposes of the Race to the Top application. But as a matter of policy, we're also seeking to improve our education policy in a number of ways. I believe the amendment before us advances both of those causes.

The real heart of what we're trying to accomplish with this amendment is to go back to the prior language where we made academic growth of students as closely linked to teacher evaluations and teacher performance as we possibly can. I believe, and the supporters of this amendment believe that the language that was originally in Senate Bill 440 links more closely teacher performance to growth in academic performance on the part of our students. We believe that that is right for us, both in terms of strengthening our application, because we believe this will allow the state to have a stronger application in terms of the number of points we might earn and overall for purposes of Race to the Top. But, also, even if it weren't about the money, this is also an advancement and an improvement as a matter of education policy, because I suspect, and notwithstanding the fact that the devil are always in

the details, that ultimately what we're trying to do in strengthening teacher evaluations is to do it in a way that not only enhances their own career but most importantly improves their performance as the teacher of our children, knowing full well that that's ultimately what our school system is about.

And so I believe that the original language in Senate Bill 440, that was approved in the Education Committee, was clearer and more precise and I think tighter as it related to the very important policy of teaching or of tying teacher evaluations to student academic performance. And in its essence, that's what we were trying to achieve with the amendment that is before us at this moment, Mr. President. And for those reasons, I would urge adoption and would encourage everyone in the circle to support it.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir.

Senator Gaffey.

SENATOR GAFFEY:

Thank you, Mr. President; good to see you today.

THE CHAIR:

It's good to be seen, sir.

SENATOR GAFFEY:

Thank you, sir.

Mr. President, I rise to oppose the amendment that my friend Senator Caligiuri has offered to the Chamber. And I rise to oppose it because the amendment, although Senator Caligiuri is correct, is identical to the bill that we passed out of the Education Committee unanimously. As I referred to before, that bill was a work in progress. That bill was not going to be the final bill. We moved out the vehicle because we knew we were going to be taking that bill as well as five other bills and taking language from those bills to put into the bill that's before us today.

I might also add that the bill that came out of Education unanimously failed in the Appropriations Committee. But be that as it may, the reason I oppose the amendment is because the amendment is less detailed with regard to the type of data that we provide in the underlying bill as amended, the detail I talked about prior the context of what's going on in the classroom.

I mentioned that Professor Fred Carstensen had recently published an article and wrote on this. And this article came out about a month ago, and when I

read it, I became convinced that he was right. And what he wrote, Mr. President, and I quote him, There are an awful lot of things about school organization and the context in which teachers function to know. You just can't look at student progress and say the teacher is at fault or the teacher deserves credit. He said that's just ridiculous. He added, quote, How do you measure a teacher when 50 percent of the students change during the year? He said a meaningful system ought to include a wide array of data, beginning with the students' earlier contact with the educational system. This underlying bill does that. This underlying bill tracks the mobility of students, so we know how transient is the student population.

The amendment that my friend Senator Caligiuri has offered does not include that, the family characteristics, the absenteeism, the class size, disciplinary issues, turnover of teachers and students. I mean, this is the type -- these are the type of issues that you have to include in your data in order to have context behind what the test score data shows. You have to understand that there are other things going on in the classroom besides just what the students score on a -- a test that's given

once a year.

This bill, I'll also point out, it goes into effect one year earlier, so you'd have the cost far earlier that you have to deal with, I believe, in the biennium. And I also point out that this amendment allows for the evaluation to rely solely upon the tests that are given once a year. And I don't think that that's fair. I agree with Professor Carstensen up at UConn. I think that there's a far better way of doing it, and that way is included in the bill as amended. And so, Mr. President, I would ask that the -- the Chamber oppose the amendment before us.

Thank you, sir.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Gaffey.

Senator Caligiuri, for second time.

SENATOR CALIGIURI:

Thank you, very much, Mr. President.

And -- and for the second time on the amendment, in response to my friend and colleague Senator Gaffey, just a few points. I understand his point of view but I disagree, respectably. You know, the -- the amendment before us is less detailed in terms of the data. But it's also more explicit in terms of the

linkage, which is a term that was actually used in Senate Bill 440, between the data we're trying to achieve and school performance. And I think that was an advantage in the earlier language. But for the most part, I believe that Senator Gaffey's response really missed the heart of what I articulated as being the real reason why we believe this needs to be supported. It's not the data piece so much, it's the fact that the original language said and the language in the amendment before us is that student academic growth should be a significant factor in teacher evaluation.

And I don't disagree with the points that Senator Gaffey made about Section 3 of the bill, in effect, because that's what he was talking about in terms of the additional detail that's provided in the bill on the data, but that doesn't address the fact that when you get to the central question of how best to handle teacher evaluation, the wisdom of Senate Bill 440 is that we made it explicit, and we couldn't have made it any clearer, that student academic growth was going to be a significant factor in teacher evaluation. I can't think of a factor that would be more important for purposes of teacher evaluation than the academic

performance of the children whom they teach.

And I don't believe, with respect to Senator Gaffey's earlier point, that anything in the amendment or in 440 said that it had to only be testing that would be the basis for making that decision. That's not what we're trying to achieve here. What we're trying to say is that when in the Education Committee we said as a matter of policy that student academic growth should be a significant factor in teacher evaluations, we got it right. And to take that language out, although not for malicious reasons or anything like that because we all care about achieving the same goal, I think notwithstanding, we're taking a step back.

We had a chance to articulate very, very clearly, as a matter of policy and, frankly, for purposes of advancing our application for Race to the Top, that we as a matter of policy were taking a stand and saying that academic growth on our students' part is a significant factor when considering teacher evaluations. That is a wonderfully clear and powerful statement of what I believe should be the right policy for us to advance as the State of Connecticut. And that's the reason why, when you cut through it all, I

believe this amendment is worthy of our support.

And with that, I thank Senator Gaffey for a good exchange, and I thank you, Mr. President, for -- for the time.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir.

Remark further on senate Amendment B?

Senator McLachlan.

SENATOR McLACHLAN:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I rise for comment and a few questions to the proponent of the amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gaffey.

SENATOR McLACHLAN:

The amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Oh, the amendment -- I'm sorry -- Senator Caligiuri.

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR McLACHLAN:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Senator Caligiuri, I noticed that one of the key advocates of charter schools in the State of

Connecticut known as "ConnCAN" expressed concern this -- this after or yesterday afternoon about the bill before us in that it may fall short of Race to the Top application from the State of Connecticut being successful. In fact, what they said was unfortunately, because Connecticut was so far behind in Race to the Top, this progress -- meaning the bill -- may not be enough to win in Round 2 of the race and bring home the hundred and seventy-five million dollars sorely needed for our schools.

They go on to say that three key reforms proposed by ConnCAN would have made Connecticut more competitive in the Race to the Top but were not included in this final legislation. Student achievement is not required to be the primary factor in teacher evaluations. There are no consequences attached to teachers whose students don't achieve. We did not the address the unsustainable and unequal funding system for our public charter schools. And so given that observation by the key advocates for charter schools in Connecticut, would you be in agreement that this amendment addresses those concerns and raises the bar for the State of Connecticut in a realistic application for Race to the Top?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Caligiuri.

SENATOR CALIGIURI:

Thank you, very much, Mr. President.

I would agree that the amendment before us addresses their primary concern as it relates to linking student performance to teacher evaluations, which is really the bulk of what, through you, Mr. President, Senator McLachlan described as being a concern of ConnCAN. This amendment does not directly address the latter point you made about charter schools, but it does certainly tackle head on the clear linkage between student performance and teacher evaluations that many people believe, including the organization to which you referred, we need to be making to have the strongest possible application for strength to the -- for Race to the Top. So I do believe that the amendment would be addressing those concerns. Through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator McLachlan.

SENATOR McLACHLAN:

Thank you, Senator, for your observation on that statement.

I believe that charter schools is a wonderful concept. I am a product of Catholic schools and public schools. I had a experience in both -- both school systems. And charter schools, in my observation, are the success stories of public education as we know it today. So I am very supportive of charter schools and the concept of enhancing and increasing their effectiveness.

My concern is that there has been so much criticism in the State of Connecticut about the State of Connecticut's application for Race to the Top that was unsuccessful, and that when those complaints were aired and those criticisms came forth, they were fairly clear that there were a lot of blanks left in the application. And in further discussion with the charter school advocates and the advocates for Race to the Top, it became pretty clear what Connecticut had to do to attain a successful application for Race to the Top.

I think the underlying bill fall short. It is a -- it is a terrific move forward. I don't want to underestimate the importance of what you're attempting to do in the Education Committee. And Senator Gaffey has -- has worked very hard on this, and I appreciate

the work that you and your counterpart in the House have done on behalf of this measure. But let us be realistic that we can't push legislation forward that is half an apple and anticipate piles of money just flowing in from Washington, DC, when the rules are very clear. The -- the success stories that we've heard about in states like Tennessee are very clear, what scores high. And the bill, the underlying bill is going to require us to fall short, once again.

So this amendment allows us to raise the bar and give us a realistic shot at a successful application for Race to the Top for the State of Connecticut. And so I urge my colleagues to seriously consider this amendment as a positive step forward, a realistic expectation that these changes to the underlying bill is going to give the State of Connecticut a realistic possibility of success for Race to the Top.

My concern is that objections to this amendment is a deeply flawed, underlying bill that is giving people unrealistic expectations, unrealistic expectations of substantive changes to the system and will fall far short. And half measures avail us nothing. We must work and -- and to our best ability to our best capability in Connecticut. We don't have

a lot of shots at this.

So if the -- if the State of Connecticut General Assembly has determined that -- that you want to chase federal money -- and I must agree with -- with my colleague, Senator Kissel; I have concerns of that whole concept, but I've accepted the fact that -- that this state is going to go chase federal money. Well, if you're going to chase the federal money, chase it right. Don't run around in circles and leave yourself with another weak application. Give yourself the opportunity for a real strong opportunity at Race for the Top. But I think this amendment really brings it to that level and will give us a realistic chance for Race to the Top.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir.

Senator Gaffey.

SENATOR GAFFEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

And, Mr. President, I've been in the Senate for 16 years and I'll tell you, I've been a part of a lot of negotiations on bills, on education budgets, and this is the first time in my career that after you

have a negotiation the ghosts of those negotiations reappear on the Senate floor, and I find that regrettable but, nonetheless, it's happened.

I want to point out a couple things to the members, and this is, with all due respect to Senator McLachlan, this is absolutely no connection to your -- your comments that you made. I -- I appreciate your comments. I think that some of what you said was on target. Others, other comments, though, I -- I think weren't quite on target.

And I think any member of this Chamber, any member of the General Assembly that wants to get a full flavor of opinion on this or any other bill needs to talk to the people who were involved in it and not just reply upon one party's position, that party in this case being ConnCAN. I have a lot of respect for ConnCAN; I've worked with them in the past. I dare say that most of the charter school reforms would not have occurred without that work. And, in fact, I enjoy working with the charter school people. They're dedicated individuals.

In this case, though, on this application, ConnCAN is not the be-all, end-all expert of what's going on with Race to the Top. We have another

expert; he's called the Commissioner of Education. And the Commissioner of Education would sit there and tell you that he would disagree with ConnCAN's position on this. And he would also walk you through the scoring rubric of the Race to the Top application and point out where we are going to pick up those hundred points that we need. This is not just about the charter school issue. We've done a lot for the charter schools. We do a lot in this bill. We've done a lot in the past. And I'll point out that one of the leading states in Round 1, one of the finalist states, was Kentucky. They don't have one charter school in that state, not one.

So I would just encourage members to listen to all sides, in particular, someone who is unbiased and has the responsibility and obligation to conduct education policy in this state, who speaks to the people in Washington all of the time. Commissioner McQuillan was at the table for all but one meeting in these negotiations. He spent many, many hours on this. We went through each and every one of the scoring rubrics, and he and I and Representative Fleischmann, and I thought everybody in the room are convinced that this is an excellent bill, this will

give us a great shot at leaning to the tape at the end of the race down in Washington and hopefully put us in the winner's circle. This is a process of a long negotiation, and I think it's a -- a product that doesn't fall short. I think it does the job.

I will also point out that at the outset of this debate, I mentioned that there are other states that are dropping out of the race, Massachusetts, Colorado, because they have lost the support of the major education stakeholders on their application. Here, we have the support of the major education stakeholders and we're going to be able to go over that with the reviewers in Washington. They're going to know that we have that support, and God willing, we'll be able to show them that we've made these changes to state statute that they are looking for us to make so that we do things like have an alternative route to certification for principals, that we do things like strengthen the rigor of our high school curriculum and focus on science and mathematics and foreign languages.

There are so many excellent public policy reforms for education in Connecticut in this bill that will help us get the hundred points that we need and

hopefully, as I said, wind up in the winner's circle with the funding from the administration down in Washington.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir.

Senator McKinney.

SENATOR McKINNEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I rise in support of the amendment and would like to begin my comments by acknowledging, in my opinion, the underlying bill which we seek to amend is a good one. As Senator Gaffey has said, there are a number of important reforms in here, secondary school reform, very good, very important.

I am concerned about the cost and the fact that we push out in the cost in out years because we simply do not have the political will to fund that cost today in our economic environment.

Lifting the caps on charter schools, another very good reform of which I have long supported. But, again, if you lift the caps on charter schools but don't provide any additional dollars, have you, in effect, lifted the caps on charter schools? I think

that's a fair question to ask.

Alternative certification for school administrators, also a good reform, and I've stood in this circle in the past and supported alternative certification for teachers. Good reforms.

I didn't like the in-school suspension bill, but even the more flexibility added, which CAVE has supported, is a positive step in the right direction.

So this amendment is brought forward not to criticize the underlying bill but it's brought forward because we believe that the underlying bill, while progress and good, is not the state's best foot forward. It is not the best we can do to get our state in line for Race to the Top money.

Now, one of the things that I found very interesting -- and I certainly do not want to make this about Commissioner McQuillan, but I -- I do want to thank him for about 45 minutes of his time the other day when Representative Cafero and I had the opportunity to meet with him. He did go over all of the scoring on the state's first application with me. We did talk about the policies of this bill, and candidly, the politics as well. One of the things that struck me, and this is what got me and members of

our caucus talking about this amendment, was not to be critical of the work that so many including principally Senator Gaffey had done but because we can do better. And I heard, and -- and with all due respect, I heard Commissioner McQuillan say it; I heard Senate Gaffey say it so many times today that this is about consensus, that you brought many stakeholders, many of whom have fought, pitched battles in this Legislature together to agree. And what struck me as something that should have been a wow moment didn't wow me, and I'll tell you why, because I had read in the Wall Street Journal a quote by President Obama's Education Secretary, Secretary Duncan.

And I want members of the circle to -- to listen to what Secretary Duncan -- he is the man who will decide on the Race to the Top applications -- he said in an interview that he welcomed the friction between union and state officials, but he warned against states weakening their overhaul plans simply to win buy-ins from unions. Quote, watered down proposals with lot of consensus won't win and proposals that drive real reform will win. That is a quote from Wednesday, April 26, 2010, from the very man who is

going to decide which states get Race to the Top money and which don't.

So Secretary Duncan, who I think is doing a phenomenal job, who is changing the conversation about education in our country, who is leading the way in doing all those remarkable things that Senator Meyer talked about, things that five years ago, ten years ago, we wouldn't have been doing, he is saying I want real reform, I don't want consensus. Yet we have an underlying bill before us which we say is a product of consensus.

We think our amendment represents a further step in that right direction. And whether or not we get the hundred additional points -- and I concede that Senator Gaffey knows more about this than I do -- but I think the question for Race to the Top in Round 2 -- and we don't know whether there'll be a Round 3; there is some rumor that there might be a Round 3 -- but I think the question is not whether you get the same number of points. The question alone is not whether you get the same number of points as Tennessee or Delaware did last time, the two states that won, it's whether or not you get higher points than all the other states you're competing with.

And so when I look at what other states have done and are doing with Race to the Top, I question whether or not our bill goes far enough. And Senator Gaffey is correct, and the same article does talk about political battles breaking out in Florida and Ohio and Indiana and Massachusetts because people are trying to enact that very real reform that Secretary Duncan is pushing for. And I think we all know that in this building while consensus is very hard, real reform that has opposition is even harder. And that's why those battles are being waged in so many other states.

But when you look at the Race to the Top criteria, measuring effectiveness is very important. Perhaps it may be the most important point section of any of them. And if you look at the application, a state-of-the-art growth model that links to teacher and principal evaluations is worth 83 points. And if you use the growth model to improve affective -- the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs, you get another 14 points.

The underlying bill does talk about student growth but the underlying bill also fails to take any explicit reference to teacher effectiveness. Without specifically referencing teacher effectiveness, our

Race to the Top application will not be as good as other states. Half of the Round 1 finalists explicitly committed to making student achievement growth of at least 50 percent, Colorado, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Rhode Island, and Tennessee. The highest point total was Rhode Island at 51 percent. So we know Rhode Island will be competing for Race to the Top, and we know on the issue of student effectiveness -- teacher effectiveness -- excuse me -- Connecticut's application falls short of Rhode Island's. Does that mean we won't get it? I don't know. But I would want our application to be the best, and on this one measure we know we fall short of several other states.

The language of this bill, the underlying bill, talks about requiring school districts to develop a valuation for teachers and school leaders that incorporates student achievement growth. Now, in our amendment, we don't eliminate -- we don't eliminate the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council. So all of the factors which Senator Gaffey talked about, which critics say are mitigating factors, which Senator Gaffey and others and Mr. Carstensen have talked about are real factors, whether they're

mitigating or not, they can all be discussed by this advisory council in our amendment.

And I stand here as a parent with three kids in the public school system, and I don't know the answer to any of that. If you look at standardized tests and one student scores a 50 and another scores an 80, if after a year the student who was at 50 goes to 70 and the student at 80 goes to 85, who had greater growth? I don't know the answer to that. What if one student is -- has other things going on in their lives, comes to school hungry? All of those things should be measures and I imagine they will be by this advisory council.

The issue between our amendment and the underlying bill is not whether those factors should be considered but it's whether or not it is the significant factor to be of value. And we believe that Secretary Duncan and his administration in Washington believed that to be Race to the Top finalists, to be real reform, this has to be a significant factor. And the omission of that language in the underlying bill, the very change from the Education Committee bill, which did pass language saying "significant factor," and this bill which takes

out the term "significant" in my opinion can be looked at by the federal government as a weakening of our overhaul plan and therefore make our Race to the Top application less favorable.

Yes, I understand Senator Gaffey said it was a work in progress and we all know how that works. But a good lawyer would go into court, Mr. President, and say, your Honor, their first bill had significant factor. They all sat in a room, all the stakeholders, and they came out with a final bill that omitted the words "significant factor." They have weakened their application and their reform in order to gain consensus, and Secretary Duncan said don't weaken your plans to gain consensus because you won't win. So we may have a good bill but it may not be our best effort to get Race to the Top money.

And, in fact, I'm going to vote for the underlying bill because it does make improvements. But I cannot vote for the underlying bill alone and say not only have we made good reforms, not only have we made positive steps, but the State of Connecticut has laid the groundwork and has prepared ourselves to file the best application we can for Race to the Top money because that simply won't be the case. It

simply won't be the case.

When you look at the issue of charter schools, I believe we scored 23 out of 40 points on the first application on the issue of charter -- charter schools. The enrollment cap on -- of 85 students per grade on high-performing charter schools is lifted. That's an excellent part of the underlying bill. But we don't have any money to ensure that we're going to get more charter school children and we're going to get more teachers.

I asked our staff to look at the fiscal note and said, well, wait a minute, if we're lifting the cap, we're going to have more kids in our charter schools. We're going to have more teachers. We're going to have a fiscal note impacting the 2011 budget. What are we going to do about that? Well, the fiscal note says there is an impact on the 2011 budget, which means while we've technically lifted the cap, those in Washington would say effectively you haven't. That will significantly hurt our application to Race to the Top.

I also was surprised to learn -- and, again, this is a difficult political issue and even more difficult in our economic environment with large budget deficits

-- but there are 47 states, according to my research, that have Money Follows the Kid. Connecticut is not one of them. Many of the other finalists in the first round of applications for Race to the Top have Money Follows the Kid. Both first-round winners, Tennessee and Delaware, have Money Follows the Kid. So when you look at what states that we will be competing with, whether we get the hundred points more or not, other states want these federal dollars; five hundred million to one state; a hundred million to another. I'd welcome it all. I want as much federal dollars as we can get, because Lord knows the State of Connecticut has been a giver to the federal government for far too long. We give and we get about 66 cents back on the dollar we send down there. So it's about time we got some more from the federal government.

But Illinois and Louisiana and Massachusetts, they've all lifted the cap on their charter schools and have Money Following the Kid so they can get more kids in charter schools. So if Massachusetts were to correct some of their political problems and file an application, on that issue, they are ahead of us, as is Louisiana, as would be Illinois. In fact, half of the first-round finalists, Colorado, Florida, Georgia,

Pennsylvania, South Carolina, just to name a few states, had no caps and they have Money Follows the Kid.

Again, good policy lifting the caps, difficult issue on Money Follows the Kid, progress being made in the State of Connecticut. Best application? Probably not in comparison to what other states are doing. Alternative certification for school leaders, again, excellent, excellent progress being made. But other states, including many of our neighboring states like New York and Rhode Island, have 30-hour, I believe a 30-onth -- excuse me -- or 3-year requirements. Our bill, I think, is 4 years and 40 months. Now, I don't weigh in on whether 3 years and 30 months is a better policy than 4 years or 40, but I do know it will restrict the number of administrators who will go through the certification process. We will, by nature, have less, and therefore our application and our good reform is not quite as good as other states that we're competing against.

I think, Mr. President, that needs to be the context within which we offer this amendment. The underlying bill represents very good progress, and whether we get Race to the Top money or not, it's the

right thing to do and there's still more work to be done, especially when the financial implications of the underlying bill kick in, because we're going to have very difficult decisions to make in that regard. We happen to believe that we can get a better application presented to the federal government.

And I've heard -- and I don't know the answer to this -- I've heard some say that Secretary Duncan, who I've never met, has changed his mind and flipped flopped and gone back and forth on the issue of consensus, not consensus; I honestly don't know. What I know is that less than five days ago he is quoted as saying consensus won't win Race to the Top dollars, real reform will. My fear is that the underlying bill will not get us over the top -- pardon the pun -- will maybe -- maybe it will get us more points. And it will get us more points -- excuse me -- not maybe; it will get us more points. But I don't think it's going to make us a finalist or a winner in Race to the Top funds.

I mean, just -- let's look at just secondary school reform, again, good reform. But we push out the cost, I think, until either 2012 or 2013. A federal bureaucrat could look at that and say how

Committed, Connecticut, are you to these reforms? You've said you're going to do them but you're not going to have them happen or pay for them until a couple years; and, oh, by the way, you want our money beforehand. Someone could look at that and say you'll do the reforms if you get our money; you won't do the reforms if you don't. I don't believe that's the intent of this Legislature. I know it's not the intent of Senator Gaffey who -- we passed this, I believe, last year in the Senate and it didn't pass in the House. But that is something that could hurt our application as well; again, very difficult issues to resolve.

But I just -- without pouring too much cold water on our application -- I just think in our caucus we believe we could have gone a little bit farther. We could have done a little bit better, and we believe this amendment represents an extra step that will set our state up for very important and very needed Race to the Top funds. And with that, Mr. President, I urge adoption for the amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir.

Will you remark further on Senate Amendment B?

Will you remark further on Senate Amendment B? If not, Mr. Clerk, please call for a roll call vote. The machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate. Will all Senators please return to the chamber. Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate. Will all Senators please return to the chamber.

THE CHAIR:

Have all Senators voted? If all Senators have voted, could you please check your vote? The machine will be locked. The Clerk will call the tally.

THE CLERK:

Motion is on adoption of Senate Amendment Schedule B:

Total Number Voting	35
Those voting Yea	10
Those voting Nay	25
Those absent and not voting	1

THE CHAIR:

Amendment B fails.

Will you remark further on the bill as amended by Senate A?

Senator Gaffey.

SENATOR GAFFEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, just for purpose of legislative intent, in Section 21, it refers to, when you're deciding whether it's in-school or out-of-school suspension, that the administration address this question and the issue of the discipline problems of the child through means other than out-of-school suspension or expulsion, including positive behavioral support strategies. For legislative intent, I just want to make it clear that that is not a prescribed, any particular prescribed program that the districts will have flexibility in determining what positive behavioral supports that they -- they would implement in their schools.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir.

Will you remark further on Senate Bill 438, as amended by Senate A?

Senator Debicella.

SENATOR DEBICELLA:

Mr. President, just briefly, I stand in support

of this bill today. I think a lot of the debate that we've been having is whether or not this is going to qualify us for Race for the Top money, and I believe that the bill, because it is a compromise, not doing the things that we necessarily needed to do is going to put us at risk.

But I actually look at this bill a slightly different way. I'm just looking at this as public policy, never mind getting the money. And what is in this bill is good public policy to actually promote the extension and development of charter schools in our state. There could be no doubt that charter schools have been a force for good in improving the quality of education, not just in improving the lives of students who go to the charter schools but serving as an example to public schools of how they can actually be more effective.

I'm especially encouraged in this bill, Mr. President, with the section on innovation schools. There is one point of disappointment I have on this, though, and a question, through you, to the proponent of the bill on this.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gaffey.

SENATOR DEBICELLA:

Through you, Mr. President, the section of the bill dealings with innovation schools, when I had voted on this bill in the Appropriations Committee or some version of it, had innovation schools being triggered by a vote of the parents. And it was actually the parents in a community that could create an innovation school. Now the bill seems to say it a vote of the teachers and administrators that actually trigger an innovation school.

Through you, Mr. President, what was the logic of making that change through the legislative process?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gaffey.

SENATOR GAFFEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Through you, sir, Senator Debicella, you're referring to a different bill that you had in Appropriations; that was a bill that was put forth that at the time, I believe, in the Appropriations Committee had a parent trigger, I believe they refer to. But that -- that was never included in -- in this bill, the innovation schools in the section we have in this bill just allow for a different model, similar

to, as I said before, what the City of New Haven agreed to with their teachers' union where you have flexibility in hours, work at the school, a school day, budgets, waivers of certain contractural provisions in the -- in the -- the contract with the teachers. That's what this refers to. The other bill spoke to the issue that you're -- you're asking a question about now, through you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Debicella.

SENATOR DEBICELLA:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I thank Senator Gaffey for the answer to that question, And I think that demonstrates why, while we have a good bill before us today, it had the potential to be a great bill. We have a bill that is going to expand charter schools, make it easy for alternative certification, all the things that we've been talking about, all good public policy. But there were ideas that were making its way through the General Assembly which could have been revolutionary in taking a huge leap forward for education. And giving parents the power to actually implement an innovation school, which is a version of a charter school, I actually

think would have helped our education system immensely.

So I rise today, Mr. President, in support of this bill because of all the positive things that are in it, but I rise with somewhat of a heavy heart that we didn't have a bill that would truly make Connecticut education take a great leap forward.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir.

Will you remark further on Senate Bill 438 as amended by Senate A?

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, speaking in support of the bill, first I would like to commend Senator Gaffey for his extraordinary labor in this very, very difficult process of negotiation leading to this significant, consensus bill. To some extend, it must be the -- the educational -- the education policy equivalent of bringing together Prime Minister Netanyahu and the Palestinians in a debate, in a negotiation process involving the charter schools and the -- and the

teachers' unions as participants in this debate.

I think this is a really historic bill, and there are so many ground-breaking provisions in it that will be of great significance for us in the years ahead, and they were worth doing without regard to whether or not there is, in fact, a Race to the Top competition or whether or not Connecticut will be successful in pursuit of funding in the next round of that. The changes in this bill are important education policy changes for Connecticut, and the time to do them was now. And Senator Gaffey took advantage of that time and struck while the iron was hot to do it.

There are so many provisions, again, Mr. President, that are in fact historic. In Section 4 of the bill, requiring the development of guidelines for a model teacher evaluation program that includes student academic growth and requires local school district evaluation programs to be consistent with those guidelines, that is major, major change. We all know that credentialing is not necessarily the equivalent of good performance. We all know that -- that whether a -- a teacher has a master's degree or a 60-year certificate does not necessarily equate with outstanding performance in the classroom, just as not

every -- every attorney who has a law degree in the field is necessarily good in the practice of law.

There are performance indicators that are critical. We know that there is nothing more important than the performance of our students and ways of gauging growth and progress. As mentioned earlier in the colloquy, if you have students in a low-performing school with an excellent teacher, they may make progress. They may still perhaps lag behind, to some degree, those who started in a much higher level, but the degree of ground covered, the degree of advancement may be spectacular.

So -- and I think evaluating starting points and ending points for students is what this will lead us to understand and evaluate and pinpoint where genuine progress is being made, understanding the starting points in determining the nature and extent of that progress. So Section 4 of the bill, I think, is -- is revolutionary.

Section 13 or Section 6, also, providing -- permitting a board of a priority school district to convert an existing school to an innovation school, this way of dealing with schools and those that may be in troubled circumstances is also a critical

breakthrough. Section 13, eliminating the requirement that the State Board of Ed issue charters and waiving the enrollment caps, this is, again, a manifestation, a belief in the success of the best charter schools in our state and moving toward allowing them to expand without artificially or arbitrarily imposed caps. Again, as was pointed out by Senator McKinney and others, the funding issue is -- is certainly critical here that -- that we need to find ways to -- to back that commitment up with additional money. But removing the cap, in and of itself, is a significant move.

So there is so much in this bill that is worth doing without regard to the Race to the Top process. It'd, of course, I think, help crystallize the debate and create a greater sense of urgency because there is the Race to the Top incentive out there, but all of these changes stand on their own merit and are worth doing, in and of themselves.

Section 21, as Senator Gaffey referred to, is very important in terms of building in a -- a better due-process framework for the idea of in-school versus out-of-school suspensions. That's a -- a battle we've been fighting for several years. Those of us who

represent urban districts believe very strongly that there should be in-school suspension, that out of school suspension should be reserved for those rare cases of -- of threat to discipline and threats of -- of actual harm, and -- and threats of order in the school. Most of the kinds of incidents for which students are being, in many cases, suspended, we believe, are not necessarily justified in terms of out-of-school suspension. In fact, as we all know with many adolescents, if they have the sort of Ferris Bueller frame of mind, the idea that -- that if I could violate a rule and get three days off might be an incentive to do so. It might be perceived by some as a reward to be able to be out of school for a few days. So this section of the bill gives an express authority to use a student's past disciplinary problems that have led to being suspended or expelled as a criteria for determining whether an out-of-school suspension is warranted in a particular case. And before determining that an out of school suspension is appropriate, the school must have tried to address that problem through other means. This is good pedagogy. This is a good way to -- to approach this. There have to be other means tried including positive

behavioral support strategies and looking upon out of school suspension as a last resort rather than a first resort. This is an important, common-sense provision.

I commend Senator Gaffey for all of his work on this and his dogged determination to keep on with this principle and to -- to not allow it to be postponed any further.

So, again, there is so much in this bill that is -- that is worth doing, either within the context of a Race to the Top application or outside of it. In any case, this is an important day for educational advancement in the State of Connecticut.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir.

Will you remark?

Senator Williams.

SENATOR WILLIAMS:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I rise to associate myself with the remarks of Senator Gaffey and Senator Looney. I won't repeat what Senator Looney said so eloquently other that -- then the fact that we are moving forward with a very

important bill concerning education that will improve the standards in the State of Connecticut, align ourselves with the reform movement that's starting with the Obama administration in Washington, DC, enhance our eligibility for more federal funding, and in the end provide a better education for our students here in the State of Connecticut.

So, Senator Gaffey, thank you for your leadership on this bill.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir.

Will you remark further on the bill as amended by Senate A? Will you remark further? If not, Mr. Clerk, please call for a roll call vote. The machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate. Will all Senators please return to the chamber. An immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate. Will all Senators please return to the chamber.

THE CHAIR:

Have all Senators voted? If all Senators have

voted, please check your vote. The machine will be locked. The Clerk will call the tally.

THE CLERK:

Motion is on passage of Senate Bill 438 as amended:

Total Number Voting	35
Those voting Yea	32
Those voting Nay	3
Those absent and not voting	1

THE CHAIR:

The bill as amended passes.

Senator McKinney.

SENATOR McKINNEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I rise for a point of personal privilege.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR McKINNEY:

Thank you.

Mr. President and members of the circle, we are joined today, and I am joined today, by two wonderful people from the Town of Easton, Connecticut; Easton's Clerk, Derek Buckley is with us today. And the best

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Yes, Mr. President.

Mr. President, if as the next item of business if we would look to Senate Agenda Number 1, under Disagreeing Actions, Senate Bill -- Substitute Senate Bill 438, AN ACT CONCERNING CHARTER SCHOOLS, as amended by Senate Amendment Schedule "A" and then amended by the House of Representatives by House Amendment Schedule "A." And, Mr. President, would move that that item be called as the next item by the Clerk.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

Calling from Senate Agenda Number 1, Disagreeing Actions, Substitute for Senate Bill 438, AN ACT CONCERNING CHARTER SCHOOLS, as amended by Senate Amendment Schedule "A" and House Amendment Schedule "A," favorable report of the Committee on Appropriations.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gaffey.

SENATOR GAFFEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I move acceptance of the joint committee's favorable report and passage of the bill in concurrence with the House, sir.

THE CHAIR:

On acceptance and passage in concurrence, will you remark further?

SENATOR GAFFEY:

Yes, Mr. President, very briefly. The amendment that was -- or the bill that was merged into the bill we previously approved allows for school governance councils, which will be comprised -- the majority of the members will be parents. They will have governance roles, looking at the budgets, looking at the school plan, being involved in the hiring of administrators. I dare say, Mr. President, that we now have one of the most historic education reform bills that have -- that have been before this General Assembly, and we are poised, not just to compete for Race to the Top dollars, we are poised to win now thanks to this legislation. I urge support.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Will you remark further?

Senator Caligiuri.

SENATOR CALIGIURI:

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Very briefly, unfortunately, for the reasons that I voted against the bill earlier this week, this is really the Race to the Top Bill that a number of us voted against earlier this week. And for the reasons that I voted against it earlier, I will be doing so again this evening.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, sir.

Will you remark further? Will you remark further? If not, Chair will ask the Clerk to announce that a roll call vote is -- has been ordered in the Senate.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate. Will all Senators please return to the chamber. Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate. Will all Senators please return to the chamber.

THE CHAIR:

The machine is opened.

Senator Looney.

Members, please check the board to make certain that your vote has been appropriately recorded? If all Senators have voted and if all votes have been properly recorded, the machine will be locked.

Mr. Clerk, may take a tally?

THE CLERK:

Motion's on passage of Senate Bill 438 in concurrence.

Total Number Voting	35
Those Voting Yea	31
Those Voting Nay	4
Those absent and not voting	1

THE CHAIR:

The bill has passed in concurrence with the House.

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, if the Clerk would call as the next item of business, calendar page 31, Calendar 333, Senate Bill 270.

THE CLERK:

Calling from calendar page 31, Calendar Number 333, File Number 468, Substitute for Senate Bill 270, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROHIBITION OF CERTAIN GIFTS FROM PHARMACEUTICAL AND MEDICAL DEVICE MANUFACTURING COMPANIES TO HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS, favorable report on Committee on Public Health and General Law.

SENATOR LOONEY:

JOINT
STANDING
COMMITTEE
HEARINGS

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SENATOR GAFFEY: Bruce Douglas, followed by Glenn Cassis. Is Glenn here? Glenn? Glenn is here, okay. And then Commissioner Mark McQuillan will follow Glenn.

Good afternoon, Bruce.

BRUCE DOUGLAS: Good afternoon, Senator Gaffey, and Representative Fleischmann and members of the Education Committee. Again, my name is Bruce Douglas, and I represent the Capitol Region Education Council and the 35 school districts in this region. I'm also speaking this evening on behalf of the Connecticut Association of Public Schools Superintendents.

I'm testifying in favor of Senate Bill 438, AN ACT CONCERNING OPEN CHOICE PROGRAM FUNDING because it recognizes the legitimate cost of education. SB 438 provides a strong incentive for districts to accept significant numbers of Open Choice children. The bill is the first legitimate funding formula that would enable the Open Choice option to meet the Sheff requirements and to provide the same opportunities for students in school districts statewide. Because it's never been properly funded, Open Choice Program, since its conception in 1997, has been inadequate -- an inadequate Sheff remedy and consistently failing to meet the target enrollment projections set by the State.

In 1997 through 2007, the Open Choice subsidy for districts receiving students was $2000 per student. In 2008, the subsidy went up to $2500, which is still woefully inadequate. For the State Department of Education's calculations, the average cost of educating a student in the Capitol region in 2007 was $12,745 per child, and statewide it was $13,000.

The programs slow growth can't be attributed to a lack of parent interest or willingness on the part of the receiving school districts. Each year, the number of applications for Open Choice consistently exceeds the number available suburban seats. This year, there were close to 4000 applications for 200 seats.

Since 1997, the number of applications has exceeded the number of available seats by 20 times. The statistics represent a generation of children that have been shamefully denied the constitutional rights and opportunities promised in the Sheff court order and the Constitution of the State of Connecticut.

To increase the number of Open Choice seats, SB 438 will address districts' legitimate concerns regarding essential cost and limited class sizes. Given the current recession and projected deficits for 2014, the bill will allow districts to meet or exceed the Sheff settlement enrollment projected for 2013 and to hire additional teachers in order to maintain class sizes.

Moreover, it will provide the critical support necessary to train teachers and assist children as they adjust to new cultural and social environments and close the achievement disparity.

Education is an emergency. It's obvious that we've denied a generation of children their just entitlement to educational equity and excellence. Their lost opportunity has lifelong and next generation impact. Adequate funding for Open Choice would have allowed the State to meet or exceed this benchmark in the future so I encourage you to support Bill 438.

Thank you.

SENATOR GAFFEY: Thank you very much your testimony, Bruce.

Any questions for Bruce Douglas?

Yes, Representative McCrory

REP. MCCRORY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thanks for your testimony, Mr. Douglas.

Along the lines of what you're saying in regards to this Sheff settlement, are you suggesting that if we pass this legislation -- it's -- it's sort of along the lines of money following the child, specifically, what school district is responsible for educating that child that school district will actually receive a funding.

And it also sounded like similar to what Mayor -- of East Hartford, yeah, we were just mentioning is about the funding and -- yeah, you know, you know who she is -- is talking about. Are you -- are you suggesting that maybe some of the school districts that are receiving students from the City of Hartford might open their doors for a, quote/unquote, find space for these students if dollars were to follow those students to their community?

BRUCE DOUGLAS: Yes, essentially, I'm suggesting that. By looking at this bill, you see that there's a growth incentive if the school districts were to accept 3 percent of its total student population, or 5 percent total student population for incoming from an urban center, that they would be funded either at $6,000 or at $9,000 per child.

I actually did a calculation. If you took away the State's transportation costs and the average special ed cost out of the average per pupil expenditure, it comes to about $9,200 per child.

REP. MCCRORY: And -- and that -- you know, and that's a good thing because, you know, we have this -- this Sheff decision, and it makes people feel good. I know this might not make people feel comfortable to what I'm saying, but it is a piece of feel-good legislation. And if it's really enacted, we'd probably be able to eliminate some of this litigation that exists in the educational systems in the city of -- in the State of Connecticut. But if we don't put the dollars behind it, then we'll live in a fallacy that the school districts who receive children are actually going to open their doors if they -- if the dollars don't fund it.

Also, it works in the reverse, whereas you have school systems outside the City of Hartford who bring -- who send their children into Hartford, those dollars should also follow that child so that we don't have to come back here every year arguing over dollars to educate children.

So I think this is a very good piece of legislation that we should delve into a little deeper to find out the best way to educate children, whether it's sending them outside urban areas or them coming into our urban areas.

If we really serious about breaking down some of the walls of segregation that exist in this state, we really have to look into this and do something about it because the situation, as it exists right now, is not working. It makes us feel good, but it is not working.

I appreciate your testimony.

BRUCE DOUGLAS: Well, I would agree with every thing that you said, but it doesn't make me feel good.

SENATOR GAFFEY: Thank you, Bruce. Thank you very much for your testimony. I appreciate it.

Glenn Cassis, followed by Commissioner Mark McQuillan.

Good afternoon.

GLENN CASSIS: Good afternoon, Chairman and members of the Education Committee. My name is Glenn Cassis. I'm the executive director for the African American Affairs Commission.

The top priority on the agenda for the African American Affairs Commission is the issue of education. The one variable that has direct causal relationship with disparities that exists amongst the African Americans in this state of Connecticut are in the areas of economic development, health, employment, the criminal justice system and -- and the education achievement gap.

The gap continues to exist in the classrooms of elementary and secondary schools in Connecticut. You have most of my testimony so I'll just summarize some of the other points of my testimony.

The State of Connecticut now has the opportunity to implement a plan of action necessary to change the educational landscape. The State of -- the State Department of Education has for several years proposed a plan to raise high school graduation standards. If approved by the Legislature, HB 5489, these

HB5491

schools are continued to fail, new action must be taken.

Parents can make decisions. The steps that are being used are not just taken out of context. It just happens half the schools have been failing for quite a while. The alternative, this is the only thing that can be done to make an improvement.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you.

SENATOR GAFFEY: Any further questions for Glenn?

Thank you very much, sir, for your testimony.

Commissioner Mark McQuillan to be followed by Mayor Bill Finch.

Good afternoon, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER MARK MCQUILLAN: Good afternoon. Senator Gaffey, Representative Fleischmann, thank you very much for having me come before you to offer testimony on a number of bills.

I understand the limitation of the time and so, therefore, I will concentrate on two or three, but I have submitted written testimony on Raised Bills 438, 439, 440, through a whole succession of them and you have it in -- in writing and would like to, one, first of all, thank both the Chairs for the convening of a group of a number of people to talk about how we can enhance the strength of our Race to the Top application. And, to that end, I just would like to say -- wanted to comment on a number of the bills that I think will strengthen that application as we go forward.

HB5489
SB442

We have a -- a critical turning point, I think, here in Connecticut that's very evident by the

So we would suggest that if plans for secondary school reform are to involve the priority and urban school districts, we would welcome the opportunity to collaborate with the State Department in making that happen.

I'd be happy to answer any questions.

SENATOR GAFFEY: Thank you very much.

Questions from members of the committee?

Thank you for your testimony.

RICHARD THERRIEN: Thank you.

SENATOR GAFFEY: Martha Stone, followed by Marc Magee, followed by Dawn Marchand.

Is Dawn here?

Martha.

MARTHA STONE: Senator Gaffey, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Committee, my name is Martha Stone. I'm the executive director of the Center for Children's Advocacy, with me is Dennis Parker, who's the director of the Racial Justice Project of the ACLU.

We're here testifying in support of Bills Number 438 and 5487 in our capacity as plaintiff's counsel in the case of Sheff versus O'Neill. I was one of the original attorneys when Sheff's lawsuit was filed in 1989. I have lived the history of this case for 21 years.

There's no question in our minds that most progress has happened in the last couple of years. The Court order required that in October of 2009, 27 percent of the students would be in a reduced isolation setting. But

by Year 5, there must be a significant increase with a minimum of 41 percent of Hartford's children in desegregated settings or 80 percent of demand.

We specifically took a hands-off approach with the State in terms of how they would meet their goals, letting them meet them through a variety of magnates, Hartford host magnates, choice charters. And while we have watched the magnate school option significantly grow, unfortunately, the efforts to grow Open Choice have been dismal and, frankly, unacceptable.

And so we look at Bill Number 438 which will incentivize the districts to participate in Open Choice as a huge step forward with one important amendment that I will get to in a minute.

The first point we want to emphasize is that the demand for Open Choice far exceeds the availability. The lottery to determine which children will get Open Choice is about to take place in two weeks. 2,418 Hartford children applied to be part of the Open Choice Program for the coming school year this fall. We met with the State about a week ago to find out how many participating districts had offered new seats. The answer is 59 new seats. This occurred despite the fact that the school capacity study done by the State Department of Education shows over 3,000 excess seats available in those districts. And so, sadly, too many eagerly awaiting children will be turned away and what they will be turned away from is an opportunity to have both an integrated and a quality education. The recent 2007 report on Project Choice shows Hartford students in Project Choice far outperforming their counterparts in the district.

But we do suggest one important amendment and that is if you are going to increase the funding that you also give the Commissioner the authority to mandate percentage participation by town.

Just to give you another statistic, the State's goal in the current comprehensive management plan for next year is to have 1800 students participate in Open Choice. If you take the current number and add the 59 new seats that will bring you to a total of 1322 students who will have that opportunity. That's almost 500 students less that what the State's goal is. And I think the saddest figure is this one, in the last five years, 32 suburban districts have made available a total of only 210 seats.

So, in light of these statistics, in light of the fact that there is a court order with a mandate with a percentage participation, we would urge you to pass 478 with the amendment that we're suggesting.

[SB438]

Thank you.

SENATOR GAFFEY: Thank you, Martha.

Questions from members of the committee?

Thank you very much for your testimony.

MARTHA STONE: Thank you.

SENATOR GAFFEY: Appreciate it.

Marc Magee, followed by Dawn Marchand, followed by Robert Muckle.

Is Robert here? Okay, Robert.
Marc.

safeguards in place to protect students' and teachers' privacy?

We know that teacher effectiveness needs to be measured by multiple factors that not only include student data on academic growth but also on social and behavioral growth. We know that important parts of teacher effectiveness are school environment, professional development, peer review and available resources. Student growth is not just the result of one teacher's activities but a reflection of other teachers, family, community support, school climate and strong leadership.

So we, therefore, recommend that a task force be formed that can clarify some of these issues on how the data will be used, how it will inform teacher effectiveness in regards to this expansion of the state data system.

Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you for that very clear and concise testimony.

Are there comments, questions from members of the committee?

If not, thank you very much for your time

CAROLE CLIFFORD: Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Next up is Mark Waxenberg to be followed by Mike Sharpe.

MARK WAXENBERG: Good evening, Representative Fleischmann, Senator Gaffey.

HB5487 HB5490
HB5493 SB438

My name is Mark Waxenberg, director of Government Relations for the Connecticut Education Association.

And in closing, I'll give you this one analogy, you got spoiled milk A, right? You got spoiled milk B. And you're the only one that can determine how that milk gets pasteurized. That is not fair. If you're going to make me drink that milk, then I need to know how you pasteurizing it. And that's the same thing for these schools. If you're going to make me go there, then at least let me be at the table to make the decisions I need to ensure that my child is safe and that he's being educated equally. And if I need to hold -- be held accountable, then we all need to be prepared to held accountable as well. Thank you very much.

SENATOR GAFFEY: Thank you, Gwen. Thank you for your testimony.

Evelyn Richardson, followed by Jen Harmon, followed by Carl Carson. Is Carl here? Okay, great.

Oh, I'm sorry.

EVELYN RICHARDSON: Hello, Senator Gaffey and all of the representatives in committee. My name is Evelyn Richardson. I would also like to mention that I'm a parent, and I'm also a participant in the Parent Leadership Training Institute.

I have -- I'm here to show my support and express my concern on the Open Choice Bill. I have two children who are part of the Choice program. They are presently attending school in Granby, Connec -- in Granby. My daughter has attended Kelly Lane since the 4th grade, and she is now on her way to middle school. My son who is on his way to 2nd grade started from kindergarten. I must say that I am extremely satisfied with the education my children have

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and are receiving as a part of my choice to get them into a school that offers them a competitive education which just so happens to be in the suburbs.

When I originally signed my daughter, Simone, up for a Choice school, I must say that I was not aware of how much a suburban education costs or how much the state would have to invest in my children's education. What I did know was that my daughter's teacher in her failing Hartford school, in private, told me that my child's scores were so good that they were actually holding up the school's scores. She said that my daughter's school had nothing else to offer her at that time, and not to quote her on it, but that I should get her out of that school as quickly as possible and get her in a private school that could challenge her more because, at that point, she was actually taking on the role of the teacher's assistant rather than a student who needed to be taught in her classroom. The knowledge that I left with after that encounter was that although other kids may have been struggling to learn or learning a little bit, my daughter was remaining stagnant while waiting for her classmates to catch up. So when I found out that I could sign her up for Choice, I hurried to do that.

I also want to mention that at that time -- I went for a teacher conference at one parent-teacher conference and she showed me my daughter's report card. And her report card didn't reflect the conversation that we had had. So I was like well if Simone is such a high achiever then why is she -- why does she have, you know, middle grades? And she said she did that because she wanted to give my daughter something to -- to, you know, achieve for. She didn't want to give her the highest

grade that she deserved because she wouldn't have nowhere else to go. I'm like, What? But that's what she said. So that also showed me that, on her part, something was lacking also.

But anyway, amazingly enough after hearing that my daughter was in the top 10 percent of the school that she attended in Hartford, when she went to Granby it took her a year and a half to be at her -- the level she was suppose to be at. She was actually overachieving in Hartford, and when she got to Granby, she was hurt because she wasn't achieving at the level that they were. And she got there, but it took her a year and a half to do that. My daughter's school offered her as a result of that all kinds of extra help and services that she struggled through initially until she reached her goal. Then my son also presently received extra support after a teacher suggested that we do -- have a PPT but -- and she thought that he might have needed special education services because he didn't -- he wasn't meeting the same standards that the other children in the town were going at. I have to pray over seeing if he needed special education services because I didn't see it. After agreeing to sign in a paperwork him being tested, found out that he didn't need those services. He was just the youngest kindergartner in the school. So actually he was where he was. He just needed some time.

But I said all that to say this, I really do applaud my children's school for their support and providing my children with the same education they provide their town residents. If I could afford to pay for that education that they are receiving, I would. And so I'm truly thankful also for the Open Choice program. I would like to see suburban towns get an increase per child because I don't -- I

want, you know, in as much as I love my town of Hartford where I'm a registered voter, the school they went to here had failed them. I would like to have the comfort of knowing that suburban districts are not getting burdened with our children but that they are just -- that as they are providing our children with the necessary tool for success that they are being equally comforted in providing this service.

I would also like to see more children in urban towns have the a -- opportunity to have exposure to schools which are not overcrowded, underpaid in staff and that have the necessary skill to teach children regardless of where they live, what their culture is, and -- or how much money their parents have.

Lastly, I would never want those in charge of creating the budget -- budgets concerning this matter to forget these teachers and staff who need to be continuously educated with professional training in cultural diversity in order to be equipped to deal with diverse cultures in a school that is still predominately white students. And to be honest, I have never met one minority teacher in either of my kids' schools. I strongly feel that this training should be done in all schools where there's not equally, racially, and economically diverse concerning the students and the teachers.

In closing, I would like to say that I am a mother, a concerned citizen, a community activist who wants the same opportunity my children -- who wants the same opportunity that my children have to be opened up for other children in the community. There are hundreds of children on the waiting list. Please make it possible for them to get a good -- education

also. These children are our future, and I want the future to be a promising one full of adults who are educationally equipped to do the job of leading us. And I want those leaders to come from all racial and economic backgrounds.

I would also like to make a brief statement, if I could, to the fact of parents being involved. I -- I think that there's also another piece that's being mitted -- missing, because when my children attended the failing school in Hartford, it was my children that brought it to my attention before I even went and spoke up. Children have a strong voice. And if we listen to them, we'll also know -- and I'll tell you of a quick funny story that the principal of my son's school in Hartford told me, Ms. Pugnali. I came up to the school one day and she was like, you know, Ms. Richardson, your son is really something else. She said, Dr. Kishimoto was up here after school and Christopher was having a bad day. He was in my office and he was just crying like somebody was strangling him. So I came into my office where I left him for a minute so I can go speak to Dr. Kishimoto. And I said, Christopher, please calm down. I don't want him to think that the school is crazy. He said, Well, this school is crazy. So --'but I said that to say this is that I remember the social worker there, Ms. Clark used to say that Christopher actually was keeping them in check. He -- He was being able to see things that they needed to pay attention to. So we also need to listen to our children. And through our children, we have the parents, so parents definitely need to be involved.

On this camera here that I have I'm working on a PARENT LEADERSHIP TRAINING INSTITUTE project at Global Communication Academy. And I have pictures of both of the principals. I have

pictures of his teacher, the security guard, the crossing guard, the school, students, and everything. And one thing I'm working on a reading program over there. They don't have a library. And they're using the back of the stage as a music room. But I told them that I wanted to implement a library until they get more space. And they gave me this little space in back of the music area on the back of the stage. And I'm taking pictures of it so that I can get organized to see what I need. And on this camera there's pictures of a library that's in boxes.

SENATOR GAFFEY: Thank you. Thank you for your testimony, and more important than that thank you for your work and good luck on this project. I enjoyed your testimony tonight.

EVELYN RICHARDSON: Thank you.

SENATOR GAFFEY: Any questions?

Thank you very much. Appreciate it.

I'm just going to call Milly Arciniegas to testify. Hello.

MILLY ARCINIEGAS: Thank you, Senator Gaffey --

SENATOR GAFFEY: You're welcome.

MILLY ARCINIEGAS: -- for putting me up there on the list.

SENATOR GAFFEY: I would have called you before. I just -- I just realized that your child is (inaudible).

MILLY ARCINIEGAS: I'm going to allow her to introduce herself because she's been waiting.

Massachusetts and Tennessee.

Connecticut's existing charter laws significantly undermine our competitiveness in Race to the Top. The State Education Committee is now considering a bill, HB 5493, that directly addresses the weakest aspect of our State's charter policy, the way charter schools are funded. This bill would significantly increase our state's competitiveness in Race to the Top.

In sum, ConnCAN's analysis showed that our competition in Race to the Top is tough. Connecticut must go after every single point to earn a spot at the finish line. I urge you to help Connecticut align itself with the frontrunner states by taking action on SB 440; HB 5491, Section 3; and HB 5493. Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify today.

SENATOR GAFFEY: Thank you for your testimony.

Any questions?

Thank you very much.

Diane Ullman.

DIANE ULLMAN: Good evening, Senator Gaffey and members of the Education Committee. My name is Diane Ullman. I'm superintendent of the Simsbury schools, and on behalf of the Simsbury schools, I'm here to testify in support of Senate Bill 438, AN ACT CONCERNING CHARTER SCHOOLS AND OPEN CHOICE PROGRAM FUNDING.

Specifically, I'm here to talk about Open Choice program funding. This bill recognizes the legitimate cost of education and it offers a valid funding formula and provides incentives for districts to increase their acceptance of

Open Choice applicants, thus meeting the Sheff requirements as well as opening doors to equal opportunity and equitable education in schools and districts across Connecticut.

It is not an understatement to say that we have denied a generation and more generations of children their just entitlement to educational equity and excellence. Simsbury has proven time and time again that it's willing to step up and take more Choice students. In fact, we have a 25-year involvement with the Choice program and our enrollment has been well over 75 students during that period of time, and now is at about 100 students. So we have over a long period of time supported the Choice program and believe in it deeply.

But all the good intentions of the world are pointless if appropriate funding is not provided with each incoming new student. Again, the math is simple. It costs us $12,500 to educate a student and provide them with the support and services necessary for them to succeed. The $2500 per students leaves a $10,000 gap. Especially in this economy, when we're cutting classroom teachers, we're cutting support services to students and decreasing remedial support in tutors, this is no small sum of money. I know better than most about the generosity of my community and the willingness of my community to reach out and take a greater role in the Choice program. However, Simsbury taxpayers who support and believe in the goals of Open Choice may not be willing to do so in an economy which is becoming more and more difficult. We're watching our class sizes rise, and we're watching our support systems diminish. And it will be a very hard sell to increase Choice enrollment in this kind of environment, unless the funding formula changes.

We're watching teachers lose their jobs over the -- the two-year period, we're probably eliminating 20 teaching positions due to the economy and that's just the beginning. I'm talking about support services to kids. And we simply can't afford to take more students and not do a good job with them.

Speaking strictly for Simsbury, receiving the $6,000 for 3 percent or greater of Choice enrollment for -- students is much more realistic than the $2500 that are -- it's currently offered. And I would certainly encourage my school system to increase its role in Choice if, in fact, the funding formula changed.

Senate Bill 438, which will address our legitimate concerns would certainly make this possible. We need to provide the proper support for students who come to us through the Choice program. We are willing. We're able. We're ready to do this work. We simply need the resources to do it well and to do the right thing by -- by Hartford students.

Open Choice is the best strategy for meeting the Sheff goals. I think you're probably aware of the work that Representative Schofield from Simsbury has done and at analyzing the effectiveness of Choice versus magnets. I think they're both worthy but, certainly, the Choice -- we have open seats in our public schools. They're sitting there and they're waiting for students.

I strongly encourage you to support Senate Bill 438, which would provide the proper funding for students coming from Hartford to suburban schools. We are ready. We are willing, and we will do the right thing.

SENATOR GAFFEY: Thank you for your testimony.

DIANE ULLMAN: Thank you.

SENATOR GAFFEY: I concur clearly Choice is the best option for fulfilling the court order in Sheff. We were not going to build our way out of this problem. Commissioner testified to that fact about a month ago, which I thought was good that we're realizing through the State Department's perspective that you're not going to build magnets to fulfill the order of the court. We need much more in the Choice opportunities for children in Hartford who opt to enter into that program to go to another public school if they so wish so thank you for your testimony.

DIANE ULLMAN: Seats are there.

SENATOR GAFFEY: Questions?

Thank you very much. Appreciate it.

DIANE ULLMAN: Thank you.

SENATOR GAFFEY: Cari Carson followed by -- is Peggy Roell here?

Peggy, you're next.

And Tim Dutton. Is Tim here? Okay, Tim, you'll follow Peggy.

Good evening, Cari.

CARI CARSON: Good evening. Good evening, Senator Gaffey and members of the Education Committee. My name is Cari Carson and I'm here today testifying on behalf of Connecticut Voices for Children, which is a research-based education

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Okay, Anne, you'll follow Tim.

Peggy, welcome.

PEGGY ROELL: Senator Gaffey and fellow members of the Education Committee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak to you tonight. My name is Peggy Roell, and I'm chair of the Avon Board of Education. I am testifying today in favor of SB 438, AN ACT CONCERNING OPEN CHOICE PROGRAM FUNDING.

The Town of Avon was not a party in the Sheff litigation. Yet, understanding the importance of the diverse learning communities, our taxpayers for over 10 years, have supported the effort to desegregate Hartford Public Schools. We have enrolled over 60 Hartford children in Avon's schools through the Open Choice program, even as our school district has experienced a 50 percent increase in enrollment in the last 10 years, and have continually face tight budgets because of this unprecedented growth. The availability of additional seats in Avon may be threatened by budget reductions resulting in teacher reductions and class size increases.

Until recently, the $2500 Avon receives from the State for each Project Choice student attending Avon's Schools was adequate to offset the tuition cost for Avon students participating in the regional magnet school programs. Due to the limited amount of ECS dollars Avon received, the incremental additional cost of the Open Choice students attending school in Avon has been primarily supported by local tax revenues.

The relative balance of the cash in from Open

Choice and the cash out for magnet school tuitions ended two years ago. Not only are we now required to pay tuition for any K-12 student whose parents choose to send them to a magnet school, we are also required to pay in excess of $50,000 per year of tuition for pre-K students attending magnet schools, even though we are not obligated by state man -- statute to provide pre-K education. This is an example of an unfunded mandate.

All districts in the state are trying to maintain their instructional integrity and program quality in their schools in a cost-effective manner while remaining sensitive and responsive to their current fiscal conditions. The average cost of educating one student in the Capitol Region in 2007 was $12,745. The amount of funding received to educate one student through Open Choice hardly compares to these average costs. I am fearful that as boards of education need to make major budget reductions and face teacher reductions and increases in class size, the continued voluntary efforts of socially conscious school districts to support the goal of encouraging children to cross district lines to reduce the racially isolated schools will be threatened.

SB 438 will address district concerns about the legitimate and essential costs for education, and allow districts to meet or exceed Open Choice enrollment projections, hire teachers as needed to maintain class sizes, and assist children to socially and emotionally adjust to their new school environs. SB 438 provides further incentives for school districts to voluntarily accept additional children into the Open Choice program.

If the State is serious about achieving the goals of Sheff, including improbing --

improving the quality of education and seeking more opportunities for children to attend more mixed income in nonracially isolated schools, then the state must take responsibility for fully funding this effort. Thank you for your time.

SENATOR GAFFEY: Thank you for your testimony.

Questions from members of the committee?

Thank you very much.

PEGGY ROELL: Thank you.

SENATOR GAFFEY: Tim Dutton followed by Ann Lohrand.

TIM DUTTON: Good evening, Mr. Gaffey -- Senator Gaffey and members of the Education Committee. My name is Tim Dutton. I'm the director of the Bridge Academy Charter School, a charter school that I founded 13 years ago. It's a high school in Bridgeport.

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When I started this school 13 years ago, I envisioned myself working hard in a classroom for the Bridgeport children that I deeply care about. I did not envision the multiple times that I would need to come politicking for these children in my school. I am happy to say thank you to all of you for keeping me going these 13 years. As I've come up and said that I thought the funding system was unfair, you've responded with an increase to keep us going over that time. I've also told you about my school's successes and they're still true. We have 100 percent of our graduates from high school who leave with a college acceptance. Our -- I have waitlists of hundreds of students long. I have parents calling me every day saying, Can I get myself into -- into your school, and I have to tell them, No, we're full. And I wish there

SENATOR GAFFEY: Same to you.

ALAN ADDLEY: My name Alan Addley. I'm the Superintendent of the Granby Public Schools, and I'm here in support of Bill 438 and to ask the State of Connecticut to support the increase funding of the suburban school districts for accepting urban students through the Open Choice Program. The current level of funding of $2500 is just simply not adequate to fulfill the constitutional, moral and social obligations to the children of the Greater Hartford area.

As many of you may know, Granby has been a willing participant in Open Choice, formerly Project Concern, since its inception over 30 years ago, and we continue to be the highest participating district in the State of Connecticut with an Open Choice enrollment close to 3.5 percent with plans to increase this further. We have enthusiastically endorsed and enrolled Hartford students through the Open Choice Program. We have done so because it has been the right thing to do for both Hartford students and Granby students.

However, despite our good intentions, it is becoming increasingly harder to participate at this level with the current state level of state funding. We know there's a keen interest in the Open Choice Program from Hartford parents. I believe there was close to 4000 applicants this year for approximately 200 seats. Declining enrollments across the state means that there is space in the suburban schools. The potential to meet the Sheff stipulated agreement lies in large part in Open Choice. It's time for the State to seize the opportunity.

However, the cost associated with Open Choice for the suburban towns are not incidental. Zero budgets and staff reductions compound the problem and simply magnify the inadequacies in Open Choice funding. As you know, the current level of Open Choice funding is $2500 a student. Granby's cost per student -- if we take out transportation, if we take out special education cost, it's closer to $10,000. The academic, social supports and programmatic needs associated with the Choice program are significant. I applaud the Commissioner's recent efforts this past year to secure some additional funding through the Choice Academic and Social Support Grants.

Without additional funds, the suburban towns will be asked to educate Hartford students at about 20 to 25 percent of what it takes to educate a child in the state. We urge you legislators to embrace the Commissioner of Education's proposal to increase the funding for Choice and to support this bill with additional funding proposal. In doing so, I would ask that an additional funding that is calculated on the basis of every Hartford child attending a suburban district and not just for new students that are enrolled through Open Choice. Last year, the proposal was we would only give districts additional funding for students who were newly enrolled in the programs. This seems grossly unfair.

Typically, suburban schools, such as Granby, offset their magnet school payments with revenues from Open Choice. As you know districts have no control over the number of students who attend the magnet schools. I only mention magnet schools as they compound the funding problem, and I would respectfully suggest that they are not really the solution in meeting the stipulation of the Sheff

settlement. Tuition expenses for magnet schools and the real costs associated with Open Choice are now cutting into existing programs and services. If the State is fortunate enough to make some of the participation targets stipulated by the Sheff agreement, I am fearful that without adequate funding and equity for the Hartford students attending suburban schools will not be realized. It's not simply about putting the Hartford students in a suburban schools. We know they're going to do better. We want equity of outcomes for our Hartford students who are attending suburban schools. You're not going to have equity of outcomes without some equity of funding.

If the State is serious about addressing the Sheff settlement and serious about resolving this constitutional and moral matter, then I urge you to take this responsibility and fund this particular bill. In the meantime, I'm just -- I'm hopeful, and we are in a suburban district where superintendents are praying hard. I am just hopeful that you will not lose the goodwill of the local communities that believe in these initiatives and thank you for your time.

SENATOR GAFFEY: Thank you for your testimony. Can you tell me how many spots of which you have available in your school district for additional children from Hartford?

ALAN ADDLEY: How many spots?

SENATOR GAFFEY: How many seats would you have available for additional seats for children to opt into the Choice Program? Let's say the funding is provided and equitable, how many seats would you have available?

ALAN ADDLEY: Well, we took -- we took an additional

twelve students this year for the upcoming year, and the problem that we have, Senator Gaffey, is that we're laying off teachers at the same time. So we need funding to bring back teachers, at this point, and that's part of your problem. Space is there, and we could take -- I'm sure we could take another 20 students, clearly, could take another 20 students.

SENATOR GAFFEY: You took an additional twelve so many do you have in Granby right now in the program?

ALAN ADDLEY: We'll have for next year 81 students.

SENATOR GAFFEY: Eighty-one, okay. Thank you.

Any other questions from members of the committee?

Thank you very much for your testimony. I appreciate it.

ALAN ADDLEY: Thank you.

SENATOR GAFFEY: Ann Marie Colebrook, please, followed by Alex Johnston.

Is Linda Costo here? Linda is not here.

Vinny LaFraedo? Is Vinny here?

Wily Moans? Is Wily here?

Okay. Well, I'll give up and let you go to work.

ANN MARIE COLEBROOK: It's late.

Good evening, Senator Gaffey, and members of the committee. My name is Anne Marie

HB5489

taxes. All of them are because the structural deficit just doesn't work. And, you know, and they've got to start thinking about what can they do that is responsive to voters across the state that actually makes sense. And if you do something, a big idea like this, is actually an idea that's big enough to help people swallow a tax increase. And I'll say to you, you know, I pay property taxes and state income taxes, raise my income taxes if you can give me access to great public schools.

SENATOR GAFFEY: Thank you. I just thought it was fair for you to respond to -- to that question.

Any further questions for Alex?

Thank you very much. I appreciate your testimony.

ALEX JOHNSTON: Thank you.

SENATOR GAFFEY: Kevin (inaudible)? Is Kevin here?

James Baily Brislin? James?

Daisha's not here. Right? Daisha?

Ms. Dupontia?

Renita Satchel? Renita.

RENITA SATCHEL: Good evening, Senator Gaffney and members of the Education Committee -- Committee. Thank you so much for giving us this day and an opportunity to -- to share with you.

My name is Renita Satchel. I work for the Open Choice Program. And I'm here in support of House Bill 438, in particularly for the Open Choice Program.

I was born and raised in Hartford, and I'm a proud 1983 graduate of Conard High School in West Hartford. And this was made possible through Project Concern, now called the Open Choice Program. And I had a wonderful experience. As a young Project Concern graduate, I always looked for ways to support the program and the students because they no longer have the support that I enjoyed and that was a peer professional assigned to each school. She rode on the bus with us, to and from school, and she was there all day. As a third grader starting in the program and in the following years, there was some comfort in knowing that she was there with us all day to keep order on the bus and to provide support if we needed her.

Six years ago, I was excited to have the opportunity to work for Open Choice. I wanted to use my skills and my passion for the program to help the team continue to support the students, the districts and the families because I wanted the students to have the same positive experience I had.

Unfortunately, I've been somewhat frustrated over the years. Starting out there were five people. How could they adequately support a little over 1100 students in 28 districts. With correct support, over the past couple of years, we've been able to grow to a staff of nine. My blood pressure continues to rise when I hear discussions about increasing the numbers and reading articles about focusing on the numbers, and that's important, too, but when are we going to give that same energy and passion to talking about how we can adequately support the students we already have in the program.

We've been putting the cart before the horse for way too long. We can draft legislation to put students on a bus and expect them to be successful. How can we expect them to be successful without giving the districts the necessary resources to help ensure that the children will be successful? Fortunately, I had the support of my parents. They attended every single parent-teacher conference. They attended my concerts, and we had the resources so that I could participate in extra curricular activities. Unfortunately, many of the students today don't have adequate family support or the resources so vital to their success. Therefore, they require much more support at the school.

I understand the suburban school administrator's frustration. Many of them love -- would love to accept more Open Choice students, but they are expected to do so while receiving only a small fraction of what it costs to educate children that live in their town. Additionally, many Open Choice students enter with academic gaps and because of the limited resources in the districts, these students can only get the additional service -- support in reading and math through special education services.

I, respectfully, urge you to consider the children and the families. There is no doubt that Hartford's families want their children to have good education, but they need your support. Open Choice and the districts can't meet the students' academic and social needs without adequate financial support from the state. Thank you so much for your sincere consideration.

SENATOR GAFFEY: Thank you, Renita, for your perseverance and waiting to testify tonight.

Good afternoon Senator Gaffey, Rep. Fleischmann and members of the Education Committee.

My name is Lydia Tedone and I am Vice Chair of the Simsbury Board of Education; a member of the Capitol Region Education Council and Vice President of the CT Association of Boards of Education.

I am testifying today in favor of Senate Bill 438, an Act Concerning the Open Choice Program Funding.

The Open Choice Program has been determined to be one of the most important and successful Sheff remedies. Undoubtedly, it has been favored by parents, school systems and the parties to the Sheff agreement, including the State of Connecticut. However, each year the progam is consistently under funded and as a result, Open Choice has not met its state-mandated enrollment requirements.

This is true, despite the fact that our school systems are willing to enroll more students to meet the mandate. However, $2,500 per student is less than one-third the amount necessary to provide adequate resources to fund the program.

The school systems, of which I represent Simsbury, who have embraced the spirit of Sheff have made it a priority to participate in the Open Choice Program. They have also committed to accept the enrollment mandate set by the State of Connecticut. Now it is up to the legislature to provide the resources necessary to accomplish the task.

Testimony
Submitted to the Education Committee
March 15, 2010
SB 438 (Raised) An Act Concerning Charter Schools and Open Choice Program Funding

Senator Gaffey and Representative Fleischmann, and fellow members of the Education Committee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak to you today.

My name is Peggy Roell and I am Chair of the Avon Board of Education. I am testifying today in favor of SB 438, An Act Concerning Open Choice Program Funding.

The Town of Avon was not a party in the Sheff litigation. Yet, understanding the importance of diverse learning communities, our taxpayers, for over 10 years, have supported the effort to desegregate Hartford Public Schools. We have enrolled over 60 Hartford children in Avon's schools through the Open Choice program - even as our school district has experienced a fifty percent increase in enrollment in the last 10 years and have continuously faced tight budgets because of this unprecedented growth. The availability of additional seats in Avon may be threatened by budget reductions resulting in teacher reductions and class size increases.

Until recently, the $2,500 Avon receives from the state for each Project Choice student attending Avon's schools, was adequate to offset the tuition cost for Avon students participating in the regional magnet school programs. Due to the limited amount of ECS dollars Avon receives, the incremental additional cost of the Open Choice students attending school in Avon has been primarily supported by local tax revenues.

The relative balance of the cash in from Open Choice and the cash out for magnet school tuitions ended two years ago. Not only are we now required to pay tuition for any K-12 student whose parents choose to send them to a magnet school, we are also required to pay in excess of $50,000 per year of tuition for Pre-K students attending magnet schools, even though we are not obligated by state statue to provide pre-K education. This IS another example of an unfunded mandate.

All districts in the state are trying to maintain the instructional integrity and program quality in their schools in a cost effective manner while remaining sensitive and responsive to the current fiscal conditions. The average cost of educating one student in the Capital Region in 2007 was $12,745. The amount of funding received to educate one student through Open Choice hardly compares to these average costs. I am fearful that as Boards of Education need to make major budget reductions, and face teacher reductions and increases in class size, the continued voluntary efforts of socially conscious school districts to support the goal of encouraging children to cross district lines to reduce the racially isolated schools will be threatened.

SB438 will address district concerns about the legitimate and essential costs for education, and allow districts to meet or exceed Open Choice enrollment projections, hire teachers as needed to maintain class sizes, and assist children to socially and emotional adjust to their new school environs. SB 438 provides further incentives for school districts to voluntarily accept additional children into the Open Choice program, ~~and meet~~

If the state is serious about achieving the goals of Sheff, including improving the quality of education and seeking more opportunities for children to attend more mixed income and non-racially isolated schools, then the state must take responsibility for fully funding this effort. Thank you for your time.

(39)

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Open Choice statement

Good afternoon to you all,

My name is Evelyn Richardson and I am here today to show my support and express my concern on the Open Choice Bill. I have two children who are a part of the Choice Program. They are presently attending school in Granby CT. My daughter has attended Kelly Lane since the 4th grade and she is now on her way to the middle school. My son who is on his way to second grade started from Kindergarten. I must say that I am extremely satisfied with the education my children have and are receiving as a part of my choice to get them into a school that offers them a competitive education which just so happens to be in the suburbs.

When I originally signed my daughter up for a choice school I must say that I was not aware of how much a suburban education costs or how much the state would invest in my child's suburban education. What I did know was that my daughters teacher in her failing HTFD school in private told me that my child's scores were so good that they actually were holding up the schools scores. She said that my daughters school had nothing else to offer her at that time and not to quote her on it but that I should get her in a private school that could challenge her more because at this point she was actually taking on the role of the teachers assistant rather than a student who needed to be taught in her classroom. The knowledge that I left with after that encounter was that although others kids were learning my daughter was remaining stagnant while waiting for some of her classmates. So when I found out that I could sign up for Choice, I hurried to do so.

Amazingly enough after hearing that my daughter was in the top 10% academically in her school when she went to Granby it took her to her and my amazement a year and a half to be in the top percentile of her class. My daughter's school offered her all kinds of extra help and services which she struggled through initially until she reached her goal. Then my son also presently receives extra support after the teacher suggested that an IEP be done and he was found to not need special educational services but that he would benefit from extra help.

I said all that to say this: I really do applaud my children's schools for their support in providing my children with the same education they provide their towns residents. If I could afford it I would pay for the

education they are receiving so I am also truly thankful for the Open Choice program. I would like to see suburban towns get an increase per child. As much as I love my town where I am a registered voter(HTFD) the school they went to had failed them. I would like to have the comfort of knowing that suburban districts are not getting burdened with my children but that just as they are providing my child with a necessary tool for success that they are being equally comforted in providing this service.

I also would like to see more children in urban towns have the opportunity to have exposure to schools which are not over crowded, under paid and staffed and that have the necessary skill to teach children regardless of where they live, what their culture is or how much money they have.

Lastly, I would never want those in charge of creating the budgets concerning this matter to forget that these teachers and staff will need to be continuously educated with professional training in order to be equipped to deal with diverse cultures in a school that was and still is predominately white students. And to be honest I have not met one minority teacher in either of my kids schools. I strongly feel that this training should be done in all schools where it is not equally racially and economically diverse concerning the students and the teachers.

In closing I would like to say that I am a mother, a concerned citizen, and community activist who wants the same opportunity my children have to be opened up for other children and families. There are hundreds of children on the waiting list. Please make it possible for them to get a good education also. These children are our future and I want the future to be a promising one full of adults who were educationally equipped to do the job of leading us. And I want those leaders to come from all racial and economic backgrounds.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Evelyn R. Richardson

(5)

Testimony
Submitted to the Education Committee

March 15, 2010

SB 438 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING CHARTER SCHOOLS AND OPEN CHOICE PROGRAM FUNDING

Good afternoon Senator Gaffey, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Education Committee.

My name is Bruce Douglas. I represent the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC), and the 35 school districts in the Capitol Region. I am also speaking on behalf of the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS).

I am testifying today in favor of SB 438, An Act Concerning Open Choice Program Funding. Because it recognizes the legitimate cost of education, SB 438 provides a strong incentive for districts to accept significant numbers of Open Choice applicants. SB 438 is the first legitimate funding formula that would enable the Open Choice option to meet Sheff requirements and to provide the same opportunities for students and school districts statewide.

Because it has never been properly funded, the Open Choice program, since its inception in 1997, has been an inadequate Sheff remedy, consistently failing to meet the targeted enrollment projections set by the State of Connecticut. From 1997 through 2007, the Open Choice subsidy for districts receiving students was $2,000 per student. In 2008, the subsidy was adjusted to $2,500 per student, and today, it remains woefully inadequate. Per State Department of Education calculations, the average cost of educating a student in the Capitol Region in 2007 was $12,745 and $13,118 statewide.

Approximately 1,851 children currently attend public schools in urban and suburban districts throughout the Capitol Region and statewide through Open Choice. Since the program began in 1997, there has been an increase of only 700 students enrolled in the Capitol Region Open Choice program (please reference the attached SDE Capitol Region Enrollment data and Statewide Participation data). The program's slow growth cannot be attributed to a lack of parent interest or willingness on the part of receiving school districts. Each year, the number of applications for Open Choice consistently exceeds the

number of available suburban seats. This year, there were close to 4,000 applications for 200 seats. Since 1997, the number of applications has exceeded the number of available seats by at least 20 times. This abhorrent statistic represents a generation of children that has been shamefully denied the constitutional right and opportunities promised in the Sheff court order and the Constitution of the State of Connecticut.

To increase the number of Open Choice seats, SB 438 will address districts' legitimate concerns regarding essential costs and limited class sizes. Given the current recession and projected deficits through 2014, SB 438 will allow districts to meet or exceed the Sheff settlement enrollment projections for 2013 and to hire additional teachers in order to maintain class sizes. Moreover, it will provide the critical support necessary to train teachers and assist children as they adjust to new cultural and social environs and close the achievement disparity.

Education is an emergency. It is obvious we have denied a generation of children their just entitlement to educational equity and excellence. This lost opportunity has a life-long and next generation impact. Adequate funding for Open Choice would have allowed the state to meet and exceed its enrollment benchmark for this year. As the state looks ahead to meeting the Sheff stipulated goal for 2013, Open Choice is our best strategy along with the existing magnet schools for providing diverse, quality education opportunities that are the constitutionally guaranteed rights of all of Connecticut's children.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

CREC

Student Enrollment History
1995-2009

Open Choice

District	Project Concern 1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	Open Choice 2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Avon				3	15	25	29	36	30	35	37	41	50	48	61
Berlin					4	5	7	10	10	9	11	15	19	26	32
Bolton					7	11	10	13	12	17	18	23	24	22	27
Bristol					77	85	84	79	63	51	44	36	27	20	8
Canton	11	8	15	34	35	32	40	39	35	43	40	39	40	37	45
Cromwell				4	3	5	6	10	14	32	39	41	42	47	57
East Granby					11	11	8	9	13	25	24	20	15	23	29
East Hartford															0
East Windsor				4	13	22	30	30	28	52	47	43	46	38	42
Ellington										11	15	10	10	18	33
Enfield				13	20	35	46	64	57	70	75	77	73	77	69
Farmington	132	108	96	92	84	77	82	92	85	83	91	94	96	95	87
Glastonbury	52	50	45	46	41	38	37	29	34	40	44	41	48	46	48
Granby	24	29	30	31	29	33	29	30	27	28	37	52	72	76	76
Hartford					45	93	96	16	9			1	1	0	32
Manchester	55	35	32	24	16	10	5	4	4	2	1				0
New Britain						1	5	13	4	2	1				0
Newington	50	54	49	50	49	48	50	51	53	56	56	54	52	53	55
Plainville	43	48	42	36	41	35	49	55	53	59	63	59	55	51	48
Portland															12
Region 10					11	8	6	6	5	7	11	8	8	6	6
Rocky Hill				4	8	11	19	29	35	46	43	34	28	26	25
Simsbury	58	64	58	54	64	73	64	70	71	88	99	93	99	94	99
Somers					3	5	10	12	15	14	16	18	24	24	21
Southington				10	14	14	13	12	11	9	16	55	60	10	7
South Windsor	42	43	43	49	57	60	60	63	57	56	51	19	13	71	90
Suffield	12	16	15	23	25	24	27	24	16	20	21	23	24	25	38
Vernon					8	18	28	33	38	41	42	41	37	32	29
West Hartford	87	62	44	36	28	18	32	33	43	51	59	77	87	89	98
Wethersfield				8	11	11	14	16	17	14	13	13	13	29	43
Windsor					9	29	26	23	19	15	12	13	12	10	7
Windsor Locks				3	7	10	13	18	21	24	27	29	31	36	39
TOTALS	566	517	469	524	735	847	925	919	879	1000	1053	1069	1106	1129	1263

09:27 Monday, February 1, 2010

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

PARTICIPATION IN MAGNET AND OPEN CHOICE PROGRAMS FOR OCTOBER 2009
EXCLUDES STUDENTS ENROLLED IN CHARTER SCHOOLS AND THE CTHSS

TOWN	NAME	(1) Resident Students	(2) F/T & P/T Magnet Students	(3) OPEN Choice Received	(4) OPEN Choice Sent	(5) Total Participating Students (2+3+4)	(6) Participation Percentage (5/1)	(7) Participation Percentage Alt1 (5/(1+3+4))
1	ANDOVER	620.18	10	-	-	10	1.61	1.61
2	ANSONIA	2,863.98	196	4	1	201	7.02	7.01
3	ASHFORD	698.74	3	-	-	3	0.43	0.43
4	AVON	3,587.16	78	60	-	138	3.85	3.78
5	BARKHAMSTED	667.44	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
6	BEACON FALLS	1,030.09	5	-	-	5	0.49	0.49
7	BERLIN	3,150.62	35	32	-	67	2.13	2.11
8	BETHANY	1,037.08	22	1	-	23	2.22	2.22
9	BETHEL	3,032.76	12	-	-	12	0.40	0.40
10	BETHLEHEM	493.60	1	-	-	1	0.20	0.20
11	BLOOMFIELD	2,509.04	550	-	5	555	22.12	22.08
12	BOLTON	821.80	22	27	-	49	5.96	5.77
13	BOZRAH	388.48	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
14	BRANFORD	3,553.06	49	30	-	79	2.22	2.20
15	BRIDGEPORT	20,437.13	403	-	186	589	2.88	2.86
16	BRIDGEWATER	227.24	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
17	BRISTOL	8,720.04	40	8	-	48	0.55	0.55
18	BROOKFIELD	2,959.02	44	-	-	44	1.49	1.49
19	BROOKLYN	1,301.72	2	-	-	2	0.15	0.15
20	BURLINGTON	1,873.20	12	-	-	12	0.64	0.64
21	CANAAN	136.00	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
22	CANTERBURY	766.10	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
23	CANTON	1,740.10	26	45	-	71	4.08	3.98
24	CHAPLIN	286.08	4	-	-	4	1.40	1.40
25	CHESHIRE	4,937.62	30	11	-	41	0.83	0.83
26	CHESTER	574.00	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
27	CLINTON	2,038.17	9	-	-	9	0.44	0.44
28	COLCHESTER	3,234.27	20	-	-	20	0.62	0.62
29	COLEBROOK	252.37	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
30	COLUMBIA	795.81	11	-	-	11	1.38	1.38
31	CORNWALL	181.44	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
32	COVENTRY	1,963.61	25	-	-	25	1.27	1.27
33	CROMWELL	2,021.83	20	57	-	77	3.81	3.70
34	DANBURY	10,230.29	227	-	-	227	2.22	2.22
35	DARIEN	4,820.74	46	-	-	46	0.95	0.95
36	DEEP RIVER	654.60	1	-	-	1	0.15	0.15
37	DERBY	1,558.93	82	-	2	84	5.39	5.38
38	DURHAM	1,365.44	10	-	-	10	0.73	0.73

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09:27 Monday, February 1, 2010

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39	EASTFORD	233.00	1	-	-	1	0.43	0.43
40	EAST GRANBY	914.78	38	29	-	67	7.32	7.10
41	EAST HADDAM	1,416.23	16	-	-	16	1.13	1.13
42	EAST HAMPTON	2,040.02	15	-	-	15	0.74	0.74
43	EAST HARTFORD	7,925.41	958	-	13	971	12.25	12.23
44	EAST HAVEN	3,794.84	217	13	3	233	6.14	6.11
45	EAST LYME	2,893.32	35	-	-	35	1.21	1.21
46	EASTON	1,543.02	6	8	-	14	0.91	0.90
47	EAST WINDSOR	1,442.92	76	42	-	118	8.18	7.95
48	ELLINGTON	2,652.83	26	35	-	61	2.30	2.27
49	ENFIELD	6,142.97	105	69	-	174	2.83	2.80
50	ESSEX	986.20	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
51	FAIRFIELD	10,079.33	61	70	-	131	1.30	1.29
52	FARMINGTON	4,088.09	66	87	-	153	3.74	3.66
53	FRANKLIN	302.88	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
54	GLASTONBURY	6,973.18	268	48	-	316	4.53	4.50
55	GOSHEN	430.27	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
56	GRANBY	2,220.61	70	76	-	146	6.57	6.36
57	GREENWICH	8,706.47	10	-	-	10	0.11	0.11
58	GRISWOLD	1,895.20	2	-	-	2	0.11	0.11
59	GROTON	5,197.08	129	-	-	129	2.48	2.48
60	GUILFORD	3,729.36	24	-	-	24	0.64	0.64
61	HADDAM	1,348.27	2	-	-	2	0.15	0.15
62	HAMDEN	6,836.17	876	45	20	941	13.77	13.64
63	HAMPTON	219.02	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
64	HARTFORD	20,299.44	3,842	33	1,234	5,109	25.17	23.69
65	HARTLAND	313.77	2	-	-	2	0.64	0.64
66	HARWINTON	934.80	3	-	-	3	0.32	0.32
67	HEBRON	2,117.38	16	-	-	16	0.76	0.76
68	KENT	353.80	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
69	KILLINGLY	2,605.86	19	-	-	19	0.73	0.73
70	KILLINGWORTH	1,137.78	3	-	-	3	0.26	0.26
71	LEBANON	1,316.00	3	-	-	3	0.23	0.23
72	LEDYARD	2,554.83	43	-	-	43	1.68	1.68
73	LISBON	755.12	12	-	-	12	1.59	1.59
74	LITCHFIELD	1,225.45	4	-	-	4	0.33	0.33
75	LYME	310.03	3	-	-	3	0.97	0.97
76	MADISON	3,689.58	25	-	1	26	0.70	0.70

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CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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77	MANCHESTER	7,335.94	450	-	3	453	6.18	6.17
78	MANSFIELD	1,923.82	11	-	-	11	0.57	0.57
79	MARLBOROUGH	1,200.29	28	-	-	28	2.33	2.33
80	MERIDEN	9,220.40	667	-	1	668	7.24	7.24
81	MIDDLEBURY	1,370.79	11	-	-	11	0.80	0.80
82	MIDDLEFIELD	733.26	7	-	-	7	0.95	0.95
83	MIDDLETOWN	5,329.37	173	-	-	173	3.25	3.25
84	MILFORD	7,122.45	128	33	-	161	2.26	2.25
85	MONROE	3,919.19	33	6	-	39	1.00	0.99
86	MONTVILLE	2,743.07	62	-	-	62	2.26	2.26
87	MORRIS	357.09	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
88	NAUGATUCK	5,059.49	140	-	-	140	2.77	2.77
89	NEW BRITAIN	10,726.22	631	-	5	636	5.93	5.93
90	NEW CANAAN	4,048.56	5	-	-	5	0.12	0.12
91	NEW FAIRFIELD	2,984.60	20	-	-	20	0.67	0.67
92	NEW HARTFORD	1,144.11	5	-	-	5	0.44	0.44
93	NEW HAVEN	17,157.00	4,128	41	370	4,539	26.46	25.84
94	NEWINGTON	4,452.62	80	55	-	135	3.03	2.99
95	NEW LONDON	3,440.02	692	-	10	702	20.41	20.35
96	NEW MILFORD	4,764.21	17	-	-	17	0.36	0.36
97	NEWTOWN	5,534.24	43	-	-	43	0.78	0.78
98	NORFOLK	252.58	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
99	NORTH BRANFORD	2,394.19	60	25	-	85	3.55	3.51
100	NORTH CANAAN	454.60	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
101	NORTH HAVEN	3,696.85	70	78	1	149	4.03	3.95
102	NORTH STONINGTON	809.42	10	-	-	10	1.24	1.24
103	NORWALK	10,881.94	348	-	-	348	3.20	3.20
104	NORWICH	5,430.52	37	-	-	37	0.68	0.68
105	OLD LYME	1,191.03	10	-	-	10	0.84	0.84
106	OLD SAYBROOK	1,595.40	1	-	-	1	0.06	0.06
107	ORANGE	2,495.88	28	12	-	40	1.60	1.59
108	OXFORD	2,214.06	8	-	-	8	0.36	0.36
109	PLAINFIELD	2,535.10	13	-	-	13	0.51	0.51
110	PLAINVILLE	2,525.24	33	50	-	83	3.29	3.22
111	PLYMOUTH	1,939.21	145	-	-	145	7.48	7.48
112	POMFRET	759.65	2	-	-	2	0.26	0.26
113	PORTLAND	1,456.23	27	11	-	38	2.61	2.59
114	PRESTON	643.02	11	-	-	11	1.71	1.71

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115	PROSPECT	1,560.03	11	-	-	11	0.71	0.71
116	PUTNAM	1,205.38	15	-	-	15	1.24	1.24
117	REDDING	1,750.77	22	-	-	22	1.26	1.26
118	RIDGEFIELD	5,451.27	18	-	-	18	0.33	0.33
119	ROCKY HILL	2,653.89	98	25	-	123	4.63	4.59
120	ROXBURY	286.47	1	-	-	1	0.35	0.35
121	SALEM	758.12	12	-	-	12	1.58	1.58
122	SALISBURY	404.06	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
123	SCOTLAND	248.00	5	-	-	5	2.02	2.02
124	SEYMOUR	2,495.31	47	-	-	47	1.88	1.88
125	SHARON	293.00	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
126	SHELTON	5,548.08	58	-	-	58	1.05	1.05
127	SHERMAN	622.32	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
128	SIMSBURY	4,875.42	124	98	-	222	4.55	4.46
129	SOMERS	1,623.68	1	21	-	22	1.35	1.34
130	SOUTHBURY	3,208.50	19	-	-	19	0.59	0.59
131	SOUTHINGTON	6,786.61	81	7	-	88	1.30	1.30
132	SOUTH WINDSOR	4,711.11	133	90	-	223	4.73	4.64
133	SPRAGUE	437.07	3	-	-	3	0.69	0.69
134	STAFFORD	1,853.36	11	-	-	11	0.59	0.59
135	STAMFORD	14,879.54	667	-	-	667	4.48	4.48
136	STERLING	662.28	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
137	STONINGTON	2,531.36	22	-	-	22	0.87	0.87
138	STRATFORD	7,463.79	122	6	-	128	1.71	1.71
139	SUFFIELD	2,401.72	15	40	-	55	2.29	2.25
140	THOMASTON	1,289.72	118	-	-	118	9.15	9.15
141	THOMPSON	1,340.00	10	-	-	10	0.75	0.75
142	TOLLAND	3,194.72	33	-	-	33	1.03	1.03
143	TORRINGTON	4,784.74	5	-	-	5	0.10	0.10
144	TRUMBULL	6,845.07	116	42	-	158	2.31	2.29
145	UNION	110.00	2	-	-	2	1.82	1.82
146	VERNON	3,717.03	115	29	3	147	3.95	3.92
147	VOLUNTOWN	409.38	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
148	WALLINGFORD	6,620.76	162	92	-	254	3.84	3.78
149	WARREN	175.00	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
150	WASHINGTON	417.80	-	-	-	-	0.00	0.00
151	WATERBURY	17,432.60	1,389	-	-	1,389	7.97	7.97
152	WATERFORD	3,200.78	310	8	-	318	9.94	9.91

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153	WATERTOWN	3,247.18	14	-	-	14	0.43	0.43
154	WESTBROOK	982.14	4	-	-	4	0.41	0.41
155	WEST HARTFORD	10,265.11	282	98	-	380	3.70	3.67
156	WEST HAVEN	7,331.42	941	-	13	954	13.01	12.99
157	WESTON	2,568.83	11	12	-	23	0.90	0.89
158	WESTPORT	5,656.71	2	42	-	44	0.78	0.77
159	WETHERSFIELD	3,889.70	150	43	-	193	4.96	4.91
160	WILLINGTON	812.84	5	-	-	5	0.62	0.62
161	WILTON	4,345.18	5	-	-	5	0.12	0.12
162	WINCHESTER	1,405.73	12	-	-	12	0.85	0.85
163	WINDHAM	3,366.54	40	-	-	40	1.19	1.19
164	WINDSOR	4,176.70	391	7	2	400	9.58	9.56
165	WINDSOR LOCKS	1,883.00	95	39	1	135	7.17	7.02
166	WOLCOTT	2,968.69	211	-	-	211	7.11	7.11
167	WOODBRIDGE	1,510.09	18	11	-	29	1.92	1.91
168	WOODBURY	1,407.78	2	-	-	2	0.14	0.14
169	WOODSTOCK	1,378.38	8	-	-	8	0.58	0.58
		542,441.51	23,041	1,851	1,874	26,766		

Center for Children's Advocacy

TESTIMONY OF CO-COUNSEL MARTHA STONE AND DENNIS PARKER, ON BEHALF OF THE SHEFF v. O'NEILL PLAINTIFFS, IN SUPPORT OF THE OPEN CHOICE FUNDING INCENTIVES IN RAISED BILLS 438 and 5487.

We are submitting this testimony on behalf of the Sheff Plaintiffs in the lawsuit of Sheff v. O'Neill. Martha Stone is Executive Director of the Center for Children's Advocacy, and has been co-counsel in Sheff since its filing in 1989. Dennis Parker is the Director of the Racial Justice Project of the ACLU, and has been co-counsel in the Sheff case for many years. The Sheff Plaintiffs support these bills, but urge this Committee to amend them by adding a provision which authorizes the State Department of Education Commissioner to mandate participation by the suburban districts to supplement the added monetary incentives.

I. THE DEMAND FOR OPEN CHOICE SEATS FAR EXCEEDS THE AVAILABILITY.

State officials will soon run a lottery determining which Hartford children will be granted the opportunity to receive a quality education in an integrated setting. Too many eagerly awaiting children will be turned away. The extensive waiting list for inter-district choice transfers is a testament to the desire and need for more available suburban seats. 2,418 Hartford children applied to be a part of the Open Choice program for this coming school year in 2010-2011.

Yet sadly, **while the Department of Education requested the participating districts to put forth 1,045 new Open Choice seats for next year to help meet this overwhelming demand, to date, the suburban districts have yielded a paltry 59 new seats as of last week**—a striking and unacceptable discrepancy. This has occurred despite the fact the State's own School Capacity Study shows significant excess seats available in those districts.

II. OPEN CHOICE HAS BEEN AND IS A SUCCESSFUL REMEDY TO ACHIEVE INTEGRATION AND QUALITY EDUCATION.

Hartford students who have participated in Open Choice over the years have achieved long-standing success. According to a recent 2007 report on Project Choice conducted by Harvard researchers, and based on the state's own data, Hartford students in Open Choice far outperform their city colleagues. "In addition to the long term benefits of diversity for students and society, there is recent evidence that Hartford students participating in Project Choice are doing better on standardized achievement tests. More than half of Project Choice students are performing at or above proficiency on state standardized tests in both mathematics and reading, rates that are higher than their Hartford Public School peers and black and Latino students statewide. ...The youngest Project Choice students also show impressive academic gains. In the "Early Beginnings" program, an interdistrict kindergarten program (offering half day kindergarten along with a full day enrichment option in selected suburban districts), Hartford students had large gains in language acquisition."
See http://www.sheffmovement.org/pdf/ProjectChoiceCampaignFinalReport.pdf

III. INCREASING FUNDING INCENTIVES FOR OPEN CHOICE IS NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS OF THE SHEFF STIPULATION AND ORDER

The Sheff Stipulation and Order approved by the Court and this legislature in June, 2008 required in Year 2 that the state reach a goal of 27% of Hartford students in reduced isolation settings. Over plaintiffs' objection, the Court recently found that the State had met its Year 2 goal but it did so only by relying on Reverse Choice students, most of whom were students of color, coming into the Hartford district. The goal in the State's Comprehensive Management Plan for Year 3 is to reach 35%. Mandated for year 5 in the Stipulation is that the State reach a minimum of 41% of Hartford students in a reduced isolation setting, or 80% of demand.

The Sheff plaintiffs and the Commissioner of Education agree that to fulfill the Connecticut Supreme Court's mandate to reduce racial and ethnic isolation in Hartford's schools, and to meet the requirements of the June 2008 Court Order, the Open Choice Program must be expanded dramatically. The goal for this year for students participating in Open Choice was 1500. **The State fell short of this goal by 237 students.** The fact that only 1263 Hartford students were able to participate was directly related to the failure of the suburban districts to make more seats available. (See Appendix A.)The State's goal in its Comprehensive Management Plan for next year, 2010-11, is for 1,800 children to be educated through the Open Choice program. The State is on target to fall woefully short of this goal, given there are only 59 new seats available as of last week, as indicated above. This will bring the total to 1322, causing a shortfall **of almost 500 seats** in the absence of any immediate funding incentives.

IV. AMENDMENTS TO THE BILLS ARE NEEDED TO INCLUDE THE AUTHORITY OF THE COMMISSIONER OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO MANDATE SUBURBAN DISTRICTS TO PARTICIPATE IN OPEN CHOICE

In the absence of amendments to these bills bestowing authority upon the SDE Commissioner to mandate suburban participation in Open Choice, the suburban districts will not willingly and significantly increase their participation through funding incentives alone. The history of Open Choice sadly supports this premise. While an increase in state funding for Choice in 1999 did reverse a 9 year decline , such incentive yielded incremental results and was short-lived. Indeed, in the last five years, 32 suburban districts have made available a total of only 210 seats. In fact, this year, the districts have made available only 59 new seats....75 less seats than last year, evidencing a backslide, despite the Commissioner's efforts and a present court mandate. Given the political realities and complicated board of educations' concerns, there is no reason to believe that funding incentives, by themselves, will cause the districts to significantly increase the number of seats necessary to meet the Sheff mandates.

V. OPEN CHOICE SHOULD BE ONLY ONE OF A NUMBER OF REMEDIES TO MEET THE SHEFF MANDATES

While the Sheff plaintiffs strongly support these Bills, it should in no way signal that the plaintiff team is abandoning its commitment to the other desegregation options. Nor should the legislature, in strengthening Open Choice, retreat from its commitment to magnet schools. A majority of Hartford's children are still attending racially isolated schools and the integration goals shared by the Sheff plaintiffs and state and local officials can only be reached by employing every voluntary desegregation method available, including opening up new seats in magnet schools. In 2009 alone, over 9,000 children were placed on a waitlist for seats in magnet schools. Studies done by the State Department of Education show that magnets are "raising the educational attainment level of participating students throughout the state through high-quality, racially/economically integrated education," confirming an earlier study by the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice at Harvard Law School, documenting that diverse schools like the magnets in the Hartford metropolitan area result in improved math and reading achievement, improved critical thinking, and reduced racial stereotyping. Commissioner McQuillan's recent testimony before the Appropriations Committee in March, 2010 reinforced that "students who enroll in the inter-district magnet schools are typically outpacing and outperforming their counterparts in the non-magnet schools in their districts."

Instead of relying on any one method, the Commissioner and state legislators should be trying to strengthen all the options, including technical schools, vo-ag schools, magnets, charters, and Open Choice.

Respectfully submitted,

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Student Enrollment History
1990-2009

Hartford Region Open Choice Program

Public	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Avon									3	15	25	29	36	30	35	37	41	50	48	61
Berlin										4	5	7	10	10	9	11	15	19	26	32
Bolton										7	11	10	13	12	17	18	23	24	22	27
Bristol										77	85	84	79	63	51	44	36	27	20	8
Canton	11	10	7	9	8	11	8	15	34	35	32	40	39	35	43	40	39	40	37	45
Cromwell									4	3	5	6	10	14	32	39	41	42	47	57
East Granby										11	11	8	9	13	25	24	20	15	23	29
East Hartford																				0
East Windsor									4	13	22	30	30	28	52	47	43	46	38	42
Ellington															11	15	10	10	18	33
Enfield									13	20	35	46	64	57	70	75	77	73	77	69
Farmington	104	113	124	134	134	132	108	96	92	84	77	82	92	85	83	91	94	96	95	87
Glastonbury	35	51	53	61	60	52	50	45	46	41	38	37	29	34	40	44	41	48	46	48
Granby	25	20	28	25	28	24	29	30	31	29	33	29	30	27	28	37	52	72	76	76
Hartford										45	93	96	16	9			1	1	0	32
Manchester	98	92	99	84	71	55	35	32	24	16	10	5	4	4	2	1				0
New Britain											1	5	13	4	2	1				0
Newington	85	75	62	60	48	50	54	49	50	49	48	50	51	53	56	56	54	52	53	55
Plainville	43	42	39	40	39	43	48	42	36	41	35	49	55	53	59	63	59	55	51	48
Portland																				12
Region 10										11	8	6	6	5	7	11	8	8	6	6
Rocky Hill									4	8	11	19	29	35	46	43	34	28	26	25
Simsbury	74	76	73	73	67	58	64	58	54	64	73	64	70	71	88	99	93	99	94	99
Somers										3	5	10	12	15	14	16	18	24	24	21
Southington									10	14	14	13	12	11	9	16	55	60	10	7
South Windsor	49	39	38	34	44	42	43	43	49	57	60	60	63	57	56	51	19	13	71	90
Suffield	8	7	2	1		12	16	15	23	25	24	27	24	16	20	21	23	24	25	38
Vernon										8	18	28	33	38	41	42	41	37	32	29
West Hartford	195	179	155	131	112	87	62	44	36	28	18	32	33	43	51	59	77	87	89	98
Wethersfield									8	11	11	14	16	17	14	13	13	13	29	43
Windsor										9	29	26	23	19	15	12	13	12	10	7
Windsor Locks									3	7	10	13	18	21	24	27	29	31	36	39
TOTALS	727	704	680	652	611	566	517	469	524	735	847	925	919	879	1000	1053	1069	1106	1129	1263

Sheff Movement **Quality Integrated Education for All Children**

Senator Gaffey, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Committee,

I, Liz Dupont-Diehl, am here to testify on behalf of the Sheff Movement coalition on Raised Bills 438 and 5487.

Connecticut should be proud of the nationally recognized two-way voluntary integration program that has grown out of the 1996 Sheff v. O'Neill mandate. Although many parts of the country are now becoming increasingly racially and economically segregated, Connecticut is moving slowly but surely in a better direction – bringing children together through a combination of high quality interdistrict magnet schools and opening up suburban schools to children in segregated urban districts. Providing these choices improves education for all children, and responds directly to the heart of the Sheff decision.

Connecticut has developed an outstanding voluntary, two-way integration program that is fostering excellence and providing a first-rate education to its students. We are succeeding in fulfilling the Sheff mandate, in closing the achievement gap, and in creating graduates who will go on to become the creative and productive workers our state needs.

In the past 4 years, Connecticut has made good progress in developing a system of regional magnet schools that foster racial and economic integration. There are now more than 60 of these schools statewide serving many thousands of children, and they represent some of the best schools in the state and are successfully closing the achievement gap..

Augmenting the magnet school system, the Open Choice program was intended to give city children a second option – the ability to attend a suburban school. Although Open Choice has been successful for the children it serves, it has not opened enough seats to meet demand. There are two reasons for this: first, the rate of reimbursement to suburban districts has been too low to fairly support new children coming into the suburban districts, and second, in 1997, the state legislature gave the suburban districts the discretion to set the number of city children who would be permitted to attend schools in their town. Both of these recognized impediments to the growth of the Open Choice program must be removed if we are to make progress in reducing racial and economic isolation for students in our major cities.

TESTIMONY OF THE

CONNECTICUT COALITION FOR JUSTICE IN EDUCATION FUNDING

TO THE

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

March 15, 2010

The Connecticut Coalition for Justice in Education Funding appreciates this opportunity to submit written comments pertaining to various bills raised before the Education Committee during this short legislative session.

SB 438 — An Act Concerning Charter Schools and Open Choice Program Funding.

At issue is the proposed removal, in Section 1(a), line 4, of the phrase "within available appropriations." Even assuming that the removal of this caveat would have no practical effect on present or future appropriations for charter schools — inasmuch as responsible budgeting requires that expenditures always be made within available appropriations — the symbolic "in your face" quality of removing this phrase reeks of special-interest legislation. The removal of the clause would be seriously unfair to every other educational program and all governmental and nongovernmental programs that steadfastly serve the common good of the people of Connecticut and which almost annually must come before this legislature to seek funding for the maintenance, even the sheer continued existence, of programs that deliver vital services to huge segments of this state's population. All these programs and agencies are subject to "available appropriations." Charter school funding or expansion should not be treated any differently. Nor should hopes for scoring all 40 points pertaining to charter schools, out of a maximum total of 500 points, on the state's next ARRA/Race to the Top application be allowed to dictate preferential treatment for these schools above all other appropriations or policy proposals now before the legislature.

HB5489
HB5490
HB5491
HB5492
HB5493

With reference to Section 3(g), beginning on line 264, the proposed increases in state grants to receiving districts for Open Choice students is a major step forward in easing the fiscal burden on receiving districts. Nevertheless, even the proposed $2500, $6000, and $9000 levels fall short of funding all the essential support services that the receiving districts necessarily muster to appropriately accommodate the extra learning needs of most Open Choice students.

HB 5487 — An Act Concerning the Open Choice Program.

A $3000 state grant to receiving districts for each Open Choice student is clearly better than the current $2500. However, in terms of the actual educational costs incurred by receiving districts,

the $500 difference is of minimal significance. The funding levels contained in SB 438 would go much farther in helping to ease the cost to receiving districts and are therefore much more likely to result in the voluntary opening of additional Open Choice slots in suburban districts.

HB 5489 — An Act Concerning Secondary School Reform.

The increased high school graduation requirements proposed in this bill should all be made contingent on the state's provision of adequate and equitable funding for its public schools, not merely on any hoped-for receipt of ARRA/Race to the Top or other federal or private-sector funding. Indeed, the state's recent unsuccessful application would not have resulted in sufficient funding to accomplish all that was committed to in that application — and it certainly would not have made much impact in overcoming the many years of gross underfunding that has ravaged our most struggling school districts (unless, of course, privatization of "failing" districts and/or their schools was the implicit goal).

HB 5490 — An Act Concerning the Minimum Budget Requirement.

With reference to Sec. 1(d), lines 38-43, it is not possible to estimate the potential impact on school districts of the proposed MBR reduction inasmuch as the Department of Education's website has not been updated to provide relevant enrollment data for FY09, let alone for FY10. (The same time lag pertains to other education data that are important to transparency of government and have heretofore routinely been provided on its website in a relatively timely fashion, including essential fiscal information.) Nor has the Department ever made available data showing which municipalities retained a portion of ECS aid before passing on the funds to their districts, and in what amounts and percentages, subsequent to the passage of Public Act 09-1. Until all such data are made publicly available by the Department, no further action should be taken on this bill.

That nearly all Connecticut communities are now "fiscally stressed" is a given. That cities and towns seek this rather modest measure of relief from the MBR for FY10 and FY11 can thus be well understood in these tough budget times. Yet to lessen local contributions for municipalities whose school districts are the most academically challenged and resource-starved — thanks to the state's decades-long failure to adequately and equitably fund the public schools — seems fundamentally counterproductive. A fair solution: The state should make up the difference in lost local aid due to MBR relief for all those school districts, including Priority Districts and others, who have one or more schools listed as being "In Need of Improvement" on the state's most recent NCLB report.

HB 5491 — An Act Concerning Certain School District Reforms To Reduce the Achievement Gap in Connecticut.

Given the extensive length of this bill and the number of different provisions it includes, comments here will only highlight those sections that were found to be the most objectionable:

- Sec. 1(g)(1-4), lines 152-201 — Most parents are unlikely to have an informed grasp of the technical details or fiscal ramifications of whatever intervention model their petition recommends, let alone understand the multitude of other impacts such action would have

In sum, what Raised Bills 5493 and 438 do is to open up the state to unfettered charter school growth and to pass those costs off to traditional school districts and their communities. In lieu of toll booths at our state borders, the state in effect would be putting up billboards saying "Welcome, Charter Management Organizations!"

Unfettered growth of charter schools means the substantial downsizing of urban/urban-ring districts. Unfettered growth of charter schools probably will lead to further exacerbation of the de facto racial and socioeconomic segregation that *Brown* and *Sheff* have tried to remedy. Unfettered growth of charter schools surely also will mean that the academically struggling urban/urban-ring school districts will be relegated to serving only the very poorest and neediest of children, the ones that charters and magnets do not want, just as a recently retired Hartford teacher wrote in yesterday's *Courant* (March 14, Nancy Winterbottom, "Hollowing Out City Schools"). Unfettered growth of charter schools, enabled by this funding scheme, will lead to a significant erosion of the too-little state aid that traditional school districts receive, an erosion that could reach untenable levels for urban/urban-ring districts.

We ask that you kill this bill rather than to support the creation of still another unique funding scheme to add to Connecticut's hodgepodge of flawed school funding statutes, the convoluted sum of which does not constitute a fair, viable, or legally defensible state funding system.

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# # #

The Connecticut Coalition for Justice in Education Funding (CCJEF) is a broad-based coalition of municipalities, local boards of education, statewide professional education associations, unions and other pro-education advocacy organizations, parents and Connecticut schoolchildren aged 18 or older, and other concerned taxpayers. Member school communities are home to more than 45 percent of the state's public school children, including some three-fourths of all minority students, those from low-income homes, and students from homes where English is not the primary language.

Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, Inc.

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Testimony
Submitted to the
Education Committee

March 15, 2010

SB 438 AN ACT CONCERNING CHARTER SCHOOLS AND OPEN CHOICE PROGRAM FUNDING
SB 440 AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND TEACHER PERFORMANCE
SB 442 AN ACT CONCERNING BOARDS OF EDUCATION
HB 5487 AN ACT CONCERNING THE OPEN CHOICE PROGRAM
HB 5489 AN ACT CONCERNING SECONDARY SCHOOL REFORM
HB 5491 AN ACT CONCERNING CERTAIN SCHOOL DISTRICT REFORMS TO REDUCE THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP IN CONNECTICUT
HB 5493 AN ACT CONCERNING STRATEGIC PLANNING IN STATE EDUCATION POLICY AND CHARTER SCHOOL FUNDING

The Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) strongly supports the provisions of SB 438, An Act Concerning Charter Schools and Open Choice Program Funding, which would increase the per pupil grant to districts receiving a significant number of open choice students. These resources are critical to supporting the costs of providing an appropriate educational experience. In these times of extremely difficult local budget constraints, it is appropriate for the state to support the long standing integration program that is a key component of the Sheff settlement agreement.

We are concerned about the provisions in this bill which remove the "within available appropriations" limitation on the number of charter schools and their enrollment at a time when districts face caps on many of the state reimbursement grants, putting them in a precarious fiscal situation. It is inequitable to allow unrestricted growth in the charter school grants.

CABE has significant concerns about the implementation of SB 440, An Act Concerning School Districts and Teacher Performance. It is unclear from the proposed bill how the determination of effective or highly effective teachers or principals would be made, and how "acceptable rates of student growth" and "high rates of student growth" would be determined. It is also unclear of what the purpose of the department making such information available would be, as there is no tie to teacher and principal evaluation or compensation.

The language in SB 442, An Act Concerning Boards of Education, needs further clarification and definition to ensure that the reconstitution of a board of education in a district identified as in need of improvement would only occur after other measures have been taken to provide support and professional development to that board of education. It is also important to include a process for return to a board elected by the community.

CABE supports HB 5487, An Act Concerning the Open Choice Program, which increases the grant from $2,500 to $3,000 for each out of district student participating in the Open Choice Program for the reasons indicated in our support of SB 438.

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Subject: S.B. 438, S.B. 440, H.B. 5490, H.B. 5491, H.B. 5493

3/15/10

Dear Members of the Education Committee,

The following are the positions of the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) on five bills that are on the agenda of the Education Committee's public hearing on 3/15/10.

S.B. 438 - An Act Concerning Charter Schools and Open Choice Program Funding

CAPSS supports the major increase in per pupil Open Choice Program Funding that is called for by this bill. We regard Open Choice as an effective means for breaking down public school student racial isolation but for the Program to have the appeal that it needs to have to exert a significant impact, school districts who receive students from other districts need to receive more in per pupil funding than is presently the case. The reason for this is twofold. First, some students who are received from other districts have program needs that cost more than the present per-pupil allotment. Second, if districts are to make available a significant number of slots for students from other districts, the receiving districts will need to increase teaching staff thus incurring a cost that is most of the time not covered by the present per-pupil allotment.

H.B. 5490 - An Act Concerning the Minimum Budget Requirement

CAPSS favors the retention in place of what has been for many years the Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR) because the alteration of only one facet of the state's system for funding public schooling outside of a comprehensive review of the entire system will not only not solve basic problems but will also make that more difficult the solving of those problems. The more that we engage in a patchwork approach to solving educational funding issues, the more we make more problematic the review of an entire system which has serious dysfunctions. The time has come for a thorough review of the entire system both in terms of the spending side and the revenue side. Simply adjusting and/or eliminating the MBR falls far short of doing what needs to be done.

H.B. 5491 - An Act Concerning Certain School District Reforms to Reduce the Achievement Gap in Connecticut

This bill contains two provisions that are difficult to reconcile under one legislative purpose.

1. CAPSS supports the inclusion of student learning data as a factor in the evaluation of public school teachers and principals. The most basic purpose of schooling is to teach students what they need to know

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conflict between the majority of
parents who favor one improvement strategy and the minority who do not agree with them.

CAPSS favors the inclusion of the parental perspective in decisions regarding improvement strategies in a manner that will enhance the chances of successful implementation of improvement strategies. This success has the best chance of happening when school system and school building leaders work with parents to achieve consensus as to the approach that is best for that school. In this cooperative approach, parents not only have a real opportunity to impact what will be done for their children but they also take advantage of that opportunity with the information that they need to make that impact an informed one. Most important, parents have the advantage of participating in a process that has a high probability of actually improving the education that their children will receive.

H.B. 5493 – An Act Concerning Strategic Planning in State Education Policy and Charter School Funding.

For the reasons stated in the CAPSS position on H.B. 5490, CAPSS is opposed to any alteration of specific aspects of the state's approach to the funding of public schooling outside of a comprehensive review of the entire system for funding.

CAPSS is also opposed to any increase in funding for state charter schools without a commensurate increase in state funding for the rest of the public schools in the state which schools the vast majority of the state's students attend. For those students, the ECS Program is level funded and serious reductions are being considered for the Excess Cost Program and for the state's public transportation grant. We cannot favor a public policy position that increases funding for the education of a small number of children when the funding for the rest will at best remain static.

S.B. 440 – An Act Concerning School districts and Teacher Performance Programs

The bill would move the state towards a system whereby the efficacy of teacher preparation programs would be judged based on the achievement of the teachers who graduate from these programs. CAPSS favors the establishment of such a system. We take this position for the same reason why we favor S.B. 440 which would require the inclusion of student achievement in the evaluation programs for teachers. CAPSS, however, maintains that the components that we have specified for an effective approach to inclusion of student achievement in teacher evaluation must also be the components of a system that assesses preparation programs for teachers.

Thank you for your consideration of these positions. CAPSS representatives and I would be pleased to discuss these matter with you personally.

Thank you also for the service that you give to the citizens of CT.

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Joseph J. Cirasuolo

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
MARK K. MCQUILLAN
COMMISSIONER

Education Committee
March 15, 2010

Testimony of Mark K. McQuillan, Commission of Education

ON

Raised Bills 438, 439, 440, 442, 5487, 5489, 5490, 5491, 5492, and 5493 HB5488

Thank you for the opportunity to come before you today to speak on a variety of important issues, especially as they relate to our state's application for Phase II of the Race to the Top Grant application. On Thursday, March 4th, Connecticut was disappointed to learn that it had not been selected as one of the 16 states chosen to be finalists in the Phase 1 competition for Race to the Top funding. Despite this setback, Connecticut is still very much in the running for Phase 2 and a number of the bills being heard today will support our application.

Secondary School Reform and Online Coursework

In particular, **HB 5489, An Act Concerning Secondary School Reform,** seeks to amend the current high school graduation requirements proposed as a part of the Connecticut Plan-- the Secondary School Reform plan adopted by the State Board of Education. This proposal compliments the state's Race to the Top application which requires all districts who sign on as a participating district to begin taking the necessary steps to implement the Connecticut Plan so that the full set of revised graduation requirements proposed in this bill will be fully implemented by the class of 2018.

While the Department strongly supports HB 5489 as proposed, it recognizes that districts across the state are concerned about any new mandates at this difficult time. As such, the Department would recommend revising HB 5489 to mirror what is being proposed in our Race to the Top application, which involves phasing in the Connecticut Plan in two parts over a period of eight years. In Part I, districts will work with the Department and external partners (SERC, the RESC Alliance, CAPSS, CAS, CABE, CEA, AFT and higher education) to implement the initial or foundational work needed to effectuate the changes called for in the Plan, including the hiring of additional mathematics and science teachers, in anticipation of the new core curriculum. In Part II, participating districts will complete the work needed to staff their schools and prepare teachers for implementing the full set of graduation requirements for the class of 2018—students who are now in 4th grade.

The Department believes it is crucial to move the Connecticut Plan forward if Connecticut wants to continue to be a leader in education and expects to build the educated workforce its economy

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desperately needs. However, we are happy to work with the Education Committee to revise the language in HB 5489 to reflect the proposal in our Race to the Top application so as to limit the burden on districts over the next few years.

The Department also strongly supports the proposal in HB 5489 that requires local and regional boards of education to adopt policies for the approval of online coursework that high school students may take for credit towards high school graduation requirements. This proposal also compliments our Race to the Top application which seeks to expand opportunities for students across the state to access such courses. Allowing Connecticut high school students to enroll in online courses provides students the opportunity to take classes in subject areas that might not be offered in their own school. It also offers flexibility for those students who may need to recover credits required for graduation.

As such, we strongly support HB 5489 as it is an important step to encourage all school districts to make progress in improving our secondary schools and to prepare Connecticut students to be "college ready" and "work force ready."

Charter Schools

The Race to the Top grant competition allocates forty points to states whose application "ensures successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools." Connecticut's charter school statute has been applauded for its strong accountability provisions which have led to some incredible success stories in charter schools across the state. However, the proposals laid out in **SB 438, An Act Concerning Charter Schools and Open Choice Program Funding**, will help to remove barriers to charter school expansion, by removing the language that restricts the State Board's ability to grant state and local charter schools and eliminating the enrollment cap of eighty-five students per grade for those state charter schools that have a demonstrated record of achievement. The bill will also help to ensure continued support to state charter schools for capital expenses by extending the Commissioner's authority to provide grants for such purposes.

In order to further support our application, the Department recommends that a provision be added to this bill to allow for the creation of "Innovation schools." The Race to the Top application awards eight points for those states with the statutory authority in place to enable LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools other than charter schools. "Innovative autonomous public schools" are defined in the application as "open enrollment public schools that, in return for increased accountability for student achievement (as defined in this notice), have the flexibility and authority to define their instructional models and associated curriculum; select and replace staff; implement new structures and formats for the school day or year; and control their budgets." A number of states have adopted such legislation, including Colorado and Massachusetts (both finalists in Round I), and a number of states that were not finalists are pursuing legislation to provide for these types of schools now. CommPACT schools, while similar to this model, do not provide quite the flexibility as required in the application's definition for this school model.

While the Department supports SB 438, it cannot support **HB 5493, An Act Concerning Strategic Planning in State Education Policy and Charter School Funding**. This proposal seeks to shift the financial burden of state charter schools from the state to the local districts. The State Board of Education considered such a proposal at a workshop held on January 27, 2010 and decided, based on testimony from a wide variety of stakeholders, that while such a proposal certainly has merit, now is not the time to be adding a new burden to our local districts. In addition, such a proposal should be examined in the broader context of school choice programs as a whole.

The Race to the Top application does not explicitly require such a proposal to be adopted in order for the state to be successful in Round II. The application simply requires that the state's charter

schools "receive equitable funding compared to traditional public schools and a commensurate share of local, State and Federal revenues." Further, the Reviewer Guidance included in the application instructs the application scores to award "high points" if the per-pupil funding to charter school students is greater than or equal to that which is provided to traditional public school students. When all revenue sources are considered, under the current funding formula, the state charter schools receive approximately 92% of the funding that traditional public schools receive. Of note, the per pupil figures used to conduct this analysis include funding for special education and transportation, two mandates that do not apply to the charter schools. If those funding streams were excluded from the analyses, the difference between charter school per pupil funding and traditional public school funding would be even less.

Commissioner's Authority to Reconstitute a School Board

SB 442, **An Act Concerning Boards of Education,** provides the Commissioner of Education the authority to reconstitute a local or regional board of education for a school district that has been designated and listed as low achieving. The Department strongly supports this proposal as it is crucial to turning around the state's lowest achieving schools who have failed to make progress despite interventions at many levels. Further, this proposal will support our Phase II Race to the Top application which specifically requires a state to demonstrate its authority to intervene directly in the State's persistently lowest-achieving districts. The Department has been in touch with the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education and is happy to work with them and other stakeholders on language which would work out a process under which such action would occur.

I have delineated our specific recommendations for the provisions in the bills being heard today in the written testimony that is being submitted (below).

SB 438: AN ACT CONCERNING CHARTER SCHOOLS AND OPEN CHOICE PROGRAM FUNDING

As described above, the Department supports the concepts in this bill. We recommend, however, that the language in Section 1, which seeks to eliminate the enrollment cap of eighty-five students per grade for state charter schools that have demonstrated a record of achievement be revised to allow for such schools to seek a waiver of such enrollment caps from the State Board of Education. Eliminating enrollment caps for high performing charter schools will support the state's Phase II application for Race to the Top.

In addition, section 3 of SB 438 provides a financial incentive for districts to increase their participation in the OPEN Choice program. OPEN Choice is a crucial component of the state's plan to be successful in achieving the goals required as a part of the court-ordered stipulated agreement in the matter of Sheff v. O'Neill. While the Department supports this concept, we have some concerns.

First, given the fiscal outlook of the state, especially for FY 2012, we are not certain that such an increase in reimbursement rates is prudent at this time.

Second, we are concerned that the participation thresholds for the financial incentives as proposed in this bill are so high that only one or two districts in the Sheff region would qualify. Instead of placing the initial threshold at three percent, the Department recommends that the per-pupil-grant be increased if the receiving district's participation level is between two and three percent and that the grant would increase even more if the participation level is greater than three percent. It is also recommended that the per pupil grants at each incentive level be lowered as follows: $3,000 if the receiving district's participation level at less than two percent; $4,000 if the receiving district's

participation level is at least two but less than three percent; and $6,000 if the receiving district's participation level is three percent or greater.

The Department also notes that the tiered incentive offered in Section 3 of SB 438 would apply to all suburban districts in the state and not just for those districts in the Sheff region.

SB 439: ACT CONCERNING THE STUDY OF EDUCATIONAL STABILITY FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

This bill requires the Department of Education to study issues involving educational stability for children in foster care in the state and to report back to the Education Committee by than January 1, 2011. While the Department recognizes the importance of this issue, at this point, it is crucial for the Committee to support for SB 31, An Act Implementing the Budget Recommendations of the Governor Concerning the Educational Placement of Children in the Care and Custody of the Department of Children and Families, when it comes before the Education Committee. SB 31 includes the necessary provisions to implement Public Law 110-351, the federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 which requires, in part, that states take steps to insure the educational stability of foster children by permitting each child, if it's in his or her best interest, to remain in the schools of origin even if the foster or relative placement is in a different town. Connecticut is required to implement the federal law by July 1, 2010. Failure to enact this legislation this session will jeopardize the state's ability to seek federal Title IV-E reimbursement for children in out-of-home care.

SB 440: AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND TEACHER PERFORMANCE PROGRAMS

The purpose of this bill is to require that the Department expand its public school information system to perform a variety of functions, including linking student achievement to teachers and then back to the teacher preparation program that prepared that teacher. Many of the initiatives required in this bill are already being done by the Department or are a part of the Department's plan for Race to the Top and its application for the ARRA Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) grant program. For example, the Department has already assigned unique identifiers to all public school educators and school leaders and it intends to link students to the courses they take and the teachers who teach them. As part of our plan for Race to the Top we intend to expand on these efforts in order to link student growth to teacher evaluations. In addition, another component of our Race to the Top plan involves working with the Department of Higher Education on developing a methodology to link information on teacher and principal performance back to the Connecticut institutions at which they trained, in order to give feedback to the state's institutions of higher education on *their* effectiveness in preparing the state's education workforce.

While the Department appreciates that the language in SB 440 only requires to the Department to expand its public information system "within available appropriations", it does not include such language in the new subsection (d) of the bill, which requires the Department to make available the information that the expanded system would gather. In addition, the tasks that SB 440 seeks to require that the Department undertake have a hefty price tag associated with them. The Department has requested $2.9 million in the SLDS grant to pilot such projects and $15 million through Race to the Top to implement such an effort statewide.

Lastly, while this bill seeks to include in statute a definition of an "effective" and "highly effective teacher", adoption of such a proposal will not aid the Department in gathering baseline data on the numbers of "effective" and "highly effective teachers" in this state, in time for its Phase II Race

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Testimony of
John Altieri, Jurisdictional Vice President PreK-12
AFT Connecticut

S.B. 438 An Act Concerning Charter Schools and Open Choice Program Funding

H.B. 5493 An Act Concerning Strategic Planning in State Education Policy and Charter School Funding

Education Committee Public Hearing
March 15, 2010

Good afternoon Senator Gaffey, Representative Fleischman and members of the Education Committee. I am John Altieri, a former Norwalk teacher and current AFT Connecticut Jurisdictional Vice President. I represent teachers who work in grades PreK-12. AFT Connecticut is a diverse labor union with 28,000 members. I am here today to discuss S.B. 438 An Act Concerning Charter Schools and Open Choice Program Funding and H.B. 5493 An Act Concerning Strategic Planning in State Education Policy and Charter School Funding.

We urge you to reject proposals for *"money follows the child funding"* and using a statewide average to determine per pupil funding. The *money follows the child* proposal takes scarce funding from local districts which are already providing resources by statute and by individual M.O.Us. with charter schools. Using a statewide average for per pupil funding will mean an increase of approximately $1,000 per pupil in a time when districts are struggling to meet basic needs.

Concerning charter schools raises some perennial issues:

- We continue to oppose the expansion of charter schools beyond the current cap of 24. Additional "site charters" as proposed in section 2(g) are merely a way to skirt current law and create charter chains.
- We also continue to oppose the language set forth in lines 392-403 and 431-439 which proposes to fund charter schools on a state-wide net per pupil

Eagan

Center for Children's Advocacy
University of Connecticut School of Law
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TESTIMONY OF THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY IN SUPPORT OF S.B. No. 439 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE STUDY OF EDUCATIONAL STABILITY FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE.

March 15, 2010

This testimony is submitted on behalf of the Center for Children's Advocacy, a non-profit organization based at the University Of Connecticut School Of Law. The Center provides holistic legal services for poor children in Connecticut's communities through individual representation and systemic advocacy.

We support the concepts contained in Senate Bill 439 which will require that the Connecticut Department of Education study and report to the Legislature regarding the critical issue of educational stability for youth in foster care. Ensuring that abused and neglected children have the right to remain in their home school even if placed into foster care is a critical step in promoting permanency and academic success for these vulnerable children. Therefore, it is vital that SB 439 be a *complement*, rather than a *replacement* for SB 31, which mandates that an educational stability initiative be implemented for these children by the Department of Children and Families.

The youth we represent have already been traumatized by being abused or neglected in their home environment. Often times, a foster child is moved to a home outside of his immediate community and must start over in a new school, typically after the academic year begins. Not only has the child lost his parents and possibly his siblings, but he has lost friends, classmates, a favorite teacher, a coach, music lessons, and/or anything he identified with in his former school.

School Stability For Foster Youth *is Now a Federal Mandate*

On October 7, 2008, the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (PL 110-351) was signed into law. "Fostering Connections" amends the Social Security Act to help hundreds of thousands of children and youth in foster care find permanent families and improve their educational outcomes. **The new federal law *requires* child welfare agencies to include "a plan for ensuring the educational stability of the child while in foster care."** The agency must also include assurances that it has coordinated with the appropriate school districts to ensure that the child remains in the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of placement. As part of the requirement for ongoing receipt of Title IV-E reimbursement funds, the federal government reviews state child welfare agencies progress with critical and mandated well-being outcome measures in periodic Child and Family Service Reviews. **Notably, the new federal law increases the amount of federal funding that may be used to cover education-related transportation costs for children in foster care.** Finally, DCF certified to the federal government subsequent to the passage of PL 110-351 that the state needed implementing legislation to facilitate educational stability. **Per the requirements of the law and the certification process, Connecticut must be ready to comply with the educational stability mandate by July, 2010.**

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Testimony of
Mark Waxenberg, Director Government Relations
Connecticut Education Association

Before the

Education Committee

Re: H.B. #5487 'An Act Concerning the Open Choice Program'
H.B. #5490 'An Act Concerning the Minimum Budget Requirement'
H.B. #5493 'An Act Concerning Strategic Planning in state Education Policy and Charter School Funding'
S.B. #438 'An Act Concerning Charter Schools and Open Choice Program Funding'

March 15, 2010

Senator Gaffey and Representative Fleischmann, my name is Mark Waxenberg and I am the Director of Government Relations for the Connecticut Education Association. I am here to comment on H.B. #5487 'An Act Concerning the Open Choice Program', H.B. #5490 'An Act Concerning the Minimum Budget Requirement', H.B. #5493 'An Act Concerning Strategic Planning in state Education Policy and Charter School Funding', and S.B. #438 'An Act Concerning Charter Schools and Open Choice Program Funding'.

Rather than going bill by bill, I would like to state that the Connecticut Education Association supports the many choice programs in our state today, but, has serious reservations about the bills before you. The bills regarding charter schools are being promoted by ConnCAN a Charter School Advocacy Group and Achievement First, a Charter School Management Organization operating four schools in Connecticut. Simply stated, they are seeking millions of dollars for these schools, which educates less than 1% of the student public school population in Connecticut. They have made and are making claims about the necessity for such charter school funding in our state but my attachments I and attachments II dispute those claims.

Attachment I is an examination of ConnCAN's claims regarding Race To The Top. Robert Bifulco, who was the only school funding expert used in the Governor's ECS Task Force 3 years ago, states in his ConnCAN analysis "The budget of ConnCAN is fundamentally an advocacy piece that is designed to promote a specific view of Charter Schools, and does not help policy makers or the public think carefully about what a Charter School Program should be trying to achieve and how best to achieve it."

Attachment II is my presentation before the State Board of Education regarding similar if not the same issues before you today. If you examine my appendices you can see the growth of charters in Connecticut over the years and the per pupil funding as well. The bottom line is that this legislation is asking for millions, if not tens of millions of state and local tax dollars to go to less than 1% of the public school student population in Connecticut under the guise of Race To The Top and that's not true. We can not support such a cost shift of tax dollars.

The second issue that is before you relates to the MBR (Minimum Budget Requirement). The difficulty with this proposal is that it flies in the face of Connecticut's Supreme Court case that was heard April 22, 2008 on Education Funding with the decision yet to be released. Upon examining the oral transcripts I found it very interesting that in response to education funding questions from the Justices, the Stated relied on existing funding methodologies provided by the State. Therefore, any modification of the MBR would undermine the State's case before the Connecticut Supreme Court.

I strongly believe if you were to examine the transcripts you too would come to the conclusion that altering the MBR statute at this time, would not be in the best interest of the State.

In summation, the bills before you deal with very weighty issues that should not be passed without modifications and further scrutiny.

GREAT LAKES CENTER
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ConnCAN Can't Support its Claims

March 10, 2010

Brief provides one-sided arguments for change in Connecticut's charter school law

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Robert Bifulco – (315) 443-3144; rbifulco@syr.edu

EAST LANSING, Mi., (March 10, 2010) – A recently released issue brief argues that lifting the charter school cap and increasing funding for charters would raise low-income student achievement in Connecticut. A new Think Twice analysis of brief finds that it is one-sided, ignores relevant research on charter schools and offers no evidence to support its claim.

The brief, published by the Connecticut Coalition for Achievement Now (ConnCAN), *Connecticut's Charter School Law and Race to the Top*, was reviewed for the Think Twice think tank review project by Syracuse University professor Robert Bifulco.

In his review, Bifulco explains that the brief is fundamentally an advocacy piece that is "designed to promote a specific view of charter schools, and does not help policymakers or the public think carefully about what a charter school program should be trying to achieve and how best to achieve it."

The ConnCAN issue brief claims that "charter schools have demonstrated sustained success, especially among low-income students" and calls those schools "an essential part of closing Connecticut's achievement gap." The brief advocates lifting the Connecticut charter school cap and creating a funding mechanism that pays charter schools the same per pupil rate as that pupil's home school district.

Though Bifulco praises the brief for pointing to funding questions that may deserve attention, he identifies several major shortcomings. The brief fails, for instance, to use any peer-reviewed, empirical research on charter schools, even though such research is ample and relevant. Additionally, Bifulco observes that simply lifting the charter school enrollment cap across the board, as the ConnCAN brief recommends, ignores the fact that charters can already exceed the cap in Connecticut—but only *if* they demonstrate a record of student achievement. Changing that law to allow expansion for charters that do not have such a record may not, as the ConnCAN brief contends, place the state in a better position to receive *Race to the Top* dollars.

Overall, the brief is described by the reviewer as providing "a rather one-sided and incomplete analysis of the issues at stake."

Find Robert Bifulco's review as well as a link to the ConnCan issue brief at: http://www.greatlakescenter.org

About The Think Twice Project
The Think Twice project provides the public, policy makers and the press with timely, academically sound reviews of selected think tank publications. It is a collaboration of the Education Policy Studies Laboratory at Arizona State University and the Education and the Public Interest Center at the University of Colorado at Boulder and is funded by the Great Lakes Center for Education Research and Practice.

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DOCUMENT REVIEWED:	"Connecticut's Charter School Law and Race to the Top"
AUTHOR:	Tori Tusheit
PUBLISHER/THINK TANK:	Connecticut Coalition for Achievement Now (ConnCan)
DOCUMENT RELEASE DATE:	February 2010
REVIEW DATE:	March 10, 2010
REVIEWER:	Robert Bifulco, Syracuse University
E-MAIL ADDRESS:	rbifulco@syr.edu
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Summary of Review

The issue brief entitled "Connecticut's Charter School Law & Race to the Top" by the Connecticut Coalition for Achievement Now (ConnCAN) recommends changes to the state's charter school law that it argues would improve funding equity and are essential to closing the state's achievement gaps. The brief's specific proposals deserve careful attention, particularly its recommendation to tie charter school funding levels to student needs. The brief, however, offers no evidence for the claim that expanding charter schools would raise the achievement of low-income students, and it presents one-sided arguments for its policy positions that ignore important considerations. The brief does not provide the thoughtful discussion of the state's educational goals and how charter schools might further these goals needed to improve charter school policy.

Review

I. INTRODUCTION

The Obama administration's Race to the Top grant competition pushes states to adopt policies that encourage the development of high-quality charter schools. This push has forced state policymakers to reexamine their charter school laws. An issue brief recently released by the Connecticut Coalition for Achievement Now (ConnCan), titled *Connecticut's Charter School Law and Race to the Top* and authored by Tori Tuscheit, illustrates the type of issues that are being considered.[1]

This review briefly summarizes the recommendations made in the ConnCan brief and considers critically the rationales offered to support them. I do not offer, and indeed do not have, a position on whether or not Connecticut ought to adopt the proposed policy changes. Rather, the purpose of the review is to highlight the claims made, assess the quality of evidence used to support those claims, and raise considerations not adequately discussed in the brief.

II. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE REPORT

The brief asserts that Connecticut's "charter schools have demonstrated sustained success, especially among low-income students" (p. 6), and it suggests that they are "an essential part of closing Connecticut's achievement gap" (p. 11). It identifies aspects of Connecticut's current charter school law that it argues have restricted the growth of charter schools in the state, created funding inequities, and wasted resources. It recommends lifting the current cap that limits charter schools to 300 students and instituting a "money follows students" funding mechanism whereby districts would send charter schools an amount equal to the district's per-pupil expenditure for each resident student that the charter school enrolls. These changes, the brief suggests, would help to close achievement gaps between high- and low-income students, improve school funding equity, eliminate waste, and make Connecticut more competitive for federal Race to the Top grant dollars.

III. THE REPORT'S RATIONALE FOR ITS FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

To support the claim that charter schools have demonstrated sustained success among low-income students, the brief relies primarily on the percentage of African American students in a school achieving "at or above goal" on statewide tests as its measure of success.[2] Specifically, it highlights that the percentage of African Americans in charter middle schools who meet this standard is above the statewide average, and that three of the top 10 middle schools in the state on this measure are charter schools. The brief also points to the fact that one charter school saw a larger increase in the percentage of students scoring at or above goal between 2008 and 2009 than any other school (p. 6).[3]

The argument that the recommended changes to the state's charter school law will help to close achievement gaps relies heavily on the claim that charter schools are especially effective at improving the achievement of low-income students. Specifically, the brief argues that eliminating the cap on the size of charter schools will allow more low-income students to attend high-performing schools. It also argues that because charter school funding depends on an annual appropriation by the state legislature,

the current law creates uncertainty that discourages the opening of new charter schools—schools that presumably would help the state's neediest students.

In addition to the criticism of funding charter schools through an annual line-item appropriation, the brief takes issue with two other aspects of Connecticut's charter school funding system. According to the report, charter schools receive only 75% as much funding per pupil as the districts where they are located. Part of the reason for the discrepancy is that charter school funding is pegged to statewide averages, and is not adjusted for fact that many charter schools serve disproportionate numbers of low-income students, which the report argues is inequitable. Also, the state is currently responsible for all charter school funding, and charter school enrollments do not necessarily result in reduced state aid payments for district schools, which the report argues amounts to a wasteful, double-funding of charter school students. Under the funding system recommended in the brief, the district where the student resides would send charter schools an amount equal to its own average per-pupil expenditure, which would have two purported benefits: improve funding equity and eliminate the double funding of charter school students.

Finally, the report argues that these changes to its charter school law would make Connecticut more competitive for the federal Race to the Top grant program, which awards points for ensuring favorable conditions for high-performing charter schools.

IV. The Report's Use of Research Literature

The brief does not make use of existing research on charter school performance or charter school funding. There are no references to peer-reviewed research, even though ample research is relevant, including a large literature that addresses charter school performance and several studies that discuss the difficult issues raised by efforts to compare charter school and traditional public school funding.[4]

V. Review of the Validity of the Findings and Conclusions

The percentage of African-American students in charter schools achieving "at goal" does not tell us anything about how successful Connecticut charter schools have been at improving the performance of low-income students or even African American students; nor does the fact that a particular charter school saw an unusually large change in the percent of students achieving "at goal." The reason is simple. The percentage of charter school students scoring at some level tells us nothing about what those students would have achieved in traditional public schools, and thus does not tell us whether charter schools "have made impressive progress in increasing achievement among the state's neediest students" (p. 9). Examining changes in the percentage of students who are scoring above some standard is not any more useful. Because most charter schools are substantially smaller than traditional public schools, they are much more likely to see large, year-to-year changes in the percentage of students in any category simply due to random variation.[5]

Having a large percentage of students scoring at or above goal is certainly not a bad thing. It just does not tell us anything about how effective charter schools are at improving the performance of low-income students. Studies that have made serious attempts to answer this question provide little reason to believe that charter schools are consistently more effective than traditional public

schools or that expansion of the number of charter schools will do much to decrease achievement gaps between low-income and high-income students.[6]

Of course, just as some traditional public schools are particularly effective at improving the achievement of low-income students, it is likely that some charter schools will be similarly effective. The brief is correct that limiting enrollments at such charter schools may prevent some needy students from accessing a high-quality education. The Connecticut charter school law, however, specifically allows schools with demonstrated records of student achievement to expand beyond the statutory limit of 300 students, and a quick look at the school profiles produced by the Connecticut State Department of Education indicates that at least 5 of the 17 charter schools in the state have been allowed to exceed the 300-student cap.[7] There may be good reasons to remove the enrollment cap on other charter schools. The point here is that if the goal is to improve the achievement of low-income students for the least cost, it makes some sense to target additional classroom seats, and the attendant resources, to those charter schools that have demonstrated high levels of achievement—the current state policy.

Comparing resource levels in charter and traditional public schools is fraught with challenges. Traditional public school districts often provide in-kind services to charter schools or their students, and charter schools may not be responsible for providing the full range of services provided by traditional public school districts. The brief provides no indication of how it was determined that charter schools end up with only 75% of per-pupil funding that districts receive, or how, if at all, this comparison accounts for in-kind services or differences in service responsibilities. Policymakers should not draw strong conclusions from such simplistic comparisons.

Nevertheless, if a state is going to allow students to enroll in charter schools, it should ensure that those schools have sufficient funding to provide educational programming commensurate with student needs. Thus, the argument that charter schools that serve disproportionate shares of low-income students should receive high levels of funding has merit. Tying charter school funding levels to the average per-pupil funding in the sending district, however, may not achieve this goal. Due to local fiscal constraints, some districts might spend less than other districts with similar student populations or less than is needed to raise student achievement to acceptable standards. In this case, the proposed funding policy would merely pass inequities in the system for funding traditional public schools along to charter schools. Also, the level of need among students in a charter school might not match the average level of need in the districts where the charter school students reside. In fact, tying charter school funding levels to the district average might provide charter schools incentives to serve relatively low-need students. Thus, although the funding proposal recommended in this brief might well represent an improvement in the current charter school law, it may not go far enough towards tying funding levels to student needs.

If the primary goal of a charter school law is to create competition between charter schools and traditional public school districts, then the proposal to shift responsibility for making charter school payments to districts may make sense. Such a policy change, however, could create significant revenue losses for districts, and studies of how such revenue losses might influence service delivery are needed to understand the full implications of such a change. Just

as importantly, fostering competition between schools is only one of several alternative rationales for charter school programs. For instance, some advocate for charter school programs on the grounds that they allow educators to experiment with new practices and foster innovation. The benefits of such experimentation, however, accrue statewide, which suggests the burdens of financing charter schools should be shared statewide. Or, if the state wants to encourage cooperation among charter schools and traditional public school districts, it might want to limit the fiscal impacts of charter school enrollments on traditional public schools. Thus, the wisdom of a "money follows the child" funding mechanism depends on the purposes a charter school law is trying to achieve.

Finally, the Race to the Top competition will indeed consider whether a state ensures successful conditions for high-performing charters. Whether the changes recommended in this brief will improve Connecticut's chances in this competition depends on how federal guidelines are interpreted. For instance, will a policy that limits enrollment growth to charter schools that demonstrate high levels of achievement (the existing policy) be seen as inhibiting or encouraging the creation of high-performing charter schools? Only the federal officials charged with making those decisions can answer that question. More importantly, however, decisions about charter school policy should be based on judgments about how best to promote a state's educational goals, and states should be wary about adopting policies solely for the purpose of winning this one grant competition.

VI. Usefulness of the Report for Guidance of Policy and Practice

Charter school laws vary widely from state to state, and the details of a state's law almost certainly influence the number and types of charter schools that emerge. Thus, the details deserve careful attention. This brief is to be commended for calling attention to some of these details, and for offering a set of viable policy recommendations. The specific proposals, particularly the proposal to link charter school funding to student needs, deserve serious attention.

Like far too many advocacy pieces, however, the brief is designed to promote a specific view of charter schools, and it does not help policymakers or the public think carefully about what a charter school program should be trying to achieve and how best to achieve it. A more useful brief would begin with the goals of a charter school program, or of school choice programs more generally; these might include the following: expanding choice and empowering parents, fostering innovation, promoting racial or economic integration, raising achievement, creating competition among schools for students and resources, increasing school efficiency, or establishing alternative forms of accountability. Next, it would discuss how the policy proposals offered here might promote certain of these objectives but perhaps undermine others, and would thereby clarify what is at stake in making decisions on these policy details. In comparison with that type of discussion, this brief provides a rather one-sided and incomplete analysis of the issues at stake.

Notes & References

[1] Tuscheit, T. (2010, February). *Connecticut's Charter School Law and Race to the Top*. New Haven: Connecticut Coalition for Achievement Now (ConnCAN). Retrieved March 2, 2010, from http://www.conncan.org/learn/research/public-charter-schools/connecticuts-charter-school-law-race-top.

[2] The "goal" standard is defined by the Connecticut State Department of Education as the knowledge, skills and critical thinking ability that are reasonable to expect of students within their grade level, and is a higher standard of achievement than the state's "proficiency" standard. See Truscheit, T. (2010, January). *The state of Connecticut public education: A 2009-2010 report card for our state's public schools and public policies*. New Haven: ConnCAN.

[3] These facts are drawn from another ConnCan report, Truscheit, T. (2010, January). *The state of Connecticut public education: A 2009-2010 report card for our state's public schools and public policies*. New Haven: ConnCAN.

[4] For a review of these literatures see Bifulco, R. & Bulkley, K. (2008). Charter schools. In Ladd, H.F. and Fiske, E.B. (Eds.), *Handbook of Research in Education Finance and Policy* (pp. 425-446). New York, Routledge.

For further discussion of the challenges involved in comparing resources in charter and traditional public schools see Belfield, C. (2008, March). *Funding formulas, school choice, and inherent incentives*. Boulder and Tempe: Education and the Public Interest Center & Education Policy Research Unit. Retrieved March 1, 2010 from http://epicpolicy.org/files/CHOICE-05-Belfield2.pdf.

[5] Kane, T. J. & Staiger, D.O. (2002, fall). The promise and pitfalls of using imprecise school accountability measures. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, *16*(4), 91-114.

[6] For a recent review see Bifulco, R. & Bulkley, K. (2008). Charter schools. In Ladd, H.F. and Fiske, E.B. (Eds.), *Handbook of Research in Education Finance and Policy* (pp. 425-446). New York, Routledge.

[7] School Profiles (n.d.) Connecticut State Department of Education. Retrieved March 2, 2010, from http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/profiles/index.htm.

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Association

Testimony of
Mark Waxenberg, Director Government Relations
Connecticut Education Association

Before the
State Board of Education

Agenda Item XI D

December 2, 2009

Good morning, Chairman Taylor, Commissioner McQuillan, and other members of the Board. My name is Mark Waxenberg from the Connecticut Education Association (CEA).

The context for my remarks begins in 1996 when CEA embraced the reform potential of charter schools. We supported the 1996 law and quickly got down to the business of establishing the first unionized charter school in the state, Integrated Day Charter School in Norwich. CEA also has pioneered another reform approach known as CommPACT schools.

I am here to comment on item XI D. It contains four proposals around charter schools that would overhaul state law on charter schools and rattle the very foundations of education funding. These are enormous issues with enormous consequences.

In our view, three of the four proposals offer nothing in the way of realistic or responsible options. Only one – revision of the local school model – offers a glimmer of promise. But we hasten to add that we have serious concerns about that proposal, too.

At the risk of stating the obvious, let me say that complete and comprehensive information is essential to the discussion you are having today. In that spirit, I have nine attachments to my testimony: #1—all sources of funding for individual charter schools; #2, #3, #4, 5—detail of the dramatic growth of charter schools; #6—charter schools in need of improvement; #7—loss of school funding if proposal #2 before the State Board were to be enacted; #8—State Auditor of Public Accounts document on improvements in accountability needed for charter schools; and #9—brochure providing an overview of the CommPACT school model.

I will now comment on each specific proposal beginning with a note about educational policy and legislative history. When charters were conceived, policymakers studied how to put charter schools and public schools on equal financial footing. Elected policymakers decided it was in the public interest for the state to fund charters at the student "foundation level" established in the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grant. That critical policy decision appears to be ignored in today's State Board material.

Instead, the material prepared for the State Board today by State Department of Education (SDE) staff introduces a new concept in talking about parity between traditional schools and charter schools – named "average adjusted net per pupil expenditure." We question why the staff had to try and come up with a new concept to compare expenditures between traditional schools and charter schools. We only have to look at Attachment #1 to see that per-pupil expenditures in an overwhelming majority of charter schools already surpass the $10,306 parity target identified by staff in the material presented to the State Board.

Proposal #1 takes that per-pupil expenditure and increases it by $1,000 per student in all the charter schools in the state. This would cost the state more than $5 million, raising the total state budget allocation for charters to more than $50 million, and, with growth, might approach a $100 million price tag in the future.

There is another reality that you need to keep front and center in your board discussions: Under current law, charter schools do not pay for transportation, special education costs, and nursing services. These costs are all borne by the city/town in which the charter is located.

Proposal #2 expects local school districts to take over the fiscal responsibility for charters now borne by the state. This cost shifting would create huge financial hardships for local school districts. Attachment #7 details local costs for the 75 districts – from urban to rural – that have 10 or more students attending charters. You can see that districts immediately would lose more than $17 million dollars from their local budgets – school budgets that thousands and thousands of schoolchildren depend on for quality education. In subsequent years, the situation would get even worse. We cannot expect to place the lion's share of responsibility for charters on the shoulders of local taxpayers.

Proposal #3 is where CEA finds a glimmer of promise. But it dims when we read the references to independent governing bodies and contractors managing our schools. These are strong words for privatization of our public schools, and they concern us deeply.

Proposal #4 is confusing at its best, and dangerous at its worst. The proposal seeks to remove phrases and wording that are consistent with other important education statutes. It raises a long list of issues connected with accountability and statutory safeguards. These are the same kind of issues that the state auditors raise in my attachment #7.

In closing, a comment about the general tone of the proposals. They seem to assume that traditional public schools are adequately funded. There is abundant evidence that this is not true.
Let us also not forget that there will be a 14 percent hole in the ECS program once the federal stimulus funds evaporate. That is $541 million over two years – more than half a billion dollars that will have to be found in the state budget for Connecticut's local public schools.

CEA would never underestimate the value of charter schools as laboratories of innovation. At the same time, we also must be mindful of solutions – systemic reform that can be nurtured in all local school districts – that promote high-quality education for all of the students in our state. We ask you to do the same. Thank you for this opportunity to share our thoughts with you.

Charter School Expenditure Analysis 2008-2009
SDE E0001C

School	Total State/Federal Grants	Contributions	Regular In-Kind from District	Special Ed. In-kind from District	Misc. Income	Interest Income	Loans	Other Income	Retained Income	Total	PPE
Park City	$2,035,102	$0	$41,292	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$2,076,394	$9,270
Highville	$2,939,379	$0	$0	$0	$0	$9,537	$0	$0	$0	$2,948,916	$9,830
Odyssey	$1,748,890	$1,150	$0	$92,301	$1,649	$0	$0	$0	$0	$1,843,990	$10,360
Side by Side	$2,398,023	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$2,398,023	$10,472
New Beginnings	$3,793,945	$1,294	$0	$63,000	$7,211	$6,764	$0	$13,300	$0	$3,885,514	$10,853
Elm City	$5,318,106	$726,021	$0	$0	$0	$6,684	$0	$0	$0	$6,050,811	$11,888
AF, Bridgeport	$1,753,445	$208,834	$0	$0	$0	$5,904	$0	$0	$0	$1,968,183	$12,301
AF, Hartford	$824,798	$2,382,093	$0	$0	$3,232	$607		$0	$0	$3,210,130	$12,302
Asylum Hill	$1,339,800	$220	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$336,395	$0	$1,676,415	$12,327
Explorations	$867,655	$6,205	$0	$0	$180,873	$230	$0	$0	$0	$1,054,963	$12,411
Jumoke	$4,888,583	$911	$0	$0	$123,175	$2,198	$0	$137,022	$0	$5,151,889	$12,505
Integrated Day	$4,007,233	$3,870	$0	$17,721	$27,030	$8,925	$0	$235,410	$543	$4,300,732	$13,033
Common Ground	$1,882,314	$25,400	$0	$0	$10,171	$1,051	$0	$87,586	$59,985	$2,066,507	$13,332
Bridge Academy	$3,217,348	$23,594	$209,921	$0	$53,435	$0	$0	$0	$0	$3,504,298	$13,375
Amistad	$6,598,334	$2,186,345	$0	$0	$58,612	$22,901	$0	$0	$0	$8,866,192	$13,832
ISAAC	$2,667,238	$61,182	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$309,491	$0	$3,043,911	$16,125
Stamford Academy	$1,287,392	$273,410	$980,219	$116,049	$1,582	$5,660	$0	$117,355	$32,252	$2,813,919	$21,480
Trailblazers	$1,565,657	$517,858	$788,842	$95,080	7,439	$8,492	$0	$0	$270,352	$3,2[illegible]0	$21,692
Totals	$49,133,242	$6,418,387	$2,020,274	$384,151	[illegible]74,409	$78,953	$0	$1,236,559	$363,132	$60,114,[illegible]07	$12,260

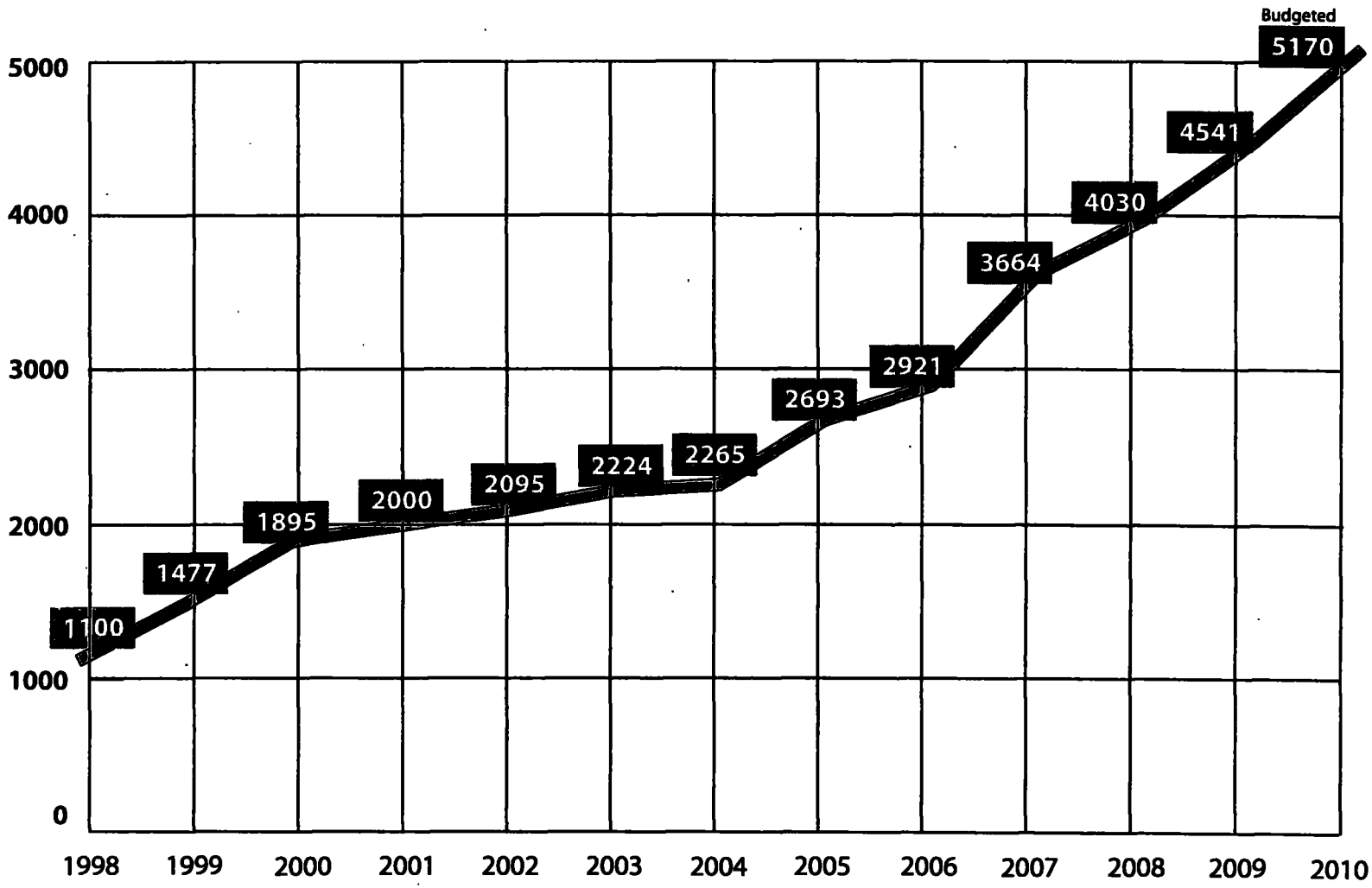
001373

Connecticut Charter School Data 1997-1998 to 2009-2010

Year	Number of State Charter Schools	Enrollment Total	State Per-pupil Grant	Total Appropriation
1997-1998	10	1,100	$6,000	$6,600,000
1998-1999	13	1,477	$6,500	$9,600,500
1999-2000	14	1,895	$6,500	$12,317,500
2000-2001	14	2,000	$7,000	$14,000,000
2001-2002	13	2,095	$7,000	$14,665,000
2002-2003	13	2,224	$7,000	$15,568,000
2003-2004	12	2,265	$7,250	$16,421,250
2004-2005	14	2,693	$7,360	$19,820,480
2005-2006	14	2,921	$7,625	$22,448,000
2006-2007	16	3,664	$8,000	$29,832,500
2007-2008	16	4,030	$8,650	$34,880,000
2008-2009	18	4,541	$9,300	$41,654,000
2009-2010	18	5,170	$9,300	$48,081,000

From the Connecticut State Department of Education

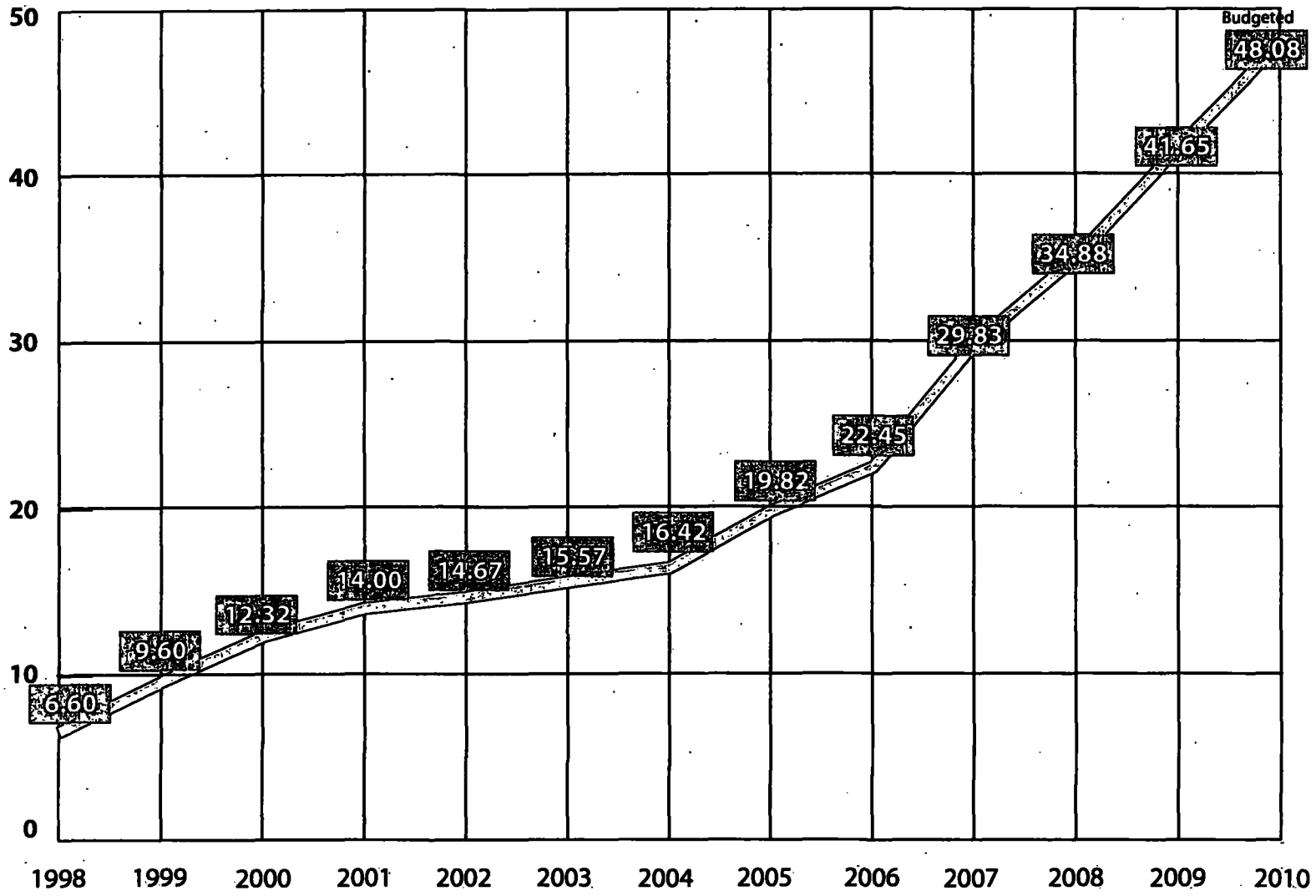
Connecticut Charter School Student Enrollment 1998-2010 (Budgeted)



Source: State Department of Education

001375

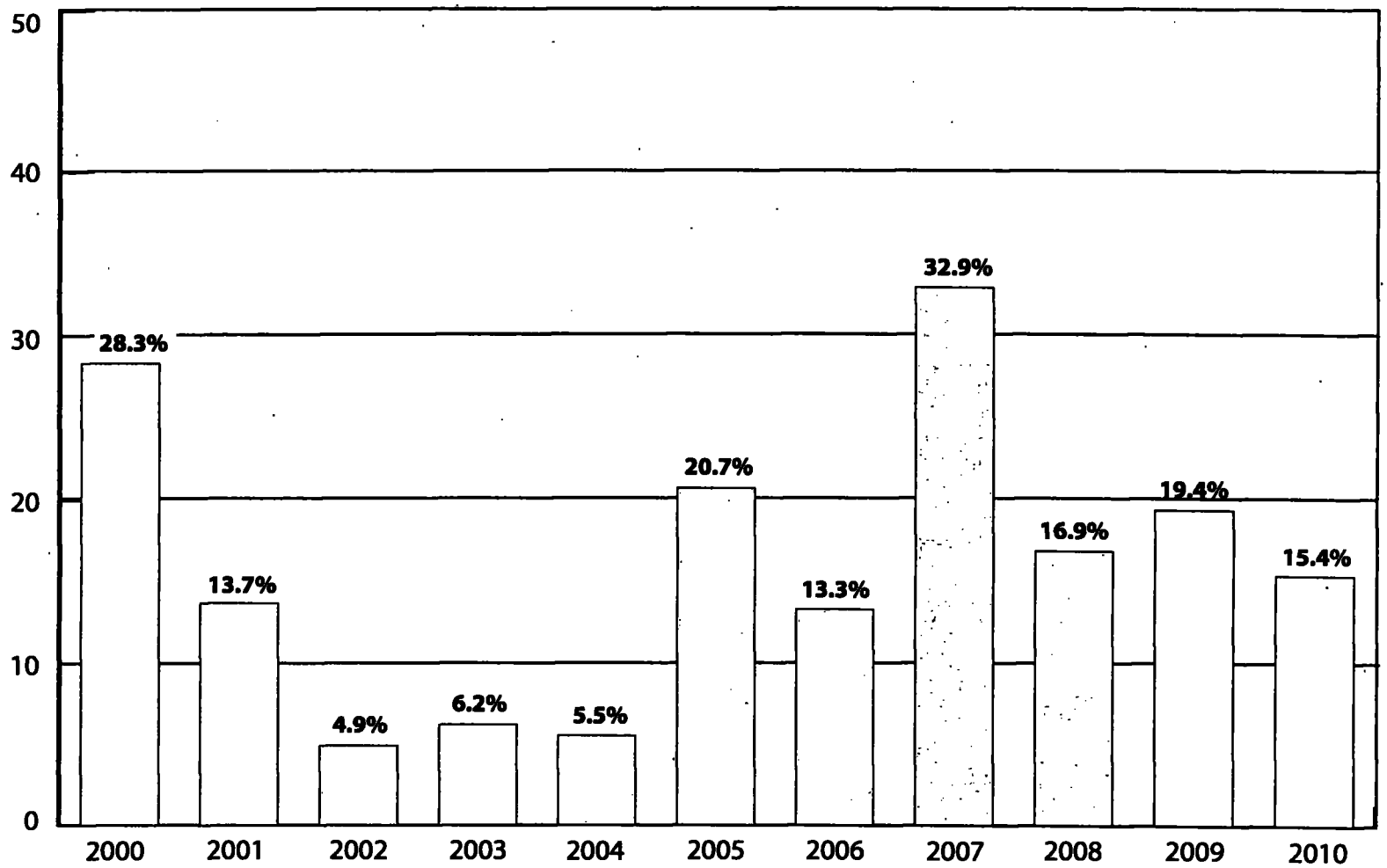
Connecticut Charter School Funding 1998-2010 (Budgeted)



Source: State Department of Education

001376

Annual Percentage Increase in Charter School Appropriations in Connecticut FY 2000-2010



Source: State Department of Education

001377

2008-2009
Connecticut Public Charter Schools
Status Per No Child Left Behind and
Connecticut's K-12 Accountability System based on
State Department of Education Data

Elementary/Middle Charter Schools in need of improvement	
Achievement First, Bridgeport	
Bridge Academy	
Park City Prep	
Jumoke Academy	
Side by Side Community School	
Trail Blazers Academy	
Elementary/Middle Charter Schools not making AYP	
Achievement First, Hartford Academy	
Achievement First, Bridgeport	
Bridge Academy	
Park City Prep	
Jumoke Academy	
Odyssey Community	
Norwich Integrated Day	
Side by Side Community School	
High School Charters in need of improvement	
Stamford Academy	
Bridge Academy	
High School Charters not making AYP	
Stamford Academy	
Explorations	
Bridge Academy	

Summary

There are fourteen Elementary/Middle Charter Schools in Connecticut. Six (42.9%) are listed as in need of improvement compared to only 36.9% of Connecticut's public Elementary/Middle schools. Also, of the fourteen Elementary/Middle Charter Schools in Connecticut, eight, or 64% did not make Annual Yearly Progress (AYP), compared to only 41.5% of the public Elementary/Middle schools.

There are five Charter High Schools in Connecticut. Two of these schools in Connecticut or (40%) are listed in need of improvement, compared to only 29.9% of Connecticut public high schools. Also, of the five Charter High Schools in Connecticut, three, or (60%) did not make AYP, compared to only 38.5% of public high schools.

Charter School Proposal
Before
State Board of Education

Proposal #2

"Increase the per pupil grant for state charter schools to comparable statewide average per pupil rate (which would exclude special education costs)."

Approximately 75 local school districts would be adversely affected financially under this proposal.

Below are cities/towns that have more than 10 students attending charter schools and the financial impact on those cities/towns, based on data from State Department of Education.

Town	Cost
Montville	$66,242
Preston	$70,224
Vernon	$77,392
Waterford	$98,700
Winchester	$107,247
Torrington	$119,900
West Haven	$167,544
Groton	$188,224
Stratford	$190,775
West Hartford	$243,544
Windsor	$291,537
East Hartford	$364,656
New London	$426,268
Bloomfield	$430,612
Hamden	$727,592
Manchester	$810,235
Hartford	$1,150,058
Norwich	$1,271,850
Norwalk	$1,983,260
Stamford	$2,389,736
Bridgeport	$2,896,398
New Haven	$3,745,665

Agency Response: "We agree with this finding. The Department is currently contracting the development of a new teacher certification system that will reconcile revenues to certificates issued. The Department will reconcile its Adult Education Accountability Reports for attendance and tuition to the revenue reports for the same activity."

Emerging Issues – Charter Schools:

Charter schools are public nonsectarian schools organized as nonprofit corporations. They are operated independently of local or regional boards of education. Charters are granted by the State Board of Education. As of the report date, there were 16 charter schools in operation in the State. That number is expected to grow in the future.

Most of the charter schools in the State perform the administrative and program functions associated with their operations. In response to the increasing demands for providing educational services within the constraints of existing budgets, charter schools are exploring new ways to acquire the subject matter expertise to operate while at the same time reducing costs. To date two charter schools have opted to employ the same management service organization in order to address those demands and constraints. The Department has been supportive and involved with the charter schools and management service organizations as they implement these new working relationships.

The management service organization charges the charter schools a service fee to provide such services as but not limited to: development of core curricula, budget preparation, recruiting, start-up management and fundraising. The charter schools benefit by this arrangement in that they have access to subject matter professionals without having to bear the full cost of those professionals. As the number of charter schools expands, it becomes increasingly likely that the use and number of management service organizations will expand with them.

However, there are certain emerging issues associated with this relatively new type of business relationship. The Department's policies and procedures need to be updated to reflect these emerging issues. Accordingly, we make the following recommendations:

Charter School Governance and Independence:

Criteria: Section 10-66aa(1)(D) of the Connecticut General Statutes defines a charter school as a public, nonsectarian school which operates independently of any local or regional board of education in accordance with the terms of its charter. Further, no member or employee of a governing council of a charter school shall have a personal or financial interest in the assets, real or personal, of the school.

Condition: Our review of the composition of the governing boards ("boards") for two charter schools and their management service organization found that several board members served on two or more of the boards.

It was also noted that several employees had been paid by both the management service organization and one of the charter schools.

There is currently no policy prohibiting charter schools and management organizations from sharing board members and/or management level employees.

Effect: Either in appearance and/or practice, the ability of charter schools to "operate independently" is compromised by the sharing of board members and employees. Decisions made for the collective good of the management service organization and the associated entities, may not be in the best interests of an individual charter school.

Cause: The Department has not established a formal policy and monitoring procedures to prevent and/or detect the presence of interlocking board members and the sharing of management level employees by charter schools and their management service organizations. It was noted that the Department had taken steps to address this matter, however no formal policy with respect to this emerging issue has been generated to date.

Recommendation: The Department should establish a formal policy that prohibits charter schools and their management service organizations from sharing board members and management level employees. The policy should be distributed to all charter schools. In addition, the Department should establish monitoring procedures designed to periodically test for the presence of shared board members and management level employees by charter schools and their management service organizations. (See Recommendation 13.)

Agency Response: "The State Department of Education agrees in part with this recommendation. We agree that a board member serving on a management service organization that provides services to a charter school precludes such board member from simultaneously serving on the charter school governing board which retains the management organization. We do not believe that a similar policy concerning management level employees is warranted at this time. However, the Department will revise the ED001(C) to monitor for related party management issues and the financial impact of sharing management level employees."

Calculation of Service Fee Rates by Management Service Organizations:

Criteria: Pursuant to Section 10-66ee(c)(1) of the Connecticut General Statutes, "the State shall pay in accordance with this subsection, to the fiscal authority for a State charter school, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2006, seven thousand six hundred twenty-five dollars for each student enrolled in such school, and for each fiscal year

thereafter, eight thousand dollars for each student enrolled in such school."

Condition: With respect to the service fees charged by the management service organization for services rendered to the two charter schools, our review noted the following:

- The Department has not yet developed a policy with respect to the application and use of service fees by charter school management service organizations.
- The service agreement does not specifically identify the direct and indirect costs that have been factored into the service fee rate.
- Some of the services listed in the agreements in exchange for the service fee appear to be one time or intermittent in nature.
- The Department has not reviewed the cost analysis and supporting documentation used by the management service organization to calculate the service fee rate charged to the two charter schools.

Effect: There is an indeterminate risk that the service fee rate charged by the management service organization may recover costs from the charter schools in excess of the services provided. As noted above, charter school funding and the service fees charged by the management service organization are both based upon enrollment.

By extension, the State is also at risk of making grant payments to the charter schools for administrative and program services not fully rendered by the management service organization.

It is possible that the service fee rate in effect does not sufficiently recover the costs associated with the services performed by the management service organization on behalf of its client charter schools. Such a determination could have a bearing on the quality of services provided by the management service organization for its client charter schools.

Cause: The use of a management service organization by the charter schools is a relatively new business arrangement. As such, the Department has not had the opportunity to develop policy with respect to the application and use of service fees.

Recommendation: The Department should develop a policy with respect to the methodology used by management service organizations to calculate service fee rates. The policy should be distributed to all charter schools. At a minimum, the policy should provide guidance on how

service fee rates should be calculated and what constitutes allowable costs. In addition, the Department should establish monitoring procedures designed to periodically test the service fee rates charged by management service organizations to determine if the rates are properly calculated and supported. (See Recommendation 14.)

Agency Response: "The State Department of Education agrees in part with the recommendation. The Department will explore the basis for management fees charged to charter schools through an examination of management service organization agreements. The Department will review the services performed and the fee paid for such services. Based upon this analysis, the Department will evaluate the need to establish policies and develop monitoring procedures as considered necessary."

Fund Transfers between Charter Schools and Management Service Organizations:

Criteria: Section 10-66aa(1)(D) of the Connecticut General Statutes defines a charter school as a public, nonsectarian school which operates independently of any local or regional board of education in accordance with the terms of its charter.

Section 10-66ee(e) of the Connecticut General Statutes states that, "Notwithstanding any provision of the general statutes to the contrary, if at the end of a fiscal year amounts received by a State charter school, pursuant to subdivision (1) of subsection (c) of this section, are unexpended, the charter school, (1) may use, for the expenses of the charter school for the following fiscal year, up to ten per cent of such amounts, and (2) may (A) create a reserve fund to finance a specific capital or equipment purchase or another specified project as may be approved by the commissioner, and (B) deposit into such fund up to five per cent of such amounts."

Condition: The financial information for two charter schools and their management service organization for 2005 and 2006 properly disclosed several non-interest bearing advances among the related parties:

One non-interest bearing transfer in fiscal year 2005 in the amount of $90,000 was between the two charter schools affiliated with the management service organization; another transfer in fiscal year 2006 in the amount of $369,354 was between the charter school and the management service organization.

Our review found that there are several emerging issues associated with monetary transfers between these affiliated non-profit organizations:

- While there may be a collective benefit in terms of minimizing the costs associated with cash management for the affiliated group of non-profits, such transfers may not be in the financial or operational interest of an individual charter school and its students.

- The transferor surrenders direct control over the transferred funds and relinquishes the potential investment income from those funds.

- The Department has no policy allowing or prohibiting unsecured, non-interest bearing advances to affiliated non-profit organizations.

- Charter schools are limited by law in the use of excess funds received from the State grant. There are no existing Departmental monitoring procedures to determine the composition of the transferred amounts among affiliated organizations.

Effect: Charter schools that make unsecured, non-interest bearing loans to affiliated organizations subject themselves to additional financial and operational risk. A default in the "loan" by one organization could have a negative, cascading effect on the other affiliated organizations.

Further, in the absence of monitoring procedures, it is possible that the transferred amounts could include State or Federal grant funds in violation of applicable laws.

Cause: The use of management service organizations by charter schools is a relatively new type of business relationship. By extension, the transfer of funds among the affiliated organizations is a relatively new type of transaction. Currently, there is no Departmental policy allowing or prohibiting unsecured, non-interest bearing transfers among charter schools and their management service organizations.

There are no monitoring procedures in place to determine whether the transfers included State or Federal grant funds.

Recommendation: The Department should develop a policy with respect to unsecured, non-interest bearing transfers between charter schools and their management service organizations. The policy should be distributed to all charter schools. At a minimum, the policy should prohibit the use of State and Federal grant funds for such purposes. The policy should describe the conditions under which such transfers are allowable, require the approval of the charter schools' board of directors and require that the transfers be properly secured and

interest bearing. (See Recommendation 15.)

Agency Response: "The State Department of Education agrees in part with this recommendation. The Department will formalize a policy to prohibit the use of State and Federal grant funds with respect to unsecured, non-interest bearing transfers between charter schools and management service organizations. Concerning transfers of non-State or Federal funds, the Department will monitor such transfers and evaluate the need for developing a more comprehensive policy and related procedures."

CommPACT Schools, a five-year school reform program headed by the University of Connecticut's Neag School of Education, is off to an encouraging start as it tackles one of the nation's most urgent educational problems -- the achievement gaps that find children of poverty and color lagging behind their other classmates in Connecticut are among the largest in the nation.

In an urban school landscape littered with failed and often fleeting experiments, CommPACT is designed for the long haul, backed by the research expertise of a major university and supported by a coalition of organizations representing teachers, principals and superintendents.

In addition to UConn's Neag School, CommPACT founders include the Connecticut Federation of School Administrators, the Connecticut Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers – Connecticut, the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents and the Connecticut Association of Urban Superintendents.

Beginning in the fall of 2008 and for five years, the CommPACT model is being piloted in eight schools in Connecticut's poorest cities and is expected to impact approximately 17,000 K-12 students.

The name CommPACT symbolizes the commitment required by the partners within each school including community members, parents, administrators, children, and teachers. This collective effort marks a radical shift from the top-down operations common to most school systems.

CommPACT Schools Cohort (2008-2013) includes:

Bridgeport: Barnum School and Longfellow School
Hartford: M.D. Fox
New Haven: Davis St. School and Hill Central
New London: Shoreline Academy
Waterbury: Washington Elementary School and West Side Middle School

Founding Partners:

American Federation of Teachers, CT

Connecticut Association of Urban School Superintendents

Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents

Connecticut Education Association

Connecticut Federation of School Administrators

Neag School of Education, University of Connecticut

CommPACT Schools FAQs

1. What are CommPACT Schools? *CommPACT Schools are existing public schools that remain accountable to their school districts while being granted increased flexibility in governance, budgeting and curriculum. A partnership of school district administrators, school representatives, teachers, community leaders, and parents shares in the decision-making. Supported by the University of Connecticut's Neag School of Education and its Institute for Urban School Improvement, CommPACT Schools work collaboratively with experts in education to enhance student learning.*

2. What are the benefits of reorganizing as a CommPACT School? *CommPACT Schools create an empowering and trusting work environment for teachers and administrators. This accomplishes two things which, together, create better student learning conditions:*

* A greater sense of shared vision, mission and ownership enhances the teaching and learning experience. Teachers and administrators are integral to the CommPACT Schools' development, planning and decision-making structures.

* A better ability to attract and retain highly-qualified teachers—especially in the urban areas where CommPACT schools have been established. Research has shown that the attraction and retention of teachers is linked to whether teachers are able to share in the school-level decisions that affect the students they teach.

3. How does a CommPACT School become established? In 2008, the first cohort of CommPACT Schools was selected from schools that applied to participate in the program. As part of the application process, 90 percent at each school had to agree to become a CommPACT School. In addition, the school administrators, superintendents, and local unions had to agree to support the school as a CommPACT School. Under guidance from UConn staff, the schools spent six months preparing the application and securing the stakeholders' support. Eight schools were selected by the *executive board of the CommPACT Schools Partners*, which includes the presidents or executive directors of the Connecticut Education Association (CEA), Connecticut Federation of Teachers (AFT-CT), Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS), Connecticut Federation of School Administrators, and dean of the Neag School of Education at UConn. The first cohort of eight schools began work in the fall of 2008. Seven of the eight schools were on the NCLB watch list regarding AYP.

4. What is the Neag School of Education's role in the CommPACT Schools initiative? By partnering with higher education, the CommPACT Schools are strongly connected to a resource for research-based practices. The Neag School's Institute for Urban School Improvement serves as the independent support center for the CommPACT Schools, *providing expertise in data-gathering and* analysis, priority-setting, and designing professional development to support research-based practices. The Institute for Urban School Improvement assigns site developers who provide on-site coaching and support.

5. How are children selected to attend a CommPACT School—won't CommPACT Schools just attract the best students? CommPACT Schools operate under existing local school attendance policies, drawing students as they would have before achieving CommPACT status.

6. What do CommPACT Schools cost the district? CommPACT Schools are reorganized *public schools and, therefore, are not* duplicative of existing services. Apart from the initial reorganization cost of releasing teachers for planning and start-up, a school that reorganizes as a CommPACT School does not cost the district any additional funds. CommPACT Schools are given the same budget they would have received as a traditional public school. Key to CommPACT Schools is that those who are closest to the students are empowered to make decisions about how best to tailor the budget with the goal of improving student learning.

7. How is the CommPACT Schools' outside support funded? Funding of the CommPACT Schools initiative takes a team effort. Using privately-raised funds, UConn's Neag School of Education provided financial support during the first year of operation for necessary planning, for a series of informational meetings at each potential school site, and for the school application and selection processes.

- Working collaboratively as a team, the partners worked with the Connecticut General Assembly to allocate $480,000 to the Neag School's Institute for Urban School Improvement to fund the implementation and day-to-day operation of the CommPACT Schools initiative.
- With a $250,000 award, The NEA Foundation is funding the Neag School's evaluation of the CommPACT Schools initiative. The NEA Foundation offers programs and grants that support educators' efforts to close achievement gaps and increase student achievement.
- Other private support includes: Near and Far Foundation - $10,000, JP Morgan Chase - $25,000 and the Fairfield County Community Foundation - $20,000.

8. What is the role of the school district in a CommPACT School? The school district is an active partner with its CommPACT Schools and agrees to support the increased autonomy of the school site, participate as a resource to the school, and support public reporting of each CommPACT School's performance and operation assessments.

9. How are the teachers unions involved? The teachers unions are active partners in the life of the CommPACT School. AFT-CT and CEA were key founders of the CommPACT Schools initiative. The unions are an integral part of the decision-making and governance process at both the local school level and state level. Meeting the needs of all students requires that we engage the expertise and professionalism of union members and their leaders as resources for school improvement.

10. How do CommPACT Schools coexist with collective bargaining agreements? Teachers working in CommPACT Schools are covered under collective bargaining agreements, particularly those agreements that pertain to salary. However, teachers in a CommPACT School may agree to alter parts of their collective bargaining agreement relating to day-to-day working conditions if they believe it will improve student learning. Such flexibility has been proven to increase efficiency and, most important, to increase collaboration in schools by better utilizing the distribution of time and human resources.

11. Why is this reform different from past school reforms? Generally speaking, public school reform efforts in the past have been neither systemic nor organic. The CommPACT School model is organic because the impetus to reorganize as a CommPACT School comes from teachers and administrators working together. Without expressed mutual interest, no reorganization can occur. This model is also systemic because it fundamentally changes the governance and decision-making structures that affect student learning most directly.

12. What does the term "evidence-based practice" mean when used in the context of CommPACT Schools? Evidence-based practice refers to school practices that research has shown to be effective in addressing a particular challenge in a particular context. Much of the education practice now in use by most schools has limited research to support its efficacy. Additionally, many research-based practices do not examine the specific context in which the intervention is effective or the conditions necessary for successful implementation. In CommPACT Schools, processes are put in place to ensure that practices are both research-based and proven effective for a school's particular condition. Essential to CommPACT Schools is that the leadership teams identify which research-based practices will work best in their particular school, with their particular students.

13. Are CommPACT Schools charter schools? No. The current charter schools in Connecticut operate under state charters and accept students through a lottery. In contrast, CommPACT schools operate within a local town or city school district and take all students within a specific local school attendance area. It is important to note that CommPACT schools were initiated by teachers unions and that shared decision-making is a hallmark of these new schools. This shared decision-making is supported by research-based, student improvement strategies.

14. Are CommPACT Schools magnet schools? No. CommPACT Schools take existing schools and convert them to schools that employ evidence-based practices in all aspects of school operation including governance, budget, and curriculum.

Service Fee Analysis
Of
Achievement First Schools
2008-2009
EDGOIC Analysis of Achievement First (AF) Charter Schools

School	State Department of Education Grant	Service Fee to Achievement First	Percentage of Grant
Amistad	$5,961,300.00	$476,904.00	8.0%
Achievement First Bridgeport	$1,488,000.00	$148,800.00	10.0%
Achievement First Hartford	$492,900.00	$237,150.00	48.1%
Elm City	$4,733,700.00	$364,572.00	7.7%
Total	**$12,675,900.00**	**$1,227,426.00**	**9.68%**

The only other Charter School in Connecticut that pays a management fee is Charter School for Young Children on Asylum Hill. It pays, $80,450 to Capitol Region Education Council, or 6.4% of the state grant.

Testimony on Raised Bills 5493, 438, 5491, and 440

Submitted by Wendy Lecker
March 15, 2010

Chairman Gaffey, Chairman Fleischmann and Members of the Education Committee:

I am a parent of three public school children in Stamford and co-president of Stamford's Parent Teacher Council, the umbrella organization for Stamford's twenty PTOs. I would haved liked to have presented this testimony in person. However, we are facing the possibility of over nine million dollars in cuts to our local school budget and this evening is our public hearing on Stamford's school budget. Therefore, I am writing to oppose Raised Bill 5493, the "money follows the child" funding proposal, the removal of fiscal restraints in authorizing charter schools in Raised Bill 438, and the portion of Raised Bill 5491 concerning a "parent trigger." I also oppose using student test scores to evaluate teachers (Raised Bills 440 and 5491).

I. Funding Proposal in Raised Bill 5493

The funding proposal in Raised Bill 5493 will have dire consequences for school districts like Stamford.

To require local districts to pay the net current expenditure for each child attending a charter school has been shown by our State Department of Education ("SDE") to drain local school districts of a disproportionate amount of necessary resources to help all children, in order to fund the few attending schools over which that district has absolutely no control or say. Charter schools are state creations, and they are separate districts. SDE has already shown that if this proposal were enacted, Stamford, a district of 15,000 students, would immediately lose 51% of its ECS allocation in order to fund 266 students. (See SDE Presentation on Charter School Funding, page 13, attached).

It doesn't take much foresight to predict that a small increase in the number of Stamford students attending charters would eat up not only our ECS allocation, but would cost us millions more. Our city has no way to make up for the money that would be lost to our school infrastructure, at a time where we are struggling to hold on to the teachers and resources we have. SDE has also shown that on average, Connecticut charter schools already spend more per student than their traditional public school counterparts. (See page 8 of SDE Charter School Documents, attached) In Stamford, the two charter schools each spend about $8,000 more per child than Stamford's public schools spend per child. (See page 8 of SDE Charter School Documents, attached)

Over forty percent of Stamford's public school students are eligible for free and reduced price lunch; 37% come from homes where English is not the home language, almost 15% of our children are not fluent in English and almost 10% of our children require special education services. Despite this need, Stamford receives about $500 per child as its ECS allocation- one tenth the median allocation of other districts in DRG H. To deprive our needy children of funds, when we already receive so little, is manifestly unjust.

Moreover, as has been pointed out by SDE and by educational finance experts such as Professor Bruce Baker of Rutgers, the "money follows the child" idea embodied by this legislation is not grounded in any sound educational financial theories or evidence. (Professor Baker's critique is attached).

As you know, the State Board of Education rejected this proposal after hearing a presentation by SDE. After rejecting the funding scheme put forth in this legislation, the State Board resolved to establish a commission to examine funding strategies. Would it not be wiser to wait until this commission studies funding mechanisms and possible effects of those mechanisms before enacting legislation? Since no serious study of funding strategies has been done on charter schools, why enact a baseless scheme that threatens to deprive the majority of students in a district of needed educational resources before this commission has done its work?

In fact, why examine charter school funding without looking at whether children in all public schools are getting adequate funding? What advantage do charter school students hold over every other public school student in Connecticut?

Sound education policy cannot be made by favoring ideology over methodology and by satisfying the needs of the few at the expense of the vast majority of public school students. As John Dewey said, "what the best and wisest parent wants for his child, that must the community want for all its children." We must strive to keep the interests of all public school children in this state in mind while crafting our educational policy.

II. Raised Bill 438

I respectfully submit that it is financially irresponsible to remove fiscal restraints from the consideration of whether to authorize a charter school. To allow charter authorization without any regard for the financial impact it at odds with building a coherent educational policy across this state. It appears that this proposed provision is designed with the idea that localities will now have to pay for charter school. As I stated above, to require local districts to pay for charter school students would have a disastrous effect on local school budgets, and as a consequence, the ability for local school districts to serve ALL their students.

III. Parent Trigger- Raised Bill 5493

Although I agree that there is an urgent need to empower parents to help improve their children's education, I disagree that a "parent trigger" as proposed in this legislation, is the proper avenue either to empower parents or to improve student learning. Moreover, I strongly believe that a "parent trigger" mechanism threatens to destabilize our public school system, a move which would undermine school and student improvement.

In Stamford, we have worked very hard to turn 20 disparate schools into one cohesive school district, where every child in every school learns the same high level curriculum, the same quality of teaching. And I give our Superintendent Joshua Starr a great deal of credit in this endeavor. This unity extends beyond curriculum. When we realized we were out of balance demographically, our school district went through a public, painful process of redistricting. Parents came out to talk, to plead, to scream. And they came to realize that their school was an integral part of an entire system that needed to be redistricted- that their needs had to fit into the needs of the district.

Now, we are coming to terms with the fact that segregation has extended into our classrooms - in the form of ability grouping. We are again going through an important, yet painful, public process to dismantle that system and improve education for all.

Our School District Is One Community

Parents have a voice, and we do everything we can to make sure it is heard- we're not perfect, but we are making great strides in involving parents. We hold forums in different locations in the city to ensure wide representation. And when parents express themselves, it's not in some sneaky petition that who knows who has really read, but in a public hearing. The public nature

taught and which students haven't. But, at the moment, there is no evidence whatsoever that the tests being touted for test-based teacher evaluation are up to that task." Thus, while it is essential to ensure teaching quality, using a test not specifically designed to evaluate teacher quality will only lead to distortion and confusion. Improper measures of teacher quality will not help improve instruction- the goal we all seek to reach.

V. Conclusion

Expanding charter schools, and funding them at the expense of children in local public schools across this state, represent a sharp departure from Connecticut's present educational policy. Raised Bills 5493, 5491 and 438 threaten the viability of public school districts in order to serve a small percentage of children: charter school students. As we know, if Connecticut were to receive Race to the Top funds, and that is only a possibility, those funds are only temporary. However, the citizens of Connecticut will have to live with the effects of these drastic changes in educational practices and policies for a long time. It would be a disservice to all children and all taxpayers to upend our educational policy, with little or no study of the effects of this sea change, merely to chase after funds that would be only temporary and that we are not sure we would even receive. I respectfully request that, in considering educational legislation, you pay heed to the effect this legislation will have on all public school children in Connecticut. To advance the educational opportunities of a small segment of our children, at the expense of all others, does not fulfill our constitutional obligation to provide every child in Connecticut access to a quality public education.

Thank you.
Wendy Lecker
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