

PA13-108

HB6358

Education	14-17, 37-41, 46-57, 60, 190-191, 193-196, 220- 221, 251-252, 255, 257, 299-300, 312, 314-315, 344, 375-377, 422-423, 457, 459-462, 1072	51
House	3521-3529	9
Senate	2710-2714, 3924-3926, 3993-3995	11
		71

**JOINT
STANDING
COMMITTEE
HEARINGS**

**EDUCATION
PART 1
1 – 357**

**2013
INDEX**

state around early childhood, and we can't even identify where the redundancies and the gaps are in our system because we don't have this coordination.

And so this model would actually allow us to do these things and continue to do the things that Connecticut should be proud of, but is not actually able to achieve in many of the smaller areas that we need to coordinate in. I'm probably going over time.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: No apology needed. Thanks for your testimony. Commissioner Pryor.

COMM. STEPHAN PRYOR: Good morning. Thank you to the Cochairs and to the Honorable Members of the Committee. I'm very grateful for another opportunity this week to be before you.

HB6358

I will not be redundant. At least I will aim not to be redundant. We've already reviewed together many of the undertakings and accomplishments that have followed from the Educational Reform Act and other measures that we have taken on together.

What I'm going to emphasize today is a set of points that we have not discussed and you've not heard from my two colleagues. I want to thank them and Myra for their incredible partnership and for their support and their leadership in all of our work.

I commend the Governor and the Secretary, Ben Barnes, for setting forth a budget in these tough financial times that prioritizes education, that as we would all wish, finds ways to make new investments in our schools and for our children. That's enormously appreciated, and the creativity that was required to accomplish that is not trivial.

I want to also commend Director Myra Jones Taylor for her incredible innovation in a short period of time, and I want to simply reference the specific point that Myra did regarding the faculty of the State Department of Education will be the administrative home for the new office.

You should know that that is a very willing undertaking on our part. We welcome the opportunity to support the efforts that will be made to consolidate across five departments and to flush out a system at long last that makes sense and that will deliver high quality early childhood experiences for our youngest children.

So the points that I want to touch upon with greatest detail within the time frame are regarding the two Governor's bills that you have before you that we did not discuss the last time I was with this Committee, which are two bills that are, I should say, House Bill 6358 and two major components thereof. That's 6358 AN ACT UNLEASHING INNOVATION IN CONNECTICUT SCHOOLS and two major components thereof.

It helps, I think, to define the content of this bill as involving one, a teaching profession initiative and two, a red tape reduction initiative.

The teaching profession initiative I think represents a step forward for our state. We've had an opportunity to work with stakeholders in implementing the provisions of the Educational Reform Act of 2012 and the other initiatives of our Department, and we have a chance to, I believe, advance reforms that are extraordinarily important and that will raise the level of teaching and learning in our state.

But we recognize that we do not have a monopoly on good ideas, that there are good ideas that are being generated at the district level and among teachers that are worthy of bringing forward and trying, that a rich environment of dialogue regarding the reforms and initiatives that we aim to undertake is very important to creating a teaching profession, and education professions plural, that are in fact attractive and that embrace the professionals involved, and that create an opportunity for professional growth.

So what the teaching profession initiative as a subset of 6358 does is, it enables districts in partnership with teachers unions as the voice for teachers at the district level, to create innovations that would be enabled through both flexibility and resources to be, if you will, unleashed as a function of that process.

I can talk about the infrastructure for that process, and I can talk about the specific methods that we intend, but the goal is for that kind of joint work between district and union to take place, and for us to become a state among states that prides itself and is exemplary in fulminating that kind of innovation.

The second component that I referenced is regarding red tape. I know my time has expired, so I'll be very brief.

As you know, the Governor convened a Red Tape Task Force, consisting of constituencies across the stakeholder array that brought forward a series of recommendations.

One of those recommendations was that we find a way to waive and flex requirements that get in the way of progress rather than enabling it.

So what we've done is, we've set forth a preliminary draft, if you will, concept, regarding a structure by which districts can bring forward to the State Department of Education those rules that they believe to be barriers.

The rules for that process would involve districts of high performance levels or importantly, high progress levels across the performance gradium, being able to bring forward their ideas for consideration.

There are several specific categories that are determined in the bill itself, imbedded in the bill as eligible for a waiver. We consider that a preliminary list. I'm glad to get into that list and talk about how it was generated and what might occur subsequent.

In both cases, these are concepts that we wish to bring forward in preliminary form to evolve with this Committee and to evolve with stakeholders, including representatives of the state's teachers and representatives of the state's supervisors to further advance reform and further as I referenced, evolve these concepts.

I look forward to taking your questions. Thank you once again.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you for all of your testimony and all of your hard work. I recognize it was no small task to pull all these items together.

I just wanted to start off with some big picture questions that I know are going to be themes of today's discussions, and I guess it's appropriate for me to direct first to Secretary Barnes.

HB 357

The concern is that there may be a number of proposed going forward but yet no guarantee in this language, at least not yet, through the budget process, will there be corresponding mandate relief?

BENJAMIN BARNES: First of all, I'll talk a little bit about the formula and then I'll push it over to Stephan to talk about mandate relief because that is a big part of what he's proposing and not in the budget bill but in the other piece of legislation.

HB 6358

The, even though we've reduced the minimum aid ratio to two percent, we have also included a strict hold harmless, so everybody gets what they got in 2013 as a starting point.

As a result, the two percent minimum aid ratio becomes sort of hypothetical. All the communities that end up having a two percent aid ratio are funded as they were last year, which is to say with a higher aid ratio. Admittedly, things have been frozen. It may not work out exactly at nine percent, but the historic levels of funding that have been received by these most affluent towns in the state will continue to be provided under the formula that we've proposed.

And we believe that that makes sense. The funding formula has to do many things, but one of the things it should certainly do is provide predictability and constancy to local districts as they, you know, make plans out into the future for the allocation of resources.

So we're sensitive to the needs not to suddenly pull funding back from even very well off districts, but this, I think, reflects our desire to concentrate new money into the towns that have the greatest financial need.

But I'll turn it over to Stephan to talk about red tape reduction.

COMM. STEPHAN PRYOR: Senator, on the issue of red tape reduction and mandate relief, one of the components of the bill I described involves a process by which districts that are high performing or high progress, meaning that in their absolute performance they rank near the top, or no matter their level of performance, they are showing progress year to year, that districts would be eligible to present their proposals for mandate relief and that there would be authority vested in the State Department of Education to waive certain requirements.

The bill itself delineates two broad categories. They're listed, they're broken down into more statutory references than the two, but the two broad areas are time and curricular and graduation requirements that are the first to be delineated.

School day, school week, school year. If a district were to wish to, if demonstrated high performance or high progress, be creative as to how the day, week or year is configured, that would be permissible.

Second, curricular and graduation requirements. If a district is performing well or showing great progress, that there would be more freedom to innovate in that area as well.

We recognize that there are other red tape examples or mandate examples that districts may have that they wish to bring forward. What we've done is, we've laid down the tracks through the Governor's bill and presented an infrastructure by which there can be a process that's built out to enable such waivers to occur.

We think it's very important that as we focus our resources on the alliance districts and in other ways on lower performing schools and districts to enable greater structure, greater resources, greater support, that we likewise left the higher flying districts fly even higher and provide for mechanisms for relief of the kind, Senator, that you reference.

SENATOR BOUCHER: Thank you for that clarification, through you, Mr. Chair. Then it would not involve collective bargaining rights territory so to speak to be mandate relieved necessarily, or things such as prevailing wage for school construction projects and things such as that. You focus mostly on curriculum? May I just get a clarification through you, Mr. Chair.

COMM. STEPHAN PRYOR: If I may, Mr. Chair, at present the list is as I described. We have described the two areas, time and curricular and graduation requirements. There are more sub components thereof.

As a starting point, we have not contemplated the areas that you reference. We would like to create a process by which districts can within parameters apply for other areas for waivers. The areas that you describe we have not contemplated being eligible.

SENATOR BOUCHER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And with your indulgence, one last item, because I will leave the issue of clarifying the entire pilot situation to others as you know there's a lot of questions about that.

But the last question I have, because you did reference being able to plan and creating a consistent number, even if it is zero going forward.

But in this bill it looks like the changes to the charter schools statutory level of funding is changed from the previous year that they were functioning under. It looks like going forward they will be reduced both in 2014 and in 2015. Could you please clarify, through you, Mr. Chair, and that is my final inquiry. Thank you.

COMM. STEPHAN PRYOR: The charter school per pupil amounts that were described in statute have been modified in ways that I will describe.

As you will recall, the Legislature during its effort to reconfigure the budget, the vernacular is to do a second round of rescission post the Governor's administrative rescissions, reduce the per pupil that was provided for at \$10,500 per pupil up from \$9,400, reduce that figure to \$10,200.

The budget that the Governor proposes restores the figure to \$10,500 in the coming academic year, 13-14 and subsequently in 14-15 lifts that number to \$11,000. That represents a substantial increase from the \$9,400 we began with prior to the Educational Reform Act of 2012, but does represent a decrease in the step up from that, which was statutorily contemplated in that same act.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you. Senator Bye to be followed by Representative McCrory.

SENATOR BYE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And just to follow up on Representative Fleishmann's question very quickly. I think it's more of a statement than a need to reply, before I get to my question.

This Committee has been asking, since I've been here, about what programs are working and not working in early childhood and we've had

HB3359

particular questions about school readiness and it seems like we funded three different ways to look at it over the past five years and it just never happens.

And I understand the want for longitudinal data and it's the best kind of data, but you know, a couple years ago in Higher Ed we funded something called a regression discontinuity study, which costs a few hundred thousand dollars where we could get at least representative sample of data about what's working and not working.

So I just ask you and the Commissioner to go back and think hard about whether we can do that and get some data quickly and get back to us with that. I think we're really, at this point, more than a little frustrated trying to figure out. We're investing tens of millions of dollars a year, if it's working, how it's working, what isn't, is working and we appreciate that there's going to be a data system but I just make that as almost an editorial comment.

My first question is to Myra, and Myra, you've been a real leader here and I think it's important for the Committee to understand the development of the plan with the legislative proposal to have you hired and the Governor has made a big, bold statement at picking the most extreme plan, which is, I think, which I agree with, that we really need a whole new organizational structure to make all these pieces work together.

HB 359

But could you explain how you got input for the plan? Who had input? What kind of expertise was brought in? What, if foundations helped to fund some of it. Just, I don't mean to say briefly because I know it's going to take a few minutes but we don't need all the details.

will they kind of maybe get quality, or maybe not, and kids who get school readiness, they're going to get the best?

When we realize that those children, regardless of where they receive their care are going to end up in our kindergarten program. If we stop bifurcating the way we deal with early childhood, the way we think about the care the children receive outside of the home, then we will have better outcomes for children.

This will be challenging, but I think if I can say anything to you, please keep that in mind.

SENATOR BYE: Yes. Thank you, Myra. I really appreciate your work on this and I think when they're hiring an anthropologist, I sort of wondered, wow. But it's really the perfect job to look at state agencies and systems and so thank you for your work and we'll look forward to our continued collaboration.

MYRA JONES TAYLOR: Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you, Senator Bye. And we'll disregard what an anthropologist might make of this General Assembly.

So we are running out of time here, so Representative McCrory is going to pose a couple of brief questions, which will require brief answers and then we need to go to the public under the rules of the General Assembly. Representative McCrory.

REP. MCCRORY: Through you, Mr. Chair. A quick question to the Commissioner. I'm looking at House Bill 6358 and I believe this is the red tape bill where we want to eliminate red tape for high performing districts to continue their success that they've (inaudible).

I have a question and Senator Boucher actually asked a portion of it in regard to school day and school length, but my question centers on Line 99 where it says, administering a teacher profession initiative pilot program, and I'm reading through this and I still don't understand what that is. Can you give me an example exactly what that is?

Because when legislation is written, it's written for a reason and there's an end game to it. What specifically is the (inaudible) of the teacher professional initiative pilot program and talk to me about the waiver provision going forward for your waiving what provisions for whom?

COMM. STEPHAN PRYOR: The bill that you refer to contains two components that are best considered to be two separate programs. The provisions end up being somewhat intertwined in the drafting, but in the end there are two separate programs.

One of them is a teaching profession initiative. The other is in regard to red tape. The overarching theme of that unleashing innovation bill is the idea that we ought to provide greater flexibility at the local level to allow at the grass roots innovation to occur.

The two separate programs operate separately and let me answer your question in regards to the teaching profession initiative. The fundamental concept is that districts and teachers unions together would formulate ideas regarding the ways in which teachers may be recognized and rewarded and they advance within the profession.

They would set forth jointly, district administrators and teachers through their

unions, these ideas for approval through a competitive process at the State Department of Education.

Flexibility would be enabled and grants would be awarded on the basis of the quality of the application. That is the fundamental idea.

It's a concept. There is more work that has to be done in order to be fully flushed out, but what the Governor has presented us with is a framework that we can build upon.

REP. MCCRORY: Okay. Just want to follow up. So, I understand that, and that's a good thing. How about the waiving of certification? Are you saying once the pilot program for the admissions, there's an opportunity where someone could actually be granted a position as an educator or administrator and have those certifications waived, and are they only for those specific school districts?

Because I think it might be a great idea. However, I don't think it should just be for high performing school districts.

COMM. STEPHAN PRYOR: It isn't. So that's another important point, and I recognize because of the way the legislation is drafted it's hard to track the references. It's hard for me to do as I read it through.

But the high performing and high progress district requirement pertains only to the red tape initiative. All districts would be eligible for the teaching profession initiative.

As pertains to your question regarding certification or any other specific element, I don't want to get ahead of where we are with the development of this program.

The idea would be that districts and unions together would be able to set rules, rigorous criteria for the teaching profession in ways that jointly, such districts and unions viewed as favorable and as ways of advancing the teaching profession, and for that matter, the education professions plural, including supervisors and other leaders in the district.

So the references that you make, Representative McCrory to specific elements including certification are included in statute simply to make such possibilities eligible to unions and districts as they formulate their plans.

REP. MCCRORY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And my quick question to Myra Jones Taylor, so I understand and I'm listening and there's going to be a lot of work on the early childhood initiative.

My question is, what, although I think every child needs early childhood education, a quality early childhood education, there's some that need it more than others.

And what plan do you have in place that makes sure those who need the early childhood development more so than others will be in place and how will you determine the effectiveness of it?

MYRA JONES TAYLOR: Thank you for that question. I think the big piece goes back to this longitudinal data setting and being able to actually identify what we're doing for children and whether or not it's enough, if it's accessible for reaching the right children, or reaching children in the right most appropriate way.

I think what I'm hearing from you is, are we making sure that this is a program that reaches those who are at highest risk and who are on

the unfortunate side of the achievement gap I guess you would say.

And so I think we will continue with what we are already doing in terms of, in terms of making sure that children who receive Care 4 Kids continue to receive Care 4 Kids, that kind of thing.

But there's also the sense that we're not doing enough, if you look at the children who are, the statistics, the children who are not receiving the pre-K the most, it's low income children. So how are we reaching out to those children and those families?

I think there are a few things. One, if we had, and continuing with the great work that's been going on at DPH around home visiting, making sure that that is part of a continuum of care.

So if you have reached, you have had a nurse come to your home, a social worker, a practitioner, involved in home visiting, making sure there is a linkage, that families know, you've had the support, now pre-K is so important to you when you're three and four. That is a continuous conversation, and those are children who are most formidable.

I think also, you know, at one point, hopefully when we have more resources, pushing up the sense that we need to continue to increase our funding for early childhood.

I think we need to, we haven't, the highest levels were in 2002. We are getting closer. We have been getting closer there in terms of our funding but we're not where we were back in 2002, which varies \$250 million a year. Pushing that, thinking about how we as a unified body can either identify federal

resources. I think what's coming out of the Obama administration right now is potentially, we can't get our hopes up, potentially very exciting in thinking about how we're going to start funding pre-K on the national level.

But I think making sure that we reach families, that they have information is key, and making sure that they know where to go for that care.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you for that response, Mr. Vice-Chairman. Thank you for your questions.

REP. MCCRORY: I was going to say thank you. Thank you very much for your answers and I still have a lot more questions, but I will save them for another time.

MYRA JONES TAYLOR: Absolutely. Thank you, sir.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: There's going to be one more brief question from Senator Bartolomeo and then we're going to let you go, although there are Members who, around this circle, I have about five listed who still have questions, so I'd ask for you to consider talking with some of them outside the purview of this public forum.

Senator Bartolomeo.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO: Thank you very much. I'll be very quick. I want to go just a little bit further, Commissioner, with the removing red tape.

The Representative before me touched upon that, but I have really big concerns and I need to express them about the fact that you're looking at only doing that for the high performing and the high progress districts.

Two of my districts are alliance districts, so you know very well that when we're in a situation where budgets are a huge concern in

many of our urban districts, we're also in the same situation of being those sometimes lower performing or maybe one of our schools is making great progress and the others are not.

So those are the places where the budget is typically the biggest concern. But the red tape is extremely expensive, so I'm not understanding. It feels to me and seems to me like quite an inequity that we would look to remove that for just those higher performing, which typically translate into the wealthier communities, not always, but typically and keeping it at a huge expense for those that are already struggling to provide their services.

Can you please just touch upon that?

COMM. STEPHAN PRYOR: I'd be happy to. The idea of the red tape initiative is to get started on this front. I think it's extremely important that in a substantial way we begin to provide relief to our districts even as we are providing more leadership and more involvement on the part of the state in some of the initiatives that we are undertaking.

It may be that over time we can grow this effort but I think we want to get it right and we want to start in places that are prepared and in best position to get it done.

I would, Senator, I take your point that among the alliance district there may be the best proposals for red tape flexibility.

I would argue that it's entirely possible that some of, I'd actually be surprised if it were not the case that some of the high progress districts are the alliance districts, which is to say, I would expect that some of the districts that would be eligible because of the high progress available option, that they would

be alliance districts and that some of the lower performing and highest poverty districts with financial burden would be among those that would participate in the program.

And that's the kind of refining of our criteria that I think we can engage in together collaboratively with this Committee.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO: Thank you. I appreciate that.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you. And thank you all for your testimony. And as I say to Members of the Committee who still have questions, I believe that I've gotten the nod from Miss Jones Taylor, from the Commissioner and perhaps Secretary Barnes if he's (inaudible).

BENJAMIN BARNES: I'm always available for you and all of your Members.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you. We'll remember that. We now go to the first member of the public who won the public lottery, Dr. Sheila, Miss Sheila Cohen, to be followed by Dr. Christina Kishimoto. Welcome. Please feel free to punch the red button and get started.

SHEILA COHEN: Thank you very much. Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, Members of the Education Committee, good morning to all of you and thank you very much for the opportunity to testify.

My name is Sheila Cohen. I am the President of the Connecticut Education Association. I am here to comment on House Bill 6358 AN ACT UNLEASHING INNOVATION IN CONNECTICUT SCHOOLS.

First let me say, and start by saying that my testimony is supporting the concepts that are expressed in this bill and I thank the Commissioner and the Governor for giving us a framework we can start from to reach everyone's

goal, which is innovation in education reform being bred at the local level with teachers as meaningful partners in such innovation.

The Connecticut Education Association has always believed that unless teachers are meaningful partners in the education reform debate, little will be accomplished and the reform we seek to find in public education in Connecticut will elude us.

Carrying this strong belief into discussions with administrative officials and embracing their positive responses, we are hopeful that meaningful innovations that are in the best interest of children, teachers and public education can be realized.

The bill before you is a good start at an attempt at unleashing innovation across Connecticut.

Without going into the proposed bill section by section, we need to continue our meaningful discussions to clearly articulate our vision.

Specifically, if we chose to allow districts to waive various statutory mandates such as allowing a district to reduce the number of school days and/or the school year, allowing a district to eliminate courses such as physical education, music and art, and allowing a district to modify high school requirements without teachers being a meaningful partner in these discussions and agreeing to the proposed statutory waivers prior to submitting such a request to the State Department of Education.

We can see a very well intended bill on innovations result in an economic disaster and the discussion of how to reduce school budgets.

We also want to specifically acknowledge, for the first time, the clear language in the bill that does require meaningful teacher participation in creating teacher pilot initiatives at the local level.

Again, the teacher pilot examples given reflect the continuing discussion of the teacher unions and the state administration officials and must be further clarified.

As I close my remarks, I would say that for the first time in a long time and I underscore that, for the first time in a long time, we look at this glass as being half full rather than as half empty and we are committed to working with the AFTCT and the state to further this discussion.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you for that thoughtful testimony and for those flags that you've raised, which are obviously serious ones.

Are there questions from Members of the Committee? Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you, sir. Good afternoon. Nice to see you again. Since you have been, I'm understanding from your testimony, you've had some discussions in reference to this bill already.

Or is all this language new to you in the innovation bill?

SHEILA COHEN: We have had quite a few discussions and we have been in a consistent meeting mode so that we make sure that the avenues are open on both sides, and we've had a lot of discussions about concepts.

With regards to anything being specific or seeing it explicitly delineated in an actual bill, we, there was nothing that came to

consensus with regard to that other than to the initial concepts of being able to look at something and have a meaningful relationship, which really was based on three very strong components.

One of them is that whatever is determined has to be financially sustainable, that the program has to be long lasting, and whatever is determined with regard to innovation really needs to be something that can be successfully replicated across the state.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you for those three items. That's very important. One of my concerns is that we have a short timeframe. I don't know when you're scheduled to meet again. I hope you have a series of meetings scheduled because we really, as you know, we have deadlines as well.

We would very much appreciate it if we had a bill that all parties agreed to by the time we actually JF this bill out of Committee if it gets that far. Thank you very much.

We're trying really hard this year to make sure we don't have too many works in progress as they say in this building --

SHEILA COHEN: Thank you very much. It's been (inaudible).

SENATOR STILLMAN: -- and knowing that you have a head start on that, you know, makes me feel more comfortable that maybe you can reach the goal line sooner rather than later.

So if you would, I'm sure that other folks on the Committee are aware of our deadlines as well, but I would like to emphasize that, that we hope that you are meeting frequently enough to come to some consensus as soon as possible.

SHEILA COHEN: Thank you very much.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you, Madam Chair. The distinguished Ranking Member Representative Ackert.

REP. ACKERT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Unfortunately, I might echo the other Cochair.

These are good steps and I think that the Commissioner has mentioned that, Doctor, that it's a moving target, that they're looking at creative ways to be creative, be innovative as we like to say, and we are hopeful that that is, and it seems like just from your answer that that is the goal also of yourself. And you're looking at it, and I like to hear that, as, you know, the glass half full.

So I guess to say is that, I want to make sure that we're all on the same page and I think that's what's going on here and so I can't ask you to answer any more to that, but that please consider moving quickly and to all the others, and so we look forward to your input.

SHEILA COHEN: Thank you. That is very much appreciated, and is extremely meaningful for all of us in the teaching profession.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Okay. Are there other questions for the witness before us? If not, can we move on to, thank you very much for your testimony.

SHEILA COHEN: Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Dr. Christina Kishimoto, Superintendent of Hartford Public Schools, to be followed by Kathy Queen. Good afternoon.

DR. CHRISTINA KISHIMOTO: Can you hear me? Andrew Fleischmann, Vice-Chair Senator Beth Bye and Representative Doug McCrory, who stepped out for a moment, Ranking Member Senator Toni

HB6357

DR. CHRISTINA KISHIMOTO: I will summarize right now. With the red tape kind of comments I heard earlier, you know, Hartford public schools we believe in an empowerment structure. We believe everyone needs to be empowered to be able to make the innovative changes that they need and through these innovative changes that we can see improvement across every district in the state, and so I think that that should be applied in terms of the red tape approach for all of our districts.

HB 358

Also, in terms of transportation, we are a district of the size that should not be treated as a district that's of a smaller size. We run a top notch transportation system and we are a size that can in fact, go out for a competitive bid on our transportation approach.

So in summary, I ask for the highest level of flexibility in the use of these additional dollars so that we can continue our great work for our kids.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you for your testimony and for all the leadership that you brought to the Hartford public school system.

DR. CHRISTINA KISHIMOTO: Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Are there questions from Members of the Committee? Seeing none, thank you very much for your, oh, Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Not at all a question, but just a thank you for the incredibly good work that you're doing. It needed to come a long way. You obviously are moving in the right direction. We thank you for your leadership.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Not that I know of. Not on the hearing today, although we do have a study within the bill you referenced, 876, so we will, there will be a hearing on that. Has that bill been heard? That bill has not been heard. It will probably be on our next public hearing agenda, so if you see it come around again just know you've already testified and we have your comments and we'll make sure it's referenced to the appropriate bill.

TIM MULCAHEY: Very good. Thank you for your time.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Okay. Thank you. Any questions for the gentleman? Thank you, sir.

TIM MULCAHEY: Thank you.

SENATOR STILLMAN: For purpose of the Committee Members, we will be hearing this issue again for those folks who have not gotten here to testify. Dr. Karissa Niehoff, to be followed by Galit Sharma and then Bill Phillips. Welcome.

DR. KARISSA NIEHOFF: Good afternoon, Senator Stillman and esteemed Members of the Committee, and thank you for the opportunity to testify.

I'm Dr. Karissa Niehoff, Executive Director of the Connecticut Association of Schools and the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference. Prior to that, I was a collegiate athlete. I've been a teacher, coach, AD, a principal and now I'm here as Executive Director so a number of these bills are near and dear to my heart and to the work of our association.

We provide professional development to about 1,000 member school principals and assistant principals, and we also govern interscholastic athletics and student activities.

HB6358
HB6359
SB877
HB6383
HB6385

And I'd like to very briefly comment on where we stand on five of the bills being heard today.

First being the act to unleash innovation in Connecticut schools, we strongly support this bill that grants school districts greater flexibility in the use of time and resources to improve student outcomes. We encourage any kind of support that would allow students to earn credit based on demonstrating mastery in the classroom as well as extended learning opportunities outside of the classroom as opposed to seat time.

HB 6358

We encourage any legislation that could establish appropriate funding formulas to allow for this transition to occur and we hope that, we encourage work with higher education to accept student credit earned in non-traditional formats.

We also support the act concerning an early childhood system. We believe this is a tremendous step forward in improving education and services for children and families.

HB 6359

We, CAS considers childhood years also to be birth through eight, so going forward we hope that there can be ongoing intentional planning to make sure that the birth to five efforts remain meaningfully connected to the two to three group and the pre-K through 12 system.

We support the act concerning the entrance age for when a child may enter kindergarten. We support the transition to an entrance age by five as of October 1 and the tighter restrictions apply to starting children at age seven as there is research indicating that the red-shirted if you will, kindergarten students do not do as well in the long run.

SB 877

188
pat/gbr

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

February 15, 2013
11:00 A.M.

DR. KARISSA NIEHOFF: Fine thank you.

REP. LAVIELLE: Your testimony is always very comprehensive.

DR. KARISSA NIEHOFF: Thank you.

REP. LAVIELLE: I would like to ask you a bit about the act unleashing innovation, if I may. Unfortunately we weren't able to discuss mandate at as great length as I would have liked earlier.

HB6358

You mentioned the waiver of Carnegie Units, which I've talked about a great deal with the superintendents in towns both in my district and surrounding my district and they're great fans of this, and I think there's a lot of potential there.

But there were some other things as well that I think we could get out of mandate relief, and in our discussions this morning, I noticed that most of the reference was made to well, measures that could be taken that were inspired by high-performing schools doing better. How could they do even better what they do, and that's wonderful and that will give us some best practice for other schools.

However, one of the main purposes of providing mandate relief for high-performing schools is, well there are two. One is, they're never going to get any more money and they don't expect it and they know that and they're not asking for it.

But time is money and relieving administrators and teachers from some of these requirements that they have to fulfill takes their time and therefore, money. So there's that.

And secondly, there's an incentive to perform better or make more progress if you know you're going to get relief from some of these things.

So I wondered if you could comment on some of the areas that are documents that only hints at them might be. What I can tell from the deliberations of the red tape task force is that there are areas that could be researched in that regard but there wasn't much progress and they're not very specific.

Are there some that you would like to see pursued?

DR. KARISSA NIEHOFF: Yes, there are, and I appreciate the question. I was a member of the High School Graduation Issue Task Force that recently completed a report of recommendations to revisit the secondary language for high school graduation, in particular.

And our task force talked about a number of ways that waiving statutory requirements might help schools to do a better job personalizing the learning experience for all of their kids.

And it did not just focus it on high performing schools. We looked at the vocational technical schools. We looked at the lower performing schools in immediate, much more immediate need of change.

We can talk about a waiver of the Carnegie Unit credits. I think we all need to revisit what a credit means. It's traditionally been associated with seat time and we need to look at what we believe is mastery of learning, and that's relative to standards of performance.

We're looking at changing school hours and school days in terms of the length of time and we're looking at a changing society where the

school itself is no longer a brick and mortar facility. We're looking at online opportunities.

We're looking at internships within the community rather than taking such a prescriptive list of required courses in high schools, really getting at taking advantage of a student's success plan that's developed early in life that we can follow a student through, help them achieve along the way and identify what learning experiences would be most appropriate for them.

So there are a number of things we can do in waiving some of the statutory requirements that help all schools be more creative.

REP. LAVIELLE: Well thank you. I appreciate that answer and I think that, you know, even the bill as it stands does mention curriculum, does mention time and I assume that although it doesn't say so, that the time is maybe a reference to the Carnegie Units.

But in the task force review summary, they mentioned things like, although they don't, they say this is to be reviewed at some point, unnecessary classroom and school level administrative burdens, methods to streamline individual legislative mandates, and there are various references to reporting.

Do you have any information, any observations or things on your wish list in those areas?

DR. KARISSA NIEHOFF: Oh, absolutely. As the association that represents over 1,000 principals, we talk about this every day.

The administrative burden we've heard about quite a bit through the work of PEEK and the new evaluation department.

We really do believe that relieving some of the statutory expectations would allow us to revisit from a systemic approach, what the model of leadership is at the district level, at the building level and where the work is distributed, developing complementary evaluators, allowing school leaders to do their first job, or I should say their second. First is keeping kids safe. Second is developing teaching talents.

If we were able to go beyond traditional roles as defined historically in the school, be creative with our dollars to develop human capacity within schools, that would go a tremendous distance in helping school leaders get their work done.

So that's another, we've got to use dollars to allow districts to think creatively about how their systems are designed and implemented within their schools. It has to do with the human resource as well.

REP. LAVIELLE: Well, thank you very much for your answers.

DR. KARISSA NIEHOFF: I hope that helps.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you. Questions? Any other questions? Thank you very much.

DR. KARISSA NIEHOFF: Thank you.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Galit Sharma, followed by Bill Phillips and then Maggie Adair.

GALIT SHARMA: Honorable Members of the Committee, good afternoon. My name is Galit Sharma. I am the Program Director of the Nurturing Families Network at the Family Center Services of Connecticut and a Cochair of CTPEN the Connecticut Parents and Education Network.

HB 359

SENATOR BYE: Yeah, well, I would argue that they all belong, but I think we're already taking bold steps. I think we'll have the agency get settled and then hopefully similar programs will land there from other agencies. But as we know, there will be forces fighting this who want to stay where they are and so let's --

MAGGIE ADAIR: Change is hard. And I think it has to be taken carefully.

SENATOR BYE: Yes. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you. I appreciate your bringing up the family resource centers since they do serve some of the young children. Other comments or questions for Ms. Adair? If not, thank you for all the good work you do and for your testimony.

MAGGIE ADAIR: Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: We move now to Steve McKeever, to be followed by Dr. Michael Sharpe.

STEVE MCKEEVER: Good afternoon, Representative Fleischmann and Members of the Education Committee. My name is Steve McKeever and I'm the First Vice-President of AFT Connecticut, a diverse state federation of unions representing more than 10,000 Connecticut teachers.

Prior to my election of the, excuse me, prior to my election as the First Vice-President, I was a high school teacher for 17 years in the Middletown public school system.

I'm here to testify on three bills, HB 6357, 57 an 59. On the whole, AFT Connecticut supports HB 6357, which realizes the Governor's commitment to public education. By increasing ECS dollars in the manner in which they are distributed, Governor Malloy has stood behind

HB 6358
HB 6359

changes in the policy and the spirit made with the education formula passed in the last Session. We stand firmly behind these courageous decisions.

We are concerned, however, about the elimination of the state's reimbursement of local and regional boards for student transportation costs. Though we agree that a regional approach to education could be beneficial, in the absence of a statewide or even a regional school calendar, it is difficult to see how this could work.

In addition, we are concerned about the amount of time that school children would spend on a bus in transit especially the early elementary students.

HB 6358 creates a teaching profession initiative pilot program. We understand the administration's intent to create a program that elevates the teaching profession. We are not convinced that this is the best approach, but we stand ready to work collaboratively with the administration and this Committee in its endeavor.

We know that we cannot legislate respect for teachers but we hope that together we can address the issues that will enhance the profession, such as providing teacher identified professional development, establishing meaningful roles for distinguished educators and increasing teacher representation on the State Board of Education and other boards that recommend substantive education policies.

HB 6359 finally realizes a long-held objective of early childhood advocates to consolidate all programs and initiatives in a single location with unified governance and vision.

246
pat/gbr

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

February 15, 2013
11:00 A.M.

considered an immediate threat, or an emergency situation. Let's put it that way. But thank you very much. We do appreciate your input. Questions from anyone? Thank you, and thank you again for waiting all day.

TOM NICHOLAS: Thank you.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Next is Rae Ann Knopf, followed by Marilyn Calderon.

RAE ANN KNOPF: Good evening, Senator Stillman --

SENATOR STILLMAN: Good evening.

RAE ANN KNOPF: -- and esteemed Members of the Education Committee. Thank you for working so late so that you can hear all of our thoughts and concerns.

My name is Rae Ann Knopf. I'm the Executive Director of the Connecticut Council for Education Reform and we are a nonprofit 5013C organization that works on behalf of Connecticut business and civic leaders who support education reforms to close Connecticut's achievement gap and raise academic achievement for all learners in Connecticut.

I'm here today, first of all, we truly appreciate the work that the Committee did last year and reforms that were passed and I'm here today in support of three other bills that have been proposed and you have my testimony, so I'll just highlight a couple of elements of those so that I stay within my three minutes, that we think are really critical.

We have conducted outreach to the alliance districts since the passage of Public Act 12-116 and the provisions in HB 6357 AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GOVERNOR to continue to support alliance

HB6358
HB6359

districts with resources to continue this work. We believe it's very important. Many of them are implementing systemic reforms that take more than one year and certainly in many areas that we all know have the potential to raise achievement and close gaps such as early literacy, early learning, teacher and principal development and wrap around services and other things.

So we feel it's important that they are provided the resources and the capacity to continue that work.

And we also really support the incremental support of high quality charter schools like we saw today in the testimony.

Two other bills that we want to make sure you're aware that we support is HB 6358 AN ACT CONCERNING INNOVATION IN CONNECTICUT SCHOOLS. The thing I would say about this is, we would hope that if this goes forward, that there would be some provisions to allow lower performing schools who can demonstrate capacity to pursue similar reforms.

And if I could make just one last point. I know my time is up. We certainly support HB 6359 AN ACT CONCERNING THE EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM and feel that it is a significant move of progress to integrate the disparate elements of our early childhood system to support those families and our youngest Connecticut learners.

So thank you for hearing me and I will take any questions if you have any.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you very much. We appreciate your testimony and the thoughtfulness behind it. Thank you. Any questions? No. I think we're all set. Thank you for waiting.

I know all of you on the Education Committee have been very committed to this process and we all know that you are invested in the child's wellness of all children from different walks of life.

So thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify and I look forward to your support.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you very much. Parent Power is a great group of folks. They sent me some interesting information. I know you all work very hard on behalf of children. Thank you very much for your testimony and for your patience today. Any questions? No.

MARILYN CALDERON: Thank you very much and have a wonderful evening.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you. Next is Patrice McCarthy followed by David Kennedy and then Herb Rosenthal.

PATRICE MCCARTHY: Good afternoon. Out of the shadows into the spotlight.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Well said. Be careful if you're in the spotlight.

PATRICE MCCARTHY: I know. The seat is pretty warm, too. Senator Stillman, Members of the Education Committee, I'm Patrice McCarthy, Deputy Director and General Counsel for the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education.

Liz Brown, a member of the Waterbury Board of Education and our State Relations Chairman had hoped to be able to testify but had to leave a little while ago.

You have our written testimony and have heard a great deal about some of the issues that are of greatest concern to us, so I'm just going to highlight a few areas.

SB877
HB6357
HB6358

We also urge you to re-examine the issue of magnet school tuition for preschool students. That was placed back on local boards of education in December and we urge you to remove that obligation from local boards.

It creates a real inequity because most districts, although they wish they could, are unable to provide preschool opportunities for the majority of their students, yet they are required to pay the tuition for the magnet schools.

And we support the flexibility in HB 6358 AN ACT UNLEASHING INNOVATION IN CONNECTICUT SCHOOLS. We think that probably needs some additional work but the flexibility is most welcome. Thank you for your attention.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you very much. We appreciate, always appreciate working with CABE, appreciate your insight on where there could be some problems and where you believe you deserve support, so appreciate that. Thank you. Questions from anyone? Senator Bye.

SENATOR BYE: Thank you. Thank you for your testimony. I'm just going to ask a question that we haven't talked about yet today. When you talked about the pressure of the high school reform.

HB 6357

It was my impression as someone who had a lot of concerns about that, that until we funded it, it wouldn't come true. Is that not accurate any more, or what's the status of that?

PATRICE MCCARTHY: I don't believe that that is, as far as I know that is not accurate, that there is a report from the committee that was established to look at the implementation and they are recommending some changes to what is

294
pat/gbr

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

February 15, 2013
11:00 A.M.

SENATOR STILLMAN: In an urban setting, obviously New London is urban and we don't have too many schools right in the city center in our area, so keep up the good work. Thank you for your comments and your support.

If there's anything, I was looking to see if your comments were on line, whether you had submitted them or not.

GINA FAFARD: I did submit them.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Okay. Then we'll make sure we get copies.

GINA FAFARD: All right. Thank you very much.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you. Keep up the good work and have a good weekend. Bruce Douglas. Joe Cirasuolo, followed by Bill Davenport.

JOSEPH CIRASUOLO: Good evening. I'm the Executive Director of the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents. Thank you for this opportunity to speak to you, Senator Stillman, Members of the Committee.

We submitted written testimony on 6357 and 6358. I'll try and summarize both of those documents very briefly.

We're very much in favor of 6358. We think that the innovation part of it starts to put in place the kind of portfolio approach to school districts that needs to be there if we're going to have the student center approach to education, we favor that.

We're also in favor of that part of the bill that allows districts and bargaining agents that want to agree at the local level on restructuring the teaching profession to do that. We think it's a good thing.

We urge you, though, to add to the bill something we recommended from the Graduation Requirements Task Force that I chaired, and that would be making it easier for districts that want to move from Carnegie units for diploma criteria to a mastery base diploma system. We'd urge you to do that.

As far as 6357 is concerned, we're very pleased to see in it the money for the alliance districts, the expansion of the network schools, commissioner's network, the money that's in there for the new teacher evaluation and support system.

We have some concerns though, about the, not only the amount of money that was placed in for ECS but the way in which it puts in.

Basically what it comes down to is this. For four years we have had level funding of ECS and as a result, and in our testimony, I've given you some statistics on this, there's been a gradual decline in the educational program across the state.

The amount of money put into ECS this year does not, or in the Governor's budget, does not reverse that trend. One hundred and twenty-four municipalities don't get enough over the next two years to really change that.

The thirty alliance districts have to submit proposals to get their increase in ECS. That money has to be used, the substantial majority of it, for new things, good things, and we support that.

But that means that the money, there isn't money there for the municipalities to fund their regular operation of the school districts, and with the hit that the municipalities are taking in this budget,

307
pat/gbr

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

February 15, 2013
11:00 A.M.

I could speak for three hours about the value and the benefits of the program. We have all the statistics on graduate rates, on placement in jobs, on college completion. Not just going to college, but finishing in four years and being a landscape architect because they knew that they wanted to do that, and because of our program we helped them make that decision.

More career awareness throughout our whole program, the leadership development, public speaking, the 21st century skills, all that stuff that everybody says all schools should do, we've been doing it since 1920 and it's about time people kind of recognize it and let us do it more with these kids that want it.

REP. ACKERT: Great. Thank you so much, Bill. I appreciate it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

BILL DAVENPORT: Thank you very much.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you, sir. Thank you, Bill. Have a good weekend.

BILL DAVENPORT: Thank you.

SENATOR STILLMAN: And we thank you for your dedication again and reminder.

BILL DAVENPORT: Thanks.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Liz Frasier here? No. Regina Birdsell? Jen Alexander. Welcome.

JENNIFER ALEXANDER: Good evening. My name is Jen Alexander and I'm the Acting CEO at ConnCAN. Thank you, Senator Stillman and the Members of the Committee who are still here for the opportunity to testify in front of you today on three separate pieces of legislation, House Bill 6357, House Bill 6358 and House Bill 6359.

effectively in charter schools, but as Dr. Sharpe testified earlier, to keep talent within our state.

We also are hoping that eventually we will move toward the complete overhaul of the ECS formula that we need. This bill falls short of that.

We support the intent of House Bill 6358 AN ACT UNLEASHING INNOVATION IN CONNECTICUT SCHOOLS because it might offer high performing and innovative school districts and increase flexibility. We hope that the teacher pilot program proposed in this bill will help recruit and keep the best and brightest in the profession and ensure all kids have access to great teachers.

We understand that this bill needs a bit of work as was testified to earlier, and it's important that as that gets worked out, we ensure that the local innovations actually improve flexibility and are based on evidence about what will improve teacher quality and student performance.

ConnCAN also supports House Bill 6359 AN ACT UNLEASING INNOVATION IN CONNECTICUT SCHOOLS. Oh, excuse me, I think I just got, for House Bill 6359 because it will create a new agency to improve coordination and management of early childhood programs.

We also hope this agency will work toward higher quality standards and offer clear information to parents on the quality of their preschool options.

In sum, we know that you're going to have to make tough choices this year, and we hope that in doing so, you remember the promises made to children in last year's Public Act 12-116.

310
pat/gbr

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

February 15, 2013
11:00 A.M.

If we're serious about investing in our kids we cannot afford to dial back these reforms.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you very much. Questions?
Senator Bye.

SENATOR BYE: Hi, Jen.

JENNIFER ALEXANDER: Hi.

SENATOR BYE: And congratulations on your position.

JENNIFER ALEXANDER: Thank you.

SENATOR BYE: You're certainly well suited for it.

JENNIFER ALEXANDER: Thanks.

SENATOR BYE: You've heard my line of questioning and luckily you just heard the vo-ag people, and you're talking about making investments that are vital to kids.

And here we are. We've got the vo-ags saying, you know, we're important job creators. We have public school superintendents saying, we're underfunded and, which are serving kids all over the state, and we have you coming in saying we've got to fund you to close the achievement gap and do this.

How do we, you know, as we're sitting here all day, it's hard to figure out. What are we supposed to do here with all these competing demands?

JENNIFER ALEXANDER: Yes. So we've talked a little bit about this. We've talked about the formula and we've talked about how West Hartford fares under the existing formula, and that it fails to recognize some significant need in your district.

I think fundamentally what we're talking about is a system that fails to recognize student

But of course, this all just calls to what has been pointed out several times, that we just need an overall, more comprehensive way to fund all public schools and Connecticut is only one of two states in the entire country where there is a separate line item for schools of choice.

And so, there's certainly lots of other states that we could look to in addition to, you know, research that other advocacy organizations have done on a more flexible formula that funds an individual child and their needs.

But I would say we could also look to our neighbors in Massachusetts and Rhode Island and New York, who have been able to, you know, produce a comprehensive formula that funds all public school students.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you very much. We have two people left. Judith Meyers. Is Judith still here? Cheryl Martone. Is Cheryl Martone here?

CHERYL MARTONE: Good evening, and I'm the last --

SENATOR STILLMAN: Yes, welcome.

CHERYL MARTONE: -- of the Mohicans here. My name is Cheryl Martone and I'm from Westbrook, Connecticut. I'm a parent and I started U.S. Concerned Parents four years ago this month, and I could speak for, on behalf of parents around the state and the country because I have thousands of e-mailers now, contacts from people, in addressing issues of education, parents' rights, children's rights and the need to have knowledge of education and judicial matters. I'm a judicial abuse advocate.

Last week I was in Washington, I went to Washington, D. C. with a group called Lawless America and you know, to look at the corruption

HB 6358
HB 6384

**JOINT
STANDING
COMMITTEE
HEARINGS**

**EDUCATION
PART 2
358 - 723**

2013


 Connecticut Council
 for
 EDUCATION REFORM

EDUCATION COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING

FEBRUARY 15, 2013

Good Afternoon Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann and esteemed members of the Education Committee. My name is Rae Ann Knopf and I am the Executive Director of The Connecticut Council for Education Reform (CCER). The Council is a statewide non-profit organization, formed in 2011, that represents business and civic leaders who support comprehensive education reform efforts to close the achievement gap and raise academic outcomes for all students. The Council believes that every child in Connecticut deserves an exceptional education, without exception. Last year's education reform act moved the state towards our goal of eliminating the achievement gap.

I am here today to testify on the following three bills that will continue to move this education reform effort forward.

H.B 6357 AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GOVERNOR CONCERNING EDUCATION

This bill would:

- I. Dedicate the vast majority of new Education Cost Sharing (ECS) funding to the state's lowest performing (Alliance) districts to fuel education reform programming at the school and district levels. The Alliance Districts enroll:
 - a. 38% of all of Connecticut public school students
 - b. 71% of all low-income students
 - c. 67% of minority students and
 - d. 79% of students whose first language is not English (ELL)

- II. This year, about \$40 million was made available conditionally to Alliance Districts which were required to create plans to improve student achievement. All thirty of the districts had tiered intervention plans approved for the FY 2013 school year.
 - a. A substantial majority of this funding had to be devoted to education reform efforts that could include research based programs for:
 - i. *Early literacy.* Research indicates early interventions, especially in reading, are especially helpful to low-achieving students¹
 - ii. *Additional learning time.* Research shows that low-achieving students can improve with effective, extended learning time.²
 - iii. *Talent, to attract, retain and reward great teachers and leaders.* Research demonstrates that the lowest achieving schools like those in the Alliance Districts could improve with highly effective teachers³
 - iv. *Training for school leaders about the new teacher evaluation system* Research has shown that leaders need to be trained to do accurate observations so they provide positive feedback to teachers.⁴
 - v. *Coordination of early childhood programs and kindergarten.* Research suggests that gains made by children in preschool programs are best preserved by coordinating transitions of children from preschool to kindergarten.⁵

HB6358
HB6359

¹ NorthCentral Educational Regional Laboratory, *Critical Issue Beyond Social Promotion and Retention-Five Strategies to Help Students Succeed* Retrieved from www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/students/at_nsk/at800.htm

² Ibid

³ United States Department of Education, *Race to the Top Application, Executive Summary*, November 2009, pg 12 Retrieved from www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/executive-summary.pdf. see definition of highly effective teacher

⁴ TNTP: Reimagine Teaching. *MET Made Simple. Building Research Based Teacher Evaluations*, January 2012. Retrieved from http://tntp.org/assets/documents/TNTP_METMadeSimple_2012.pdf

- vi. *Wraparound services* Research of three similar programs have "shown positive results."⁶
- vii. *Other approved reform efforts.*

- b. With the new ECS formula, this bill would provide an additional \$48 million in FY 2014 and \$96 million in FY 2015 to further advance education reform efforts in the Alliance Districts. The first year Alliance District plans initiated systems of reform that will occur over a period of years. Additional funding, in the form of the budget recommendations for FY 2014 and FY 2015, are necessary to ensure continued progress towards improving student achievement.
- c. All of these districts will be required to have second year plans which may now include school and district changes necessary for Common Core Standards implementation. (Common Core Standards will ensure that state students graduate from high school college- or career- ready).

CCER endorses these provisions because the new ECS financial resources are needed to maximize school reform in these low performing districts.

- III. Increase charter school rates, albeit at a lower level than originally expected
 - a. Per student charter rates are raised from \$10,200 to \$10,500 in FY 2014 and \$11,000 in FY 2015 and beyond

As part of a menu of opportunities (especially for families with children in low-performing school districts), CCER believes charter schools are part of a robust package of public school choice options and they should be adequately financially supported.

H.B. No. 6358 AN ACT UNLEASHING INNOVATION IN CONNECTICUT SCHOOLS

This bill would:

- I. Establish a waiver process to free up to twenty high-performing school districts from certain statutory requirements (such as the length of school days) for three years. The requirements that could be waived include:
 - a. Length of school days (but not annual instructional hours)
 - b. Minimum days (but not annual instructional hours)
 - c. Length of school year (but not annual instructional hours)
 - d. Subjects and course credits for high school graduation

CCER supports these strategies but they could be improved by including more districts in an expanded waiver process. This waiver program could include any school districts interesting in maximizing the amount of instructional time for low-performing students. Research shows that extended learning time is helpful in remediating learning deficits for struggling students.⁷

- II. Create a Teaching Profession Initiative Pilot program that would allow the SBOE to waive teacher and leader certification requirements for three districts and finance programs for great teachers and leaders
 - a. Superintendents and collective bargaining agents must agree to changes on innovations to attract, develop and retain high quality teachers and administrators
 - b. These innovations could include the:
 - i. Establishment of a local professional standards board that may the waiver of certification requirements for teachers and administrators and develop
 - ii. Recruitment of high quality teacher and administrator candidates and development of selection criteria for them
 - iii. Career ladders that offer professional advancement in recognition, responsibilities and compensation

⁵Yumiko Jolly and Sherry Orbach, *Smoothing the Transition to Kindergarten*, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Retrieved from http://www.hks.harvard.edu/var/ezp_site/storage/fckeditor/file/pdfs/degree-programs/oca/pae-jolly-orbach-transition-to-kindergarten.pdf

⁶ Isobel Owen, *Breaking the Mold Combining Community Schools with Expanded Learning Time to Help Educationally Disadvantaged Students*, Sept 2010 Retrieved from http://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/issues/2010/09/pdf/eli_community_schools.pdf

⁷ Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis (2006) Borman, Geoffrey D. and N.M. Dowling *The Longitudinal Achievement Effects of Multi-Year Summer School. Evidence from the Teach Baltimore Randomized Field Trial* Retrieved from http://www.nccp.org/publications/pub_837.html

- iv. Criteria to supplement the standards established by the department for the issuance of a distinguished educator and
- v. Other innovations designed to attract, develop, retain, recognize and reward high quality teachers and administrators.

The research demonstrates that teachers make all the difference in whether a child will succeed or not in school.⁸ Therefore, CCER champions excellent teachers and leaders and innovative programs that will attract, retain and reward them.

H.B. No. 6359 AN ACT CONCERNING AN EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM

This bill would:

- I. Create an Office of Early Childhood (OEC) which will (over a two year implementation period) provide a comprehensive, coordinated and collaborative set of early childhood programs under one roof, the OEC.
 - a. Currently, most early childhood programs reside in five state agencies:
 - i. State Department of Education (School Readiness, Child Day Care and state funded Head Start)
 - ii. Department of Social Services (Care4Kids, Children's Trust Fund)
 - iii. Board of Regents (Connecticut Charts- a- Course which provides professional development opportunities for child care providers)
 - iv. Department of Developmental Services (Birth to Three) and
 - v. Department of Public Health (licensing of child care homes and facilities)

According to renowned Harvard research scientist Dr Jack Shonkoff, "Early childhood policies and practices are highly fragmented, with complex and confusing points of entry that are particularly problematic for underserved segments of the population and those with special needs. This lack of an integrative early childhood infrastructure makes it difficult to advance prevention-oriented initiatives for all children and to coordinate services for those with complex problems. Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems grants help states and communities to build and integrate early childhood service systems that better meet the needs of children and families."⁹ An early childhood system will provide the important quality programs that research shows improve educational outcomes for low-income children.¹⁰

CCER supports the creation of an early childhood system as a predicate to improving educational outcomes for all children, but particularly for those who are low-income.

⁸ Eric A. Hanushek and Steven G. Rivkin (2006) *Teacher Quality: The Handbook of the Economics of Education*. Retrieved from <http://edpro.stanford.edu/hanushek/admin/pages/files/uploads/HESEDU2018.pdf>.

⁹ Dr. Jack Shonkoff and Deborah A. Phillips, *From Neurons to Neighborhoods. The Science of Early Childhood Development*, National Academy Press, 2000, Retrieved from <http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?isbn=0309069882>

¹⁰ National Institute for Early Childhood Education Research, Rutgers University (2009) *Providing Preschool Education for all 4-year-olds: Lessons from Six State Journeys*. Retrieved from <http://nieer.org/resources/policybriefs/19.pdf>

p. 1 line 13



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Connecticut General Assembly – Education Committee
Testimony of Education Commissioner Stefan Pryor
February 15, 2013

Thank you Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, Senator Boucher, Representative Ackert, and members of the Education Committee. It is great to see you again after our discussion earlier this week.

On Wednesday, at your request, I provided a brief look at our significant progress implementing the numerous provisions of Public Act 12-116 – provisions that, together, we worked so hard on last legislative session.

My remarks today touch upon several of the bills you have raised for hearing. I look forward to continued discussion of these matters with the membership of this Committee over the course of the session.

The bills before you today implement the Governor's budget proposal for the coming biennium, deepening and expanding our commitment to improving our K-12 schools and our early childhood education system. As the Governor made clear in his speech to the General Assembly, we must invest in our priorities as a state and we believe that education should be one of those priorities.

House Bill 6357, An Act Implementing the Budget Recommendations of the Governor Concerning Education, renews and enhances our commitment to revitalizing struggling districts and schools. The bill reaffirms the Alliance Districts initiative, which provides accountability for new state education funding in the lowest-performing thirty districts – which include approximately forty percent of the state's students and faculty.

This year, we will focus the new increment of Alliance funding toward three levers for improving student outcomes: interventions in low-performing schools, implementation of the Common Core Standards, and assisting districts with educator evaluation and support. In addition, the Department will continue its partnership with Alliance Districts to oversee the implementation of the five-year plans set forth in 2012-13 applications.

The budget also provides funding for the state to support all districts in the rollout of educator evaluations and the Common Core. The proposal includes support for expanding the Commissioner's Network, the Governor's signature initiative for school turnaround; we are very pleased that six districts have volunteered for Network participation in the coming academic year and are in the process of working with local stakeholders to develop a turnaround plan to be submitted to the State Department of Education. And the proposal expands investments in public schools of choice.

HB 6358

I would like to speak to House Bill 6358, An Act Unleashing Innovation in Connecticut Schools. This bill is introduced to serve as a starting point for discussion of two distinct ideas: first, how we can elevate the teaching profession in Connecticut, and second, how we can support schools by removing unnecessary barriers to success.

I'd like to begin with section 4 of HB 6358, which we have put forward as a conceptual proposal. We know that teacher and leader quality is the most important in-school factor for student achievement. Our systems involved with school talent – for attracting, inducting, training, retaining, and developing the very best teaching talent in the country – must be world-class.

With section 4 of HB 6358, our intent is to seek the very best, most creative ideas from around the state to elevate, transform, and honor the profession of teaching in Connecticut. The SDE will incentivize districts to develop, in full cooperation and collaboration with their union, strategies that elevate and advance teaching. Teachers and administrators will be empowered to present and implement ideas that will strengthen the education professions in their districts. Ideas will arise from the grassroots. I look forward to discussing this concept further.

Section 3 of this bill emerged from the work of the Red Tape Review and Removal Task Force convened by Governor Malloy last year. The intent of this proposal is to enable high-performing districts – as well as the state's fastest-improving districts, and those districts showing greatest success in closing the achievement gap – to apply to the state for waivers from certain state mandates.

The philosophy behind this proposal is as follows. We seek a differentiated system – one where the SDE provides the greatest assistance, guidance, and structure to low-performing schools and districts. On the other hand, if a school or district is doing well – if its students are demonstrating high performance – we should be getting out of the way and devoting our scarce resources elsewhere.

This approach builds on much of our existing work. Our Alliance Districts and Commissioner's Network initiatives define certain low-performing schools and districts as those needing our greatest supports. Our ESEA waiver, created in response to federal guidance and approved by the U.S. Department of Education, classifies our schools based on performance. Section 3 of HB 6358 provides an additional step toward a differentiated system by giving greater autonomy and flexibility to our highest-performing and highest-progress districts.

I want to stress that HB 6358 is presented as a starting point for discussion. I look forward to continued collaborative discussions with the co-Chairs, ranking members, and entire Education Committee. We will also continue our dialogue with unions and stakeholder groups as we develop these proposals further and implement them together.

Thank you.

TESTIMONY OF THE CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS

Re: H.B. No. 6357, 6358, 6359, 6383, 6385. S.B. No. 877,

My name is Dr. Karissa Niehoff. I am the Executive Director of the CT Association of Schools (CAS) which includes the CT Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC). CAS is a non-profit association; our focus is school leadership. We provide an extensive range of professional development experiences and on-going support for school administrator aspirants, and those who are currently working as principals and assistant principals. The CIAC governs interscholastic athletics and student activities. CAS-CIAC membership includes approximately 900 public, parochial, charter and magnet schools serving students Pre-K-12 across the state. Today I am speaking on behalf of the nearly 1000 principals and assistant principals from our member schools regarding:

1. H.B. No. 6358 AN ACT UNLEASHING INNOVATION IN CONNECTICUT SCHOOLS.
2. H.B. No. 6359 AN ACT CONCERNING AN EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM.
3. S.B. No. 877 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE ENTRANCE AGE FOR WHEN A CHILD MAY ENTER KINDERGARTEN.
4. H.B. No. 6383 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING HIRING STANDARDS FOR ATHLETIC DIRECTORS.
5. H.B. No. 6385 (RAISED) AN ACT PROHIBITING THE USE OF PESTICIDES AT PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

1. H.B. No. 6358 AN ACT UNLEASHING INNOVATION IN CONNECTICUT SCHOOLS- CAS strongly supports granting school districts greater flexibility in the use of time and resources to improve student outcomes, including the waiver of Carnegie Units and extensive course requirements. We believe that policies and legislation should encourage personalized learning approaches in all schools through:

- Allowing students to earn credit based on demonstrating mastery in the classroom, as well as in extended learning opportunities, rather than seat time;
- Establishing appropriate funding formulas that allow for this transition to occur,
- Work with higher education to accept student credit earned in non-traditional formats.

CAS supports college and career standards for all students and all schools. Part of the strategy for achieving this lofty goal is to create greater relevance for students through the personalization of learning experiences. High school students can engage in valuable learning experiences through internships, summer programs, on-line courses and programs and after school programming. When these experiences demonstrate a high level of quality and relevance, schools and districts should have flexibility to grant credit for these learning experiences.

2. H.B. No. 6359 AN ACT CONCERNING AN EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM- We believe that this bill is a tremendous step forward in improving education and services for children and families. Establishing an Office of Early Childhood will help to guide the collaboration of agencies so that programs will be implemented with greater quality and effectiveness. CAS considers the childhood years to be birth through age eight. Therefore, ongoing, intentional planning will be needed to make sure that birth to five efforts remain meaningfully connected to K-3 efforts. The Office of Early Childhood and pre-K-12 education should work collaboratively and in earnest to provide a continuum of services from birth through young adulthood.

3. S.B. No. 877 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE ENTRANCE AGE FOR WHEN A CHILD MAY ENTER KINDERGARTEN- CAS strongly supports the transition to an entrance age of five by the October 1 birth date and the tighter restrictions applied to starting children at age seven.

4. H.B. No. 6383 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING HIRING STANDARDS FOR ATHLETIC DIRECTORS- CAS as the governing body for interscholastic athletics, strongly supports this bill. The role and responsibilities of athletic directors are very complex. They ensure compliance with CIAC rules and regulations; coordinate team schedules, transportation, officials; supervise and evaluate coaches, and monitor their requirements; adhere to the NCAA recruiting standards, maintain equipment and facilities to make sure they are safe for athletic play. Most importantly, they oversee the



LAURA CUMMINGS
STAFF ATTORNEY
CONNECTICUT BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
BEFORE THE
EDUCATION COMMITTEE
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
FEBRUARY 15th, 2013

Good Morning Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann and members of the Education Committee. My name is Laura Cummings and I am testifying today on behalf of the Connecticut Business and Industry Association. CBIA's 10,000 member companies represent the broad diversity of Connecticut's businesses, and the vast majority of our members are small companies with fewer than 50 employees.

Thank you for allowing me to testify today in support of **HB 6358** AN ACT UNLEASHING INNOVATION IN CONNECTICUT SCHOOLS.

HB 6358, in part, requires the State Department of Education to administer a teaching profession initiative pilot program in an effort to attract, develop and retain high quality teachers and administrators.

We know from research that teachers and principals are the most important school-based factors for driving student achievement. Excellent teachers transform children's lives. Every Connecticut student deserves to be taught by an effective educator. The first step in building a corps of strong teachers begins with improving the quality of the state's teacher preparation programs.

For the aforementioned reasons, CBIA urges the committee to support **HB6358**.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you regarding this important issue.

TESTIMONY OF CT ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS ON HB 6358

JOSEPH J. CIRASUOLO, ED.D.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The CT Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) which represents the superintendents of CT's school districts and the members of the superintendents' cabinets supports the enactment of HB 6358 because it aligns well with the *portfolio approach* to school districts that CAPSS believes is a vital component for transforming education in the State.

A *portfolio approach* is one in which the State's relationship with school districts is dependent on the success of districts in their efforts to meet the State's expectations for student achievement. Successful districts would be given greater freedom from state mandates and regulations while districts that are not successful would be given greater support and direction.

By allowing successful districts to apply for permission to implement innovations that cannot be implemented now due to State requirements, HB 6358 is an important first step towards the implementation of a *portfolio approach* in CT.

CAPSS' support for this bill, however, is accompanied by a recommendation that the State Legislature consider seriously a revision of one State requirement that presently hinders the efforts of some school districts to be successful. That requirement is the one that compels districts to essentially base the awarding of high school diplomas on the amount of time students spend in class instead of how much students have achieved as a result of their school experience.

Presently, there are nine high schools in CT that are developing high school diploma criteria that are based on whether students have mastered the required knowledge and skills necessary for students to be successful beyond high school. These schools are members of the League of Innovative Schools which in turn is a member of the New England Council of Secondary Schools.

The staffs of these schools, one of which is a Commissioner's Network School, have concluded that for them to be successful, the transition to a mastery based diploma system is necessary. Yet, no matter how well they develop a mastery based diploma system, they will not be able to implement it in CT under present State statutes. So, they are being prevented from getting permission to be innovative because they are being innovative. This simply does not make sense.

CAPSS, therefore, urges that the Legislature in addition to enacting HB 6358 also enact legislation that will grant school districts that so desire to transition from diploma criteria based on Carnegie Units to criteria based on demonstration of mastery. CAPSS is prepared to recommend specific legislative language in this regard.



*Testimony of Sheila Cohen
President, Connecticut Education Association*

**Connecticut Education
Association**

Before the Education Committee

Governance
Sheila Cohen, President
Jeff Leake, Vice President
Cheryl Prevost, Secretary
Thomas Nicholas, Treasurer
Kathy Flaherty, NEA Director
Pat Jordan, NEA Director

*Regarding Bill No. 6358, An Act Unleashing Innovation in Connecticut
Schools*

February 15, 2013

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Chairman Fleischmann, Chairman Stillman, and members of the Education Committee: My name is Sheila Cohen and I am the President of the Connecticut Education Association. I am here to comment on House Bill 6358, An Act Unleashing Innovation in Connecticut Schools. First let me start my testimony by supporting the concepts that are expressed in this bill and thanking the Commissioner and Governor for giving us a framework we can start from to reach everyone's goal, which is innovation and education reform being bred at the local level with teachers as meaningful partners in such innovation. The Connecticut Education Association has always believed that unless teachers are meaningful partners in the education reform debate little will be accomplished and the reform we seek to find in public education in Connecticut will elude us. Carrying this strong belief into discussions with administration officials, and their positive responses, we are hopeful that meaningful innovations that are in the best interest of children, teachers and public education can be realized. The bill before you is a good start at an attempt at "unleashing innovations" across Connecticut.

Without going through the proposed bill section by section, we need to continue our meaningful discussions to clearly articulate our vision.

Specifically, if we chose to allow districts to waive various statutory mandates, such as allowing a district to reduce the number of school days and/or the school year, allowing a district to eliminate courses such as physical education, music and art, and allowing a district to modify high school requirements without teachers being a meaningful partner in those discussions and agreeing to the proposed statutory waivers prior to submitting such a request to the State Department of Education, we could see a well-intended bill on innovation result in an economic discussion of how to reduce school budgets.

We also want to especially acknowledge, for the first time, the clear language in the bill that does require meaningful teacher participation in creating teacher pilot initiatives at the local level. Again, the teacher pilot examples given reflect the

continuing discussion of the teacher unions and State administration officials and must be further clarified to make sure our goal of meaningful education reform in every public school room, in every public school building, and in every public school district is successful.

We will continue to advocate for public school teachers being a meaningful partner in advancing education reform in our state. For the first time in a long time we look at this glass as "half full" rather than "half empty". We are committed to working with AFTCT and State Administration officials as partners moving forward to create a piece of legislation that can bring true education innovation to our school districts across Connecticut.

Thank You.

**JOINT
STANDING
COMMITTEE
HEARINGS**

**EDUCATION
PART 3
724 - 1073**

2013

**Testimony on HB 6358
High School Graduation Standards**

Peter J. Cummings, Ed.D.
Principal, Conard High School, West Hartford, CT

The provisions of HB 6624 that allows students to earn credit based on mastery of rigorous standards is a significant step in our goal to have each and every student graduate from high school college and career ready. To meet the demands of a 21st century education, we must allow our system of education to grow so that it systemically nurtures and mirrors the traits of adaptability, creativity, persistence, and innovation we know are hallmarks of success for both individuals and organizations in our rapidly changing world.

The mission of Conard High School summarizes our work with students: "We challenge and guide our students to be active learners and productive citizens." Our teachers are guided by the idea that all students can achieve at high levels, no matter what. We believe that each student should find a "passion" and be an integral part of guiding the learning process. We also firmly believe that all students should be able to access high level courses. In our current system guided by Carnegie Units, we must overcome regulations based on state-mandated seat time to create these learning options. A flexible standards-based system would allow students to progress at the pace best suited to their learning needs. This system would generate important data to help teachers guide instruction and would indicate when a student has reached mastery. The end result would be a system structured and guided by learning outcomes rather than compartmentalized routines and a high school diploma that represents mastery of rigorous standards and readiness for the expectations of college and career.

All students need to be able to problem-solve and think critically, communicate in a variety of modes, think flexibly and innovatively, understand and apply technological advances, and contribute positively to a diverse community and society. Educators across the state are engaged in designing ways to teach, support, and reinforce these learning expectations over time and across the curriculum. Our current structures limit the opportunities for the cross-curricular work expected in the Common Core Standards at the high school level. Additionally, the demands of a Capstone project as well as the credit expectations of the Secondary School Reform legislation require a rethinking of the regulatory processes that guide Connecticut schools. States including New Hampshire, Oregon, Maine, and Vermont have already recognized the discrepancy between the old regulations and the new demands being put upon schools; Connecticut should do the same.

The knowledge, skills and habits of mind developed in schools are the framework for the ongoing learning that will be a part of our children's lives in the 21st century. Very little of that learning will be compartmentalized into 45 minute blocks for 180 days a year. We cannot prepare students to meet the demands of the future in a system designed to fulfill the requirements of the past. Our goal is to have each and every high school graduate enroll in the college of their choice or engage in other meaningful postsecondary education not as an end unto itself, but as a stepping stone to fulfilling life and career choices. HB 6358 allows schools and teachers the flexibility to create such an educational paradigm by opening the doors to innovation.

I urge you to support HB 6422, especially the focus on revising the Carnegie Unit regulation.

H - 1160

**CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
HOUSE**

**PROCEEDINGS
2013**

**VOL.56
PART 11
3446 - 3814**

law/djp/gbr
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

412
May 9, 2013

voted? Members please check the board to make sure your vote is properly cast. If all the members voted, the machine will be locked, the tally will be recalculated and the Clerk will take a tally.

Clerk please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

Bill 6447.

Total number voting	135
Necessary for passage	68
Those voting Yea	135
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	15

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The Bill passes.

Will the Clerk please Calendar 320?

THE CLERK:

Calendar Number 320, favorable report of the Joint Standing Committee on Education, Substitute House Bill 6358, AN ACT UNLEASHING INNOVATION IN CONNECTICUT SCHOOLS.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move acceptance of the

law/djp/gbr
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

413
May 9, 2013

Joint Committee's favorable report and passage of the hard to pronounce Bill.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The question before the Chamber is the acceptance of the Joint Committee's favorable report and passage of the Bill.

Will you remark, sir?

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Bill before us essentially does three things. First, it allows for academic credits towards graduation to be earned by a student who demonstrates mastery based on a competency or performance standard to be adopted by the State Board of Education. This will be a great step forward.

Second, it eliminates certain requirements related to open choice inter-district attendance programs and reporting thereof. And, finally, it sets up a study by the State Department of Education on local partnerships to advance the teaching profession. Mr. Speaker, the Clerk is in possession of an Amendment, LCO Number 6409. I ask that the Clerk please call and I be allowed to summarize.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

law/djp/gbr
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

414
May 9, 2013

Will the Clerk please call LCO 6409 which will be designated House Amendment "A".

THE CLERK:

House Amendment "A", LCO 6409, introduced by Representative Fleischmann, et al.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Gentleman seeks leave of the chamber to summarize the Amendment. Is there objection? Is there objection? Seeing none, please proceed with summarization, sir.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Amendment before us does two simple things. First, it clarifies that when the state board is adopting an approach towards these new competency and mastery demonstrations, they will set up guidelines for those.

And second, it clarifies that regional education service centers while no longer required to attend meetings about spaces available, shall report to the Department of Education the number of spaces they have available. I move adoption.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir.

Do you care to remark further on the Amendment

before us?

Representative Ackert? Thank you, sir.

If you care to remark on the Amendment?

Representative Lavielle. Thank you.

Would you care to remark further on the Amendment
before us?

If not, let me try your minds.

All those in favor of House Amendment "A", please
signify by saying Aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Those opposed Nay.

The Ayes have it. The Amendment is adopted.

Representative Fleischmann, you have the floor.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Mr. Speaker, this is a good Bill. I believe
there may be another Amendment coming from another
member which will also strengthen an already good
Bill.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Okay. Thank you, sir.

Representative Ackert of the 8th District, you
have the floor, sir.

law/djp/gbr
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

416
May 9, 2013

REP. ACKERT (8th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, as the good Chair did say, this is a good Bill. What we do need to work on a little bit more though on innovation, is the unleashing part, so we got a good start but, there's a little ways to go but, this is a very good Bill and a very good start, sir.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir.

Representative Lavielle of the 143rd, do you care to remark, ma'am?

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker and I agree it's a good Bill. When we saw it, we saw the title which harked back to what the Governor said, one of his six points before we did the education reform bill which was to unleash innovation by removing red tape and other barriers to success especially in high performing schools and districts.

All of us, I think, together on the Committee agreed that that was a priority and in order to make sure that this bill actually addresses that priority, I have an Amendment, it is LCO Number 6387. And, I'd like to ask if the Clerk would read the Amendment and

law/djp/gbr
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

417
May 9, 2013

that I be allowed to summarize.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Will the Clerk please call LCO Number 6387 which will be designated House Amendment "B".

THE CLERK:

House Amendment "B", LCO 6387, introduced by Representative Lavielle, et al.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Gentlewoman seeks leave of the Chamber to summarize.

Is there objection? Is there objection?

Please proceed with summarization, ma'am.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This Amendment creates a task force that is required to report by October 1st of this year with a list of recommendations for mandates and for -- mandates and routine requirements related to learning from which high performing schools can opt to be relieved. And, the high performing schools are defined as they were in the original version of this underlying Bill. I move adoption.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, Madame.

law/djp/gbr
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

418
May 9, 2013

Do you care to remark further on the Amendment
before us?

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to
observe, I consider this a friendly Amendment. I
think it's really important that we do finally start
to dig up the precise mandates that we can relieve for
high performing districts. It's been a disappointment
I think to all of us in the Education Committee that
there haven't been more shown to us and I thank my
good colleague for this well-drafted Amendment.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir.

Do you care to remark? Do you care to remark
further on the Amendment before us?

If not, let me try your minds.

All those in favor of House Amendment "B", please
signify by saying Aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Those opposed Nay.

The Ayes have it and the Amendment is adopted.

law/djp/gbr
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

419
May 9, 2013

Do you care to remark further on the Bill as amended? Do you care to remark further on the Bill as amended?

If not, staff and guests to the well of the house, members take your seats. The machine will be opened.

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll.

The House of Representatives is voting by roll. Will members please report to the chamber immediately?

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Have all the members voted? Have all the members voted? Members please check the board to make sure your vote is properly cast. If all the members have voted, the machine will be locked and the Clerk will take a tally.

Clerk please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

Bill Number 6358 as amended by House Amendment "A" and "B".

Total number voting	135
Necessary for passage	68
Those voting Yea	135
Those voting Nay	0

law/djp/gbr
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

420
May 9, 2013

Those absent and not voting 15

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The Bill as amended passes.

Will the Clerk please Calendar 442?

THE CLERK:

On page 26, Calendar 442, favorable report of the
Joint Standing Committee on General Law, Substitute
Senate Bill 752, AN ACT CONCERNING SELF-SERVICE
STORAGE FACILITY LIENS.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Baram, you have the floor, sir.

REP. BARAM (15th):

Good evening, Mr. Speaker. I move for acceptance
of the Joint Committee's favorable report and passage
of the Bill in concurrence with the Senate.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The question before the Chamber is the acceptance
of the Joint Committee's favorable report and passage
of the Bill in concurrence with the Senate.

Will you remark, sir?

REP. BARAM (15th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This bill allows the
owner of a self-storage facility to send electronic
notice of default to any renter or secured party.

S - 660

**CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SENATE**

**PROCEEDINGS
2013**

**VOL. 56
PART 9
2501 - 2836**

Yes; thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, if the Clerk would call as the next item, Calendar Page 27, Calendar 579, Substitute for House Bill Number 6358.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

On Page 27, Calendar Number 579, Substitute for House Bill 6358, AN ACT UNLEASHING INNOVATION IN CONNECTICUT SCHOOLS, as amended by House Amendment Schedules "A" and "B," Favorable Report of the Education Committee.

THE CHAIR:

Good evening, Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Good evening, Madam President.

I move the joint committee's report and seek rejection of House "B."

THE CHAIR:

Motion is on adoption of the -- the bill, and you seek to -- to reject House "B."

SENATOR STILLMAN:

That is correct, Madam President. I apologize for the -- the late hour --

THE CHAIR:

Oh.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

-- I think is --

THE CHAIR:

No.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Is hindering my --

THE CHAIR:

Not a problem.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

My ability to bring the bill out, yes; I --

THE CHAIR:

Not a problem.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

-- at this -- I would like --

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

-- to seek rejection of House "B."

THE CHAIR:

At this point, it's the rejection of House "B." Will you remark, ma'am?

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Yes, Madam President.

I seek rejection because it is redundant, based already on the fact that that type of study is already going on through the Governor's Red Tape Task Force.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark further? Will you remark further?

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Yes; thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, a question through you, if I may, about this unique proposal to reject House "A" [sic].

Through you, Madam --

THE CHAIR:

I think it's reject House "B."

SENATOR BOUCHER:

House "B"; thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Yep.

THE CHAIR:

Okay; I'm sorry. Senator Boucher, will you proceed, ma'am?

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Do you have a question on the rejection?

SENATOR BOUCHER:

I do. If we could please explain the nature for the rejection, as it was passed in the House. I believe it is a mandate relief for some of the state's higher-performing districts. I believe that there was a

number of requests throughout the state for those that are performing well and that they could be relieved of the restrictions that were put upon them through the last reform bill.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Stillman, will you remark, please.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Yes; thank you, Madam President.

I appreciate Senator Boucher's question.

House "B," establishes a task force to study education mandate relief for high-performing school districts, and I believe that is already, currently being done through the Governor's Red Tape Task Force.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, my concern is that in fact if this is being done already and this is a task force and really is an effort to provide information to study if this would be appropriate, I still am having a hard time understanding why it should be rejected, particularly since there was agreement to pass this on through us, through the Senate, and if we make this change would also put the bill in, and the underlying bill in question for it to be brought up in the House.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

At this time, the Senate will stand at ease for a moment.

(Senate at ease.)

THE CHAIR:

House will come -- Senate will come back to order.

Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Thank you, Madam President.

I would -- I do beg to differ with Senator Boucher. I do understand that she is --

THE CHAIR:

Senator Stillman, can you wait a moment?

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Surely.

THE CHAIR:

The Majority Leader has now stood up.

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

If Senator Stillman would -- would yield on the, on the matter, I would move that this item be marked passed temporarily.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, so ordered, sir.

SENATOR LOONEY:

S - 664

**CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SENATE**

**PROCEEDINGS
2013**

**VOL. 56
PART 13
3813 - 4129**

If there isn't anything else, I would like to request to be placed on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing and hearing no objection, so ordered.

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, if the next bill that had been marked Calendar 580 on Page 22 would be passed temporarily and if instead the Clerk would call as the next item it would be Calendar Page 21, Calendar 579, House Bill 6358.

And then after that, if we might return to the item that had passed temporarily earlier and that was Calendar Page 27, Calendar 611, House Bill 5811.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

On Page 21, Calendar 579, Substitute for House Bill Number 6358, AN ACT UNLEASHING INNOVATION IN CONNECTICUT SCHOOLS, Favorable Report of the Committee on EDUCATION.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I urge -- move the Joint Committee's Favorable Report, in concurrence with the House.

THE CHAIR:

On acceptance and passage, in concurrence with the House.

Will you remark, madam?

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Yes, thank you.

The House amended this bill which was -- were incorporated into this file copy and I accept both amendments, House "A" and "B". I think that this bill adds a little bit of innovation to our process. We're always looking for innovative ways to address education. We'd always like to have more, but I'm sure we will over time, as the school reform legislation or activity moves forward, but this particular bill permits high school students to earn academic credits using nontraditional or mastery-based standards, based on guidelines established by the State Board of Education. It establishes an eight-member task force to study education mandate relief for high-performing school district. It eliminates an extra meeting for interdistrict open choice programs and we also would like the department to study issues relating to partnerships, so that we can continue to advance the Education Committee.

And again, I urge passage of the bill.

Thank you, sir.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you, Madam -- Mr. President.

I rise to support the bill and urge its passage. It certainly addresses some flexibility that I think is surely needed in our academic programs in our schools and also again, this is the topic of mandate relief that has been discussed ad infinitum in the General Assembly for a number of years, but we haven't moved forward. Hopefully, this particular initiative, although it does create another task force and we know how many we've had of those, will at least produce some result. And maybe one of these days, just one of these days, we might actually pass some mandate relief.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Will you remark further on the bill? Will you remark further on the bill?

Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Thank you, Mr. President.

If there isn't anything -- any if there aren't any other questions, I would like to ask this be placed on the Consent Calendar.

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing and hearing no objections, so ordered.

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

On Page 27, Calendar 611, House Bill Number 5811, AN ACT CONCERNING THE OPERATION OF VESSELS WITH ELECTRIC MOTORS ON INLAND WATERS, Favorable Report of the Committee on ENVIRONMENT. And there is an Amendment.

Oh -- I apologize.

SENATOR LOONEY:

On the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

If there's no objection, it will be placed on the
Consent Calendar.

I apologize.

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes, Madam President.

Madam President, if the Clerk would now list the items
on the Second Consent Calendar so that we might move
to a vote on that Second Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

On Page 5, Calendar 275, Senate Bill 299.

On Page 7, Calendar 356, House Bill 6253.

Page 15, Calendar 518, House Bill 6316.

And Page 18, Calendar 555, House Bill 5836.

On Page 21, Calendar 579, House Bill 6358.

Page 40, Calendar 265, Senate Bill 191.✓

Page 41, Calendar 305, Senate Bill 1081.

And on Page 43, Calendar 388, Senate Bill 1096.

And Page 45, Calendar 553, House Bill 5250.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk, please call for a roll call vote. The machine will be open for this Second Consent Calendar.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate.
Senators please return to the Chamber. Immediate roll call on today's Second Consent Calendar has been ordered in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Do me a favor. Call it one more time now, so we can get them in here faster. Thank you.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call ordered in the Senate on the Second Consent Calendar of the day. Senators please return to the Chamber. Immediate roll call in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

All members have voted, all members have voted, the machine will be closed.

Mr. Clerk will you call the last tally of the night.

THE CLERK:

On the Second Consent Calendar of the day.

Total Number Voting	35
Necessary for Adoption	18
Those voting Yea	35
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	1

THE CHAIR:

Consent Calendar passes.

Senator Looney, do you have some good news for us, sir?

SENATOR LOONEY:

Madam President, just before moving for adjournment, we have a couple of other just Calendar items. One item on the foot of the Calendar.

Madam President, Calendar Page 49, Calendar 240, Senate Bill 849. I would move to remove that item from the foot and just mark it passed, retaining its place on the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered, sir.

SENATOR LOONEY:

And also, Madam President, other item on the foot of the Calendar, Calendar 182, Senate Bill 1000. Would move to remove that item from the foot and to mark it passed, retaining its place on the Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered, sir.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you.

Madam President, the other items previously marked go for this evening, should now be marked passed, retaining their place on the Calendar. We hope to begin with those items early tomorrow.

And I would yield the floor now for Members for announcements of Committee Meetings or other Points of Personal Privilege.

THE CHAIR: