

PA13-122

HB6624

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**JOINT
STANDING
COMMITTEE
HEARINGS**

**EDUCATION
PART 3
724 - 1073**

2013

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Laurina Schaefer to be followed by Rae Ann Knopf. Lawrence, my apologies. The -- I thought the writing here was all clear, but apparently not. Thank you for coming, Lawrence.

LAWRENCE SCHAEFER: Thank you, Representative Fleischmann and members of the Committee for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Larry Schaefer, I'm the Senior Staff Associate at the Connecticut Association of School Superintendents. And my responsibilities involve leadership development and the educational transformation project. Today I'd like to testify about one line in H.B. 6624 which is in section 10, and it's the part of the statute that allows graduation to be based on mastery of competencies.

In today's education system, educators are faced with a system where time is the constant and learning is the variable. Every year a student moves up no matter what they've learned or not learned. And we feel that in the long time to have a college and career ready student population, we need to change that paradigm. So in this one short sentence that you've included in section 10-221, the paradigm shifts to where learning is the constant and time is the variable. A mastery-based diploma will encourage and allow districts as an option to move forward on a system that will lead to higher levels of performance than the current system.

Many states across the country are moving in this direction. Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Ohio, Kentucky, Oregon, Alaska, all have programs that allow mastery-based diplomas. Later on this afternoon you'll hear from two

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high schools that we're working with that would like to implement this in the near future and need this statutory change to occur.

We'd like to make one suggestion in the language. Currently the language says based on competency and performance standards adopted by the State Board of Education. We would encourage you to modify the language to allow districts to submit the standards and be approved by the State Board of Education. It allows for districts to customize their standards for their needs as well as having the State Department of Ed have an option there. I'll stop there and answer any questions you might have.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you for your testimony and for your sort of outside the box way of approaching this issue of time and learning.

Are there questions, comments for Lawrence?

If not, thank you very much.

And I'm going to turn the Chairmanship over to our distinguished Vice Chair as I have to leave the room for a couple of minutes, and I'll be right back.

But Representative McCrory, you have the floor.

REP. MCCRORY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I think we have Rae Ann Knopf next followed by Jamie Lazaroff.

RAE ANN KNOPF: Good morning, Vice Chair McCrory and esteemed members of the Education Committee. Thank you for hearing me this morning. I am Rae Ann Knopf, I am the Executive Director of

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the most intensive parts going forward would be for new teachers into each system. Am I correct in that assumption?

ROBERT RADER: Sure, but the training -- you wouldn't have to train all the teachers and the principals all over again. I think you're right and once we get the technology to help and make this really work, I think it can be fabulous for our schools.

SENATOR STILLMAN: You're on record saying that, thank you.

ROBERT RADER: Was that a trap?

SENATOR STILLMAN: If it was, I wasn't even sure I said it. Anyway, thank you both very much.

ROBERT RADER: Thank you.

SENATOR STILLMAN: And thanks for all the work you do as well. We appreciate it.

Steve McKeever followed by Peter Cummings and then Gina Fafard. Welcome, sir.

STEPHEN MCKEEVER: Good afternoon. Good afternoon, Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, and other members of the Committee. I'm Steve McKeever, I'm the First Vice President of AFT Connecticut. I'm here to talk on three different bills. You have my testimony, I just want to take a few seconds and hit the highlights of those.

The first one I want to talk about is H.B. 6624. The last couple of lines of that bill ask for complementary, I'm sorry, competency-based mastery as part of graduation requirements. I have some serious concerns

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over this because I just wonder who decides what's competent and what are the standards that are being used to go on. There's a lot of details that I think really need to be looked at before we start turning that into some sort of a law or alternative.

Another bill I want to talk about, S.B. 1097. This has come up quite a few times today and I just wanted to thank the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus for working with us on some language regarding the literacy survey. We believe that a survey would help to identify the professional development needs of -- of the teachers in the school district, and then implement those so that everybody can become better along those ways. I think Representative Rojas had said it earlier today that this is way too important and we have to get it right. So I do appreciate all of the efforts that they have put into this.

The one thing that I did want to talk about and Sheila from CEA had mentioned it earlier was the requirement that the special ed teachers for their initial certifications must pass this test by September 2013. My only concern there is that if they've gone through four years of school and have not had the coursework, they graduate in May and then suddenly they can't get a job in September because they have to go back and take some courses.

So I would suggest that maybe we push it back to 2015 for that category. I'm not saying push back the survey by any stretch, just for that category. That will give them an opportunity to get the coursework that they need. It will also give the higher ed schools, the colleges and universities, an opportunity to offer those courses. And by pushing it to 2015, the kids

STEPHEN MCKEEVER: Thank you very much.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Peter Cummings followed by Gina Fafard and Joseph Cirasuolo. Welcome.

PETER CUMMINGS: Good afternoon. Thank you for having me. My name is Peter Cummings, I am the Principal of Conard High School in West Hartford, Connecticut. So I'd like to thank you all for taking a moment. I'm here to talk to you about Senate Bill 6624, and specifically about one line in that bill which is the mastery-based credits down at the end of the bill.

And I'm here to, and you've already heard a little bit about this today, but to talk a little bit about from a practitioner lens about what this would mean in a school. And for us it's really about the idea that we're moving from time really governing the way that we structure our school to mastery of learning. And the big idea here is that we really want to move to a place where learning is documented by evidence of mastery of standards. This change is in line with the best practices that we know are happening across the country. In fact, in several states they've already adopted this practice including Oregon, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and others.

So for us right now we're being asked with all the demands put on schools and educators to really create a 21st Century educational experience in a 19th Century structure. Right now schools are structured in such a way of a factory model and we're being asked to create students and learners that are moving away from this factory model into creative learning, and that's very hard to do in the current credit

structure. So in giving practitioners the flexibility to develop systems, programs, and supports that meet student learning needs rather than document minutes spent in school, we're going to be able to develop programs that support both our high-end learners and our students who need more time.

As I think about this and I think about the students in my school, I think about the missed opportunities that many of our students have to really show the best that they can do. You know, there are students who fall behind due to any number of reasons, health issues, family issues, just being adolescents, you know, there are all sorts of things that get in the way. Having learning be -- their credits be based on mastery of learning provides opportunity to accelerate in ways that current -- aren't currently available.

The same holds true for our students who are accelerated, our students who really can go deeper, more into content area, and again providing them that opportunity to do so. The proposed change also gives educators the flexibility to innovate and what we're really asking for is the idea that we are able to be free to implement many of the changes that are being proposed including secondary school reform legislation, Common Core State Standards, and other meaningful educational reforms that are currently impossible in the credit-based system.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you very much.

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for your testimony and for your public

service. I salute all you're accomplishing at Conard even though I myself am a Hall High alum.

PETER CUMMINGS: We don't hold that against you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: So your testimony was clearly in support of this approach that we have in House Bill 6422. I'm just wondering, could you give an example, a real world sort of plain English example of how this sort of mastery-based system would work. Because we all -- the current system, everyone in this room went through. The system you're describing is -- is new and I'm just wondering if you could give us an example.

PETER CUMMINGS: Certainly. And I think it blends nicely with some of the secondary school reform legislation that this Committee has considered in the past, if you look at the requirement for students to complete a capstone project and to graduate from high school. Currently for students to earn credit for that project, they would have to sit in class for 40 minutes a day, 180 days a year, and we would measure their learning by that.

And they would not be earning credit for going into the community, for doing that work, for applying the learning that they're doing in school to the capstone project that they're completing. What we're seeking to be able to do is to have identified learning standards based on the Common Core State Standards. So let's say, for example, an English language arts standard and where they have to show that they are developing literacy, to apply that in the world let's say by working in a pre-school or by going out and teaching people how to read and getting deep into knowledge of text and

knowledge of application of text.

And then going and demonstrating that through a paper, a project, in those different pieces. It gets to application of knowledge. And so another way that you could look at would be, for example, if you have a student that is falling behind and they are a very bright mathematician. Let's say, for example, it's a student for any number of health reasons have fallen behind in their credits, they could demonstrate mastery by completing a project where they complete the mathematics exam or they show a project where they have completed the mathematics standard so that they show that they have the knowledge already rather than sitting in class and having to relearn and re-master pieces that they've already done, excuse me, or already know.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you. That was extremely helpful because this is such an abstract concept, and that was much more concrete. And I guess my follow-up is, you know, way back when, I remember there was something called the West Hartford Individualized Math Program. And it allowed children to move along in mathematics at the rate that matched their developmental progress. Are there programs like that still in place today or are they impeded by our Carnegie-unit based system?

PETER CUMMINGS: There are, but they reach an end point where we can no longer grant credit. So, for example, very simply put, I can have a student go to, we partner with the University of Hartford, they can take a three-credit University of Hartford mathematics course. And by the statute currently in place, I can only grant them half a high school credit for that.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: That's disturbing and I'm glad we have this bill before us. Thank you.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you.

Questions?

Representative Ackert.

REP. ACKERT: Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr. Cummings, thank you for your testimony and being here today. You had mentioned and I believe there was another supporter of the bill that mentioned other states that have already put these into and rolled out a masteries program. How long have they been doing that, and to get kind of an assessment of how that's working out because it looks like an excellent idea especially after you mentioned the -- taking a college course and only getting half a year on a -- so if you could give us a little idea of your -- your knowledge of what's in place and how long they've been doing it.

PETER CUMMINGS: Sure. Maine has had it in place for several years, I believe, about five. New Hampshire, a little bit shorter than that, I believe around three. And I believe Oregon is around three. And in all of these states they really have been in response to Common Core State Standards and the ideas of having individualized learning.

Maine has been very successful. They've had some very well documented programs where they really have taken students who in a traditional credit structure may not have graduated from high school and are able to graduate on time and go on to college because of the flexibility that this allows. Same holds true in Oregon, and Oregon actually is a leading state in both

implementing Common Core and also in a standards-based reporting system.

And one of the things in testimony has been said earlier about finding data and documenting student progress, this directly leads to a way to find data, document student progress in relation to established state standards so that students are able to get direct feedback on their progress in a variety of subject areas.

REP. ACKERT: Excellent. And do you think is there any downside that you could -- that you would be aware of in terms of this type of a program?

PETER CUMMINGS: The downside that I see is a changing of the educational paradigm and depending on who you ask, that's either a downside or an upside. And, you know, one of the things that we have to think deeply about is how does it change the traditional school structure? I believe that is going to require more reliance on technology and in engaging in different forms of communication. I also believe that it's going to take a full community effort to have students in the community doing work and applying their learning in a different way.

You know, one of the things that when we talk with faculty about this, we say that the problems that our children will solve in the future are not compartmentalized into 40 minutes a day, 180 days a year. You know, we really want them to take the things that they're learning and apply them authentically in the real world. In order to do that, we need a change to the regulatory process that this would lead to.?

REP. ACKERT: Thank you. Because I think you just,

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your last comment just echoed many of the parents in my district in saying we need to start applying real world experience. But thank you so much for your testimony today. Thank you, Madam Chair.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you, Representative.

Anyone else, questions?

Thank you very much. We really appreciate your conversation.

Gina Fafard followed by Joseph Cirasuolo and then Erik Good. Welcome, Gina. Good to see you again.

GINA FAFARD: Good afternoon, Madam Chair and Chairman Fleischmann, and respect members of the Education Committee. Thank you for letting me testify before you today. My name is Gina Fafard, I'm the Executive Director of the Interdistrict School for Arts and Communication, better known as ISAAC, and I'm here to speak in support of House Bill 6622. ISAC is a state public charter school in New London that serves -- currently we have students from about 12 towns, cities and boroughs, throughout Southeastern Connecticut, as an experiential learning community where students are challenged to discover their talents and strengths.

We're now in our 15th year of providing a rich educational environment that's culturally diverse and has its foundation -- foundational importance in music and art we integrate in our regular curriculum. Our school is currently considering entering into agreement with the New London Public School District similar to what is being discussed -- was discussed

Anyone else have questions?

Thank you very much, you've been helpful.

ERIK GOOD: Thank you.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Next, Jen Alexander followed by Alan Addley and Richard Murray. Welcome, Jen.

JENNIFER ALEXANDER: Good afternoon. My name is Jen Alexander, and I'm the acting CEO at ConnCAN. Thank you, Senator Stillman, and Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Committee for the opportunity to talk with you today. I submitted written testimony on four bills. I will quickly summarize our positions on three of those bills and then want to go more in depth on Senate Bill 1097.

First, ConnCAN supports House Bill 6622, AN ACT CONCERNING DISTRICT PARTNERSHIPS. You've already heard quite good testimony on that today. To support the growth of high-quality public school options in Connecticut, we need to promote collaborative efforts between public schools of choice and school districts. This bill can help accomplish this by extending and making permanent a district charter collaboration option that, as you heard, is working right now in Hartford and is beginning to work in New London. If we're serious about closing our achievement gaps in Connecticut, we have to facilitate these kinds of partnerships in order to support and sustain schools that are delivering results for kids.

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Second, we do not support Senate Bill 1098, AN ACT CONCERNING THE EDUCATION COST-SHARING FORMULA. This bill would commission yet another study of the issue of school funding, an issue the State has studied several times

over the past few decades including the recent ECS Task Force Study. We don't need yet another study to conclude that our system is broken. We have enough information to start creating a new funding formula that funds all students fairly at the public schools they attend.

Third, we support House Bill 6624, AN ACT CONCERNING MINOR REVISIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUTES, because it builds off of the good work of this Committee around data systems and transparency and it expands the definition of a school course credit to include demonstration of competency in a particular subject area. We think this is an important first step in moving towards an individualized approach to education that is tailored to each student's learning needs.

Finally, I want to talk about Senate Bill 1097, AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO THE EDUCATION REFORM ACT OF 2012. We urge you to reject this bill because it aims to unnecessarily delay implementation of the essential teacher and principal evaluation program. Providing regular feedback and support based in part on student outcomes is a core responsibility of our schools and districts. We must proceed with timely implementation of this program to ensure that children across our state have access to the best teachers and principals.

This bill is flawed for several reasons. First, as you heard Bob Rader testify earlier, this bill would put Connecticut in violation of our ESEA waiver timeline and put our state's -- could put our state's ESEA compliance at risk. Second, this bill removes implementation authority from boards of education and gives it to a professional development and evaluation

with the operations of quasi-governmentals, you know, for the last ten years. And I cite some of the examples in my -- in my testimony. But I think you're then creating a precedent for quasi-governmental agencies that didn't exist previously. You're really taking on what are -- are legitimate state agency functions and now saying that the state's not going to do them, we're going to have them done by, again an organization that's an arm's length away from state agency, and we're going to be paying their general fund basically with state dollars.

I think that's -- that's new ground, I don't think it's necessary to do for educational policy. And again given the track record of quasias, they do some great work, they provide excellent service for the state in some unique complex matters, but they have traditionally had a lapse in the ability to -- to be transparent and to show that they're -- that they're not avoiding perceptions of impropriety. And I just think the cost, particularly when you're talking about education practices in schools and the potential influence from outside money into a quasi-governmental as opposed to a state agency and who's controlling those strings, I think by and large keeping SERC within the state agency realm is a far better proposition.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you. I appreciate that.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you.

Laura Harvey. Welcome.

LAURA HARVEY: Thanks, members of the Committee for letting me testify, I appreciate it.

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REP. FLEISCHMANN: Just to clarify, that's your right. If you're a citizen of the United States and a resident of Connecticut, we're just doing our jobs here.

LAURA HARVEY: I'm here to testify in favor of Senate Bill 1098, AN ACT CONCERNING EDUCATION COST-SHARING FORMULA, Senate Bill 1099, AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL SAFETY, House Bill 6624, AN ACT CONCERNING MINOR REVISIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUTES, and House Bill 6626, AN ACT CONCERNING SPECIAL ED. And I'm here testifying on behalf of underperforming students of which one is very dear to my heart.

Regarding Senate Bill 1098, AN ACT CONCERNING THE COST-SHARING FORMULA, I would like to see this studied. I'd like to eventually see a major component of the percentage of underperforming students, and any forthcoming funds coming from the State with strings attached earmarked to follow those individual underperforming students in an audit of both that money that's following those underperforming students and the student's adequate yearly progress.

From my district, which is Region Nine, I have some data from 2011, it was the most recent I can get, that said 13 percent of the incoming eighth graders were in the C, D, and F range. And luckily now I can hope that from their own data, that my sophomore when they become a sophomore, it will be 25 percent will be in the C, D, and F range. This is what I call underperforming students, and I think they kind of slip through the cracks. Because, for example, in Region Nine, you know, most of these kids are -- they're going to go to college, they're going to go probably good colleges, they're going to achieve, and they'll

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Testimony on Minor Revisions to the Education Statutes- Graduation Requirements

Lawrence Schaefer

Staff Associate – Leadership Development

CT Association of Public School Superintendents

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On behalf of the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS), I am testifying in support of legislative changes that allow Boards of Education to replace Carnegie Units with mastery of standards as a prerequisite for graduation. Mastery of standards is an important strategy for school districts if all students are to graduate College and Career Ready. In drafting the legislative revision, CAPSS encourages the committee to revise the language in section 10 relating to subsection (f) of section 10-221a of the general statutes to read adopted or approved by the State Board of Education.

For the purposes of this testimony mastery-based, competency-based and proficiency-based have similar meaning.

States across the country are implementing similar revisions of statutes as the revision proposed to section 10-221a. New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine, Ohio, Kentucky, Oregon and Alaska are a few of the states implementing mastery of standards as a requirement for graduation and an alternative to the Carnegie Unit. The National Governor's Association Issue Brief, that is attached, documents these efforts.

In addition, the United States Department of Education devotes a section of their web site to Competency Based Pathways. The section is entitled, "Schools, Districts, and States Transform Seat-based Requirements into Competency-based Pathways to College- and Career-Readiness." A copy of the web site is attached as well.

The Nellie Mae Education Foundation recently published the report "Making Mastery Work: A Close-up view of Competency Education (November, 2012). They state, "The traditional system of moving students ahead to the next grade level after nine months seems less relevant each year. This is a reason for the growing appeal of competency-based learning or competency education."

CAPSS strongly encourages the Legislature to give school districts the option of graduating students based on a demonstration of the mastery of a comprehensive list of competencies.

Thank you.



Testimony: Jennifer Alexander, Acting CEO for ConnCAN

Education Committee - Friday, March 15, 2013

My name is Jennifer Alexander and I am the Acting CEO for the Connecticut Coalition for Achievement Now (ConnCAN), a statewide advocacy organization focused on ensuring that every child in Connecticut has access to a high-quality public education.

I want to thank Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the committee for the opportunity to provide testimony on four separate pieces of legislation: Senate Bill 1097, An Act Concerning Revisions to the Education Reform Act of 2012; House Bill 6622, An Act Concerning District Partnerships; Senate Bill 1098, An Act Concerning the Education Cost-Sharing Formula; and House Bill 6624, An Act Concerning Minor Revisions to the Education Statutes.

S.B. 1097: An Act Concerning Revisions to the Education Reform Act of 2012

Last year, Governor Dannel P. Malloy signed a landmark education reform law (Public Act 12-116) A key pillar of the education reform law was raising standards for educators by implementing a teacher and principal evaluation program.

Providing regular feedback and support, based in part on student outcomes, is a core responsibility of our schools and districts. The state's educator evaluation program (SEED) is a fundamental step needed to provide feedback and support to further empower high-performing teachers and principals, make certain that low-performing teachers get the help they need, and allow for swift dismissal of those who consistently fail to improve. Last year's law required the SEED program to launch in 8-10 sites across Connecticut as part of last year's education reform law.

The pilot is now underway in 10 sites across Connecticut, and the educator evaluation model was recently given the go-ahead for statewide implementation by the State Board of Education to be phased in gradually over the next school year. This phase-in will allow schools and districts to prepare for full implementation set for 2014-15. The State Board-approved implementation plan was developed by consensus of the state's Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC). The PEAC represents major stakeholders responsible for implementation of the evaluation program—from teachers unions to principals to school boards to superintendents.

Timely implementation of this statewide educator evaluator program is an essential step toward ensuring that children across Connecticut have access to the best teachers and principals.

S.B. 1097 must be rejected because it aims to unnecessarily delay implementation of the statewide educator evaluation system

S.B. 1097 also removes implementation authority from boards of education and gives it to a "professional development and evaluation committee." Ultimately, school boards are held accountable

Right now, this option is working in Hartford, where the Hartford Public Schools and Achievement First Hartford Academy have negotiated a District-Charter Collaboration Compact. Partnerships like these give districts a stake in the success of their charter schools, which drives them to support and sustain those schools as they would any other public school in their district.

All of our students deserve a great education, regardless of the type of school they attend. If we are serious about closing our worst-in-the-nation achievement gap, we have a responsibility to our kids to support schools that are delivering results. This legislation supports this goal, and enhances the collaborative efforts between public charter schools and their host districts.

S.B. 1098: An Act Concerning the Education Cost-Sharing Formula

Connecticut's Education Cost Sharing (ECS) formula, which allocates over \$2 billion a year, relies on outdated research and has been altered more than two dozen times. The resulting formula does an incredibly poor job of fairly serving all of Connecticut's students.

Connecticut needs a comprehensive overhaul of school finance that fairly funds all public school students based on their learning needs, including children who attend public schools of choice.

Unfortunately, S.B. 1098 commissions yet another study on the issue of school funding -- an issue that the state has studied several times over the past few decades, including with a recent study by the ECS Task Force.

Enough is enough. It's time we start acting on the creation of a new funding formula that funds all students fairly at the public schools they attend -- our kids are counting on us to do more than commission yet another study. It's time to start fixing the problem.

H.B. 6624: An Act Concerning Minor Revisions to the Education Statutes

Transparency is one of the most critical pieces to reforming education, and ConnCAN applauds the Committee for its previous work in building a longitudinal data system to gather and study student achievement.

We support H.B. 6624 because it's critical that the state captures data surrounding public education in a comprehensive way, and over a long period of time.

We also support expanding the definition of a school course credit to include a demonstration of competency in a particular subject area. It is crucial that a student's advancement through his or her career be based on ability to master and apply skills and content and not to have progress focused purely on seat time in the classroom.

This change is an important first step in moving towards an individualized approach to education, with tailored curriculum to suit each student's learning needs.

HSC  HIGH SCHOOL IN THE COMMUNITY
Academy for Law and Social Justice

We can no longer justify, to our own consciences, let alone to our communities and to the world, graduating students and sending them off to college, when we know, without a doubt, that they are not academically prepared to succeed there.

We reached this resolution after years of watching students we had supported and taught and grown go off hopefully in pursuit of a college degree, only to return empty-handed—unless you count the debt they and their families had accrued as they struggled to achieve something they were not yet ready to achieve.

We have turned a corner in this country, as far as our perception of college goes—we have established the importance of a college education as requisite to individual success. While some of our students still choose not to go, they all understand that they are choosing to give up an opportunity with great potential rewards. They understand and believe that it would be better to go to college.

What they don't know, and what we absolutely must add in our drive to establish a college-going culture, is an understanding of what a college education means—of the skills and knowledge a student must accrue in order to *be* college-educated. We should strive to send all of our kids to college, but we must first be specific and honest about the levels of performance demanded by post-secondary work. For too many of our students that rigor is ill-defined, ill-discussed, and ill-understood, and this has promoted a high school educational program where a minimum level of effort sustained over a set number of hours, as opposed to an accumulation of successful academic performances, is the benchmark for determining whether a student is ready to move to the next level.

We at HSC have decided to demand of ourselves, and of our students, honesty and specificity in our conversations about academic performance. We believe in rewarding effort and growth, but we are no longer comfortable saying to our families that evidence of effort and growth is enough of a foundation for a successful college career. This year, we have dedicated our efforts to establishing, communicating, and holding students accountable for completing the masteries and the academic performances we believe will prove students' college and career readiness. We have met with students, with families, with colleges, and with the community to talk about the culture of mastery we are striving to create, and we have begun the long process of shifting understanding of what a high school diploma should mean. We have a long way to go, but we believe this transformation of our educational program is essential, and we believe that the flexibility and innovation at the heart of HB 6624 will move us one step closer to establishing and enforcing expectations that will truly help us to move our students toward the success that public education should promise them.

A. Erik Good, Building Leader

**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.

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On Page 49, Calendar 347, Favorable Report of the Joint Standing Committee on Finance, Revenue and Bonding, Substitute House Bill 6624 AN ACT CONCERNING MINOR REVISIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUTES.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the bill.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The question is acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the bill. Will you remark, sir?

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The bill that's before us does an array of minor but helpful things for our education statutes. That includes requiring the State Department of Education to develop and implement new state longitudinal data system that acquires many aspects of the current public school information system.

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It clarifies that individual teacher performance and evaluation records that go from localities to the state remain private.

It clarifies that marital and family therapists employed by local or regional boards of education can provide services directly to serve, to students, as we had intended originally, but it makes that very clear.

The Clerk is in possession of an amendment, Mr. Speaker, LCO Number 6974. I ask the Clerk please call and I be given permission to summarize.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Will the Clerk please call LCO 6974, which will be designated House Amendment "A".

THE CLERK:

LCO 6974, House Amendment "A", introduced by Mr. Fleischmann.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The gentleman seeks leave of the Chamber to summarize. Is there objection? Is there objection? Please proceed with summarization, sir.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This Amendment now before us has a variety of additional good things, including tweaking our alternative school study

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teacher certification system so as to have it work for Teacher America, ensuring that for the administrator's Alternate Route to Certification various individuals are able to qualify to be part of the program, clarifying how our infrastructure competitive grant program shall work.

None of these have a fiscal impact. I move adoption.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The question is adoption of House Amendment "A". Will you remark? Will you remark further on House Amendment "A". Representative Ackert of the 8th District.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and this Amendment is a good piece of legislation. Just through you, I do have a question through the proponent of the Amendment.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

Yes. Just on Lines 1 and 2 deals with striking of Sections 5, 12 and 13 and I believe those dealt

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with that longitudinal data change wording. Is that correct?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, yes, and that's simply due to some wording challenges that were found in those original sections. Through you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Ackert.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

And thank you, Mr. Speaker. Also, I do agree with the proponent of the Amendment. On Sections dealing with the teacher certification, that was a good move. Part of that deals with those that are working as Teach for America type teachers. They've been very successful in the programs. Districts are extremely happy with the outcome.

Section 502 and 25 deals with a bill that we had heard regarding alternative school programs. That section got passed out of our Education Committee with full support.

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This is a good Amendment and I look for everybody to support it, sir. Thank you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. Do you care to remark further on the Amendment before us? Do you care to remark further on the Amendment?

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.

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

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Mr. Speaker, the Clerk is in possession of amendment, LCO Number 7227. I ask that the Clerk please call and I be given permission to summarize.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

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Will the Clerk please call LCO 7227, which will be designated House Amendment "B".

THE CLERK:

House Amendment "B", LCO 7227 introduced by
Fleischmann, et al.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The gentleman seeks leave of the Chamber to summarize. Is there objection? Is there objection? You may proceed with summarization, sir.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this Chamber has a long record of recognizing the contributions that our veterans have made and in the case of World War II and Korean War Veterans, honoring them with high school diplomas, in many cases individuals who left high school to go and serve their nation.

The Amendment that's now before us would offer the same honor to women who withdrew from high school during the pendency of the Second World War, not receiving their high school diploma because they were busy working to support our nation's war efforts.

And we're also talking about women who have lived in the state for the last 50 years, so these are among

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the individuals most worthy of recognition who haven't received it. I'd like to give a special thanks to Representative Bacchiochi who brought this issue forward and said that while we're recognizing the greatest generation and the men of that generation, we should recognize Rosie the Riveter, something I agree with completely.

I hope the full Chamber will join me in support of this Amendment.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. The question is on adoption of House Amendment "B". Do you care to remark? Do you care to remark further? Representative Bacchiochi of the 52nd.

REP. BACCHIOCHI (52nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And Mr. Speaker, I just want to say how proud I am to be part of this Chamber and part of this Amendment.

You know, there was a time in our past where women weren't always recognized for the hard work that they did in what was then called a man's world. And then when World War II came, over three million women entered the workforce to help in the war effort, and this Chamber has correctly recognized veterans with

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the opportunity to get diplomas because they were not able to finish high school.

And what we're doing today is recognizing mostly the women, but in some cases men, too, who entered the war effort and worked in factories during World War II.

So by passing this Amendment, I call it the Rosie the Riveter Amendment, we will allow certain individuals to get the diploma that they were deprived of so many years ago.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, madam. Do you care to remark further on the Amendment? Representative Ackert.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to thank Representative Bacchiochi and truly the, my good Chair of the Education Committee for looking at this at the merit that it has and I hope everybody, and I know everybody will support this one. Thank you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. Do you care to remark further on the Amendment before us? Representative Noujaim of the 74th.

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REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good evening to you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Good evening, sir.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Mr. Speaker, in the east end of Waterbury we have a real nice historic building that is called the Bond House, also known as the Victory House. It is the only one that is remaining in the entire country and in that Bond House, women used to stand during World War II to sell war bonds and that building remains a historic site for us in Waterbury and that's where these women have served us and served us during the war.

So it is very important that we acknowledge their presence, their work during the war, and I am very, very proud to support this Amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. Do you care to remark further on the Amendment before us? Do you care to remark further?

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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. The
Amendment is adopted.

Would you care to remark further on the bill as amended? Would you care to remark further on the bill as amended? Representative Rojas of the 9th District.

REP. ROJAS (9th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to offer my appreciation to the Chairman and the Ranking Members of the Education Committee for including language in this bill that involves the study around alternative schools. It's desperately needed. I urge adoption.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. 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.

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THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by Roll.

The House of Representatives is voting by Roll.

Will Members please return to the Chamber
immediately.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Have all the Members voted? Have all the Members
voted? Will Members please check the board to make
sure your vote is properly cast.

And if all the Members have voted, the machine
will be locked and the Clerk will take a tally. The
Clerk please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

Bill Number 6624 as amended by House "A" and "B".

Total Number Voting	131
"	
Necessary for Passage	66
Those voting Yea	131
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	19

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The bill as amended passes.

Representative Davis.

REP. DAVIS (117th):

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Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

On Page 29, Calendar Number 625, Substitute for House Bill Number 6624, AN ACT CONCERNING MINOR REVISIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUTES, Favorable Report of the Committee on EDUCATION.

THE CHAIR:

Good afternoon, Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Good -- good afternoon, Madam President. How are you today?

THE CHAIR:

Fine. And you?

SENATOR STILLMAN:

I'm well thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Good.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Because it's still early in the day.

THE CHAIR:

Let's hope it stays early in the day.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you.

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

THE CHAIR:

The motion is on acceptance and passage.

Will you remark?

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Yes. Thank you, Madam President.

This bill is strictly what it says. Its minor revisions to the Education Statutes. It's one that, I believe, many committees do every year to address some issues in a more complete package. The House amended it with their Amendments A and B, which are now incorporated into the bill and are -- I am not making any effort to remove them.

What the bill does is it makes it clear about how we use -- about student identifiers and their use so we track our -- our students as they go through the school system. It also broadens the scope of services that marital and family therapists can offer, while they're employed by local or regional Boards of Education, so that more of the family members, if -- if needed, can be brought into the process.

It also, and one part that I thought was most important, one of many other parts of this bill, is to requiring the State Department of Education to study our alternative school programs. We have many that are -- exist in the State, but we really don't have a clear understanding as to success of them all, what they do. And information from the department would be most helpful, moving forward.

It also allows -- and a date change was made in House Amendment "A". It allows schools to apply for school security infrastructure competitive grants for expenses occurred earlier in this year and aligns it with the previous public act that we acted upon, in reference to school security issues.

And it also, one important section, which I think most of us will like as well, allows local or regional Boards of Education to award a diploma to those who withdrew from high school to work in a job that assisted the World War II effort.

So there are several aspects, I believe I covered the highlights. And I urge passage.

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Will you remark? Will you remark?

Good afternoon, Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Good afternoon, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Is this white for Education Day?

SENATOR BOUCHER:

It is. We coordinated.

THE CHAIR:

That's great.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

We haven't quite -- and remarkably I have little to add to the very detailed and accurate description of minor revisions bill and encourage everyone to support it.

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Will you remark? Will you remark?

Not.

Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Yes, if I may, and if we're going to establish a Consent Calendar, I would like to ask this be included.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, so ordered.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

On Page 43, Calendar 388, Substitute for Senate Bill Number 1096, AN ACT CONCERNING GOVERNANCE OF THE STATE EDUCATION RESOURCE CENTER, Favorable Report of the Committee on EDUCATION. There's an Amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, if that item might be passed temporarily at this time and if we might move, instead, to the next item that had been marked go. I believe that was Calendar Page 8, Calendar 358, to be followed by Calendar Page 21, Calendar 574, and Calendar Page 30, Calendar 627.

THE CHAIR:

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Would move to place that item also on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, so ordered sir.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, now would ask the Clerk to call the items on the first Consent Calendar, so that we might proceed to a vote on that Consent Calendar.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

On Page 5, Calendar 278, Senate Bill 709; Calendar 333, House Bill 5759; Calendar 334, House Bill 6396; Calendar 340, House Bill 6211.

On Page 8, Calendar 357, House Bill 6349 and Calendar 398, Senate Bill 1065.

On Page 11, Calendar 457, House Bill 5564 and Calendar 462, House Bill 5908.

On Page 15, Calendar 516, House Bill 5500; Calendar 521, House Bill 6407.

On Page 19, Calendar 558, House Bill 6340.

Page 21, Calendar 574, House Bill 6534; Calendar 575, House Bill 6562; and Calendar 577, House Bill 6652.

Page 23, Calendar 587, House Bill 6465; Calendar 589, House Bill 6447.

On Page 24, Calendar 599, House Bill 6458.

Page 25, Calendar 602, House Bill 5614.

And on Page 29, Calendar 622, House Bill 5278;
Calendar 625, House Bill 6624.

Page 39, Calendar 223, Senate Bill 954 and Calendar
227, Senate Bill 819.

And on Page 46, Calendar 100, Senate Bill 273 and
Calendar 137, Senate Bill 837.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk, please call for a roll call vote and the
machine will be open on the first Consent Calendar.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate.
Members to the Chamber. Immediate roll call has been
ordered in the Senate on today's first Consent
Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

All members have voted, all members have voted.

The machine will be closed.

Mr. Clerk will you please call the tally.

THE CLERK:

On today's first Consent Calendar:

Total Number Voting	34
Necessary for Adoption	18
Those voting Yea	34
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	2

THE CHAIR:

Consent Calendar passes.

The Senate will stand at ease.

(Chamber at ease.)