

**PA13-206**

HB6622

Education	835, 841, 863-875, 915-926, 983-985, 999, 1051, 1054-1057, 1061-1063, 1065-1066, 1072	42
House	1788-1841	54
Senate	5141, 5157-5159	4
		<b>100</b>

**H – 1155**

**CONNECTICUT  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE**

**PROCEEDINGS  
2013**

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pat/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

114  
April 24, 2013

Will Members please return to the Chamber  
immediately.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Have all the Members voted? Have all the Members  
voted? Will the Members please check the board to  
make sure your votes have been properly cast.

If all the Members have voted, the machine will  
be locked. The Clerk will take a tally. Will the  
Clerk please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

Bill Number 6506.	
Total Number Voting	146
Necessary for Passage	74
Those voting Yea	146
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	4

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The bill is passed.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar 304.

THE CLERK:

On Page 23, Calendar 304, Favorable Report of the  
Joint Standing Committee on Education, House Bill 6622  
AN ACT CONCERNING DISTRICT PARTNERSHIPS.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

pat/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

115  
April 24, 2013

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good to see you up there still. I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the bill.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The question is on acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of bill.

Will you remark, sir?

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the bill before us extends a great pilot program that we started in 2008 for the Districts of Hartford, Bridgeport and New Haven, and quite simply, that pilot program allowed for cooperation between those districts and charter schools within those municipalities.

That pilot has been a huge success. Hartford has shared facilities with charter schools and those charter schools have shared their students' results with the City of Hartford.

Hartford and New Haven have worked together with charters on the training of the school administrators

pat/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

116  
April 24, 2013

and won a \$5 million Gates Foundation grant in recognition of their work and for its continuance.

Mr. Speaker, the bill before us would expand this great approach to Connecticut's Alliance Districts, all 30 of the most challenged districts in Connecticut. It's a smart thing for us to do. It will get all parties in those districts working together for the betterment of the children in those districts, just as is happening today in three districts.

I hope the whole Chamber will join me in support as the Education Committee did unanimously just a few weeks ago. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you very much, sir. Will you remark on the bill that's before us? Representative Ackert of the 8th District, you have the floor, sir.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just some comments on this piece of legislation.

You know, one of the things that the good Chairman did bring up is that this is a collaborative effort and I think that when you look at education, we look at results.

And in the area of some of the way these charter schools have been performing and we've been a proponent of outcomes, and the key here is what is the best way that we improve the education system in Connecticut, and if working collaboratively in these cities with a need to progress the student achievement and we're showing results, and it is an investment and I truly understand that.

And I can understand people's concerns in spending at this time, but it's an area that we need to truly focus on, I believe it's a collaborative effort for these charter schools. There's some sharing of data. There's some sharing of a work ethic and administration and I rise in support of this legislation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. Will you remark? Will you remark further on the bill that's before us? Representative Sawyer of the 55th. You have the floor, madam.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Good afternoon, ma'am.

pat/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

118  
April 24, 2013

REP. SAWYER (55th):

A question, through you, to the Chairman of the Education Committee.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Fleischmann, please prepare yourself. You may proceed, madam.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

If the good Chairman could please describe the economic impact that this will have. Looking at the fiscal note it's very difficult to determine what it will have on a state impact and also what it will have on the municipal impact.

The language says, very fun word, it says indeterminate, and so in looking at the educational benefits of the bill, I think those have some very clearly stated reasons for it, but when it comes to the fiscal impact it's very difficult to sort through.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I believe the reason our Office of Fiscal Analysis has chosen the term indeterminate is because we cannot today know what

pat/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

119  
April 24, 2013

precisely the impacts will be, but here's the outline of how it will work.

A district like Bridgeport can go ahead and reach out to a high-performing charter school in its city and say, we'd like to work together. We'll offer you the following school building, we'll offer you the following supports and in exchange we'd like to be able to count your children's scores as part of the scores that our district is held accountable for.

And if the parties come to an agreement, they have an MOU. So, cost? Hard to say. When you consider that you have children who may end up being in a charter school getting some small amount of funding from the district around them, there are some cost shifts, but on the other hand, those children are no longer in the school district. They're in the charter school, so it's indeterminate.

I think it's also fair to say it's a minor cost.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Sawyer.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

And a follow up question, through you, Mr. Speaker. In this particular bill, the foresight is

pat/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

120  
April 24, 2013

that these are existing charter schools, not new  
charter schools?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, this bill just speaks  
of agreements between charter schools and local  
educational authorities. I think if we're talking  
about something that happens in the next school year,  
it will be existing charter schools. Five years down  
the road it may be new ones that are put in place.

This bill does not distinguish between those that  
are presently in place and those that may be developed  
down the road. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Sawyer.

REP. SAYER (55th):

Madam Speaker, thank you. I appreciate the  
gentleman's answers because we have with his guidance,  
a very long history with establishing the charter  
schools and the successful rate that we've had in the  
state with the scores of those children that have  
attended most of those schools.

pat/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

121  
April 24, 2013

So in the case where we can have closer relationship between the charter schools and the existing school districts that would like to have a stronger partnership I think is a very beneficial thing, though I'm going to be watching it because I think it would be fascinating to see where it goes after the pilot, how much further it will go.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you to the Chairman.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Thank you, madam. Would you care to remark further? Would you care to remark? Representative Sean Williams, you have the floor, sir.

REP. WILLIAMS (68th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker and good afternoon.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Good afternoon, sir.

REP. WILLIAMS (68th):

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

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Please proceed.

REP. WILLIAMS (68th):

Thank you. Through you to Representative Fleischmann, I'm trying to understand some of the more technical language here, but in looking at Lines 12 and then through 14, I believe, it appears to have the effect, and I think you explained this in your introduction of the bill, it appears to have the effect of allowing the school district, which houses the charter school to utilize the charter school's test scores in their overall district calculations. Is that an adequate or fair description of the bill? Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, sort of. If there is a memorandum of agreement or understanding between the school district and the charter school, which is mutually acceptable, then there is sharing of scores.

So where it has happened, it has occurred because a school district has seen a charter school in its boundaries that is doing a great job. They have chosen to enter an MOU to provide further support, like a building or operating support, or both, and then there is sharing of scores.

pat/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

123  
April 24, 2013

Absent such an understanding, there is no sharing. Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Williams.

REP. WILLIAMS (68th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker, I understand that. So through you, then, I can see why a failing city school district or an under-performing city school district would want to use the test scores of a successful charter school, but I don't, I guess, what is the reason, what types of things would that city be giving them? What resources would they be giving to the charter school, which would so significantly help their test scores increase, help the charter school's test scores increase, but not the, so I guess that's what I want to know.

What issues, what things would they provide to make the charter school's test scores increase?

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

pat/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

124  
April 24, 2013

Madam.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Oh, Madam Speaker, my apologizes. And may I say, you look excellent today. I was looking down. I apologize.

First, this bill focuses on Alliance Districts. Those are the 30 districts with the lowest district performance indices in the State of Connecticut. In other words, they are the most challenged academically of all of our school districts, so most of the folks in those school districts will tell you they have no place to go but up.

The charter schools that they may be reaching out to will tend to be charter schools that are already out-performing the school district that surrounds them. Even though they're out-performing the school district, they may well have inadequate school facilities, which is often the case for charter schools, which struggle to find good facilities.

They may have inadequate funds to do all the things they want to do. They may have inadequate supports, for example, sometimes local education authorities are able to provide various types of

professional development to the local charter or state charter that it couldn't get otherwise.

So we leave it open, but there are all sorts of ways that these parties can help each other to improve student achievement. Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Williams.

REP. WILLIAMS (68th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and through you then to Representative Fleischmann. I guess I'm still unclear though. I understand the mechanics of how this works, I think. There are certain resources that a school district may provide to a charter school and then in return the school district may be able to use the charter school's test scores as part of a blended score, if you will.

But I'm wondering if we're doing the entire system a disservice by allowing a school district to artificially inflate their scores because they allowed, not because they did a good job, but because they allowed a charter school access to or use of some of their resources or facilities.

In other words, are we artificially inflating those scores and not actually diagnosing where the

pat/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

126  
April 24, 2013

problems are in that particular Alliance District because the overall scores would be reflective of something that the charter school did and not necessarily something that the school district did. Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, I don't believe so, and neither does the Gates Foundation. So let me explain to you their reasoning when they provided the largest grant in the country to the Hartford city schools just a few months ago.

They looked at the cooperation that was going on. They looked at the whole new system for co-training new administrators in both the charter schools and the public schools so that they were exposed to both models and ready to perform in either charter school or regular public school environments, and they said, this is an outstanding model of cooperation. This is going to lead to enhanced school leadership in this school district. This is going to provide a model for the country.

Now, that model grew out of these types of memoranda of understanding that are set forth in this bill.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Williams.

REP. WILLIAMS (68th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I understand why this is beneficial to the charter school because they become the beneficiaries of the school district's resources, buildings, facilities, et cetera.

But are we a) diverting resources away from the school district that most needs it by encouraging this type of memorandum and are we, and what is the school district getting in return for that, other than this new, what I will call blended score? Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Well, Madam Speaker, through you, in the case that I just referred to, the City of Hartford is developing and adopting what is considered one of the premier training systems for its school leaders. That means its vice-principals and its principals.

So one of the reasons for the great performance of students in Jumoke Academy and Achievement First Hartford is that there is great school leadership in those buildings, school leaders who understand how to motivate their teachers and how the teachers can in turn motivate the students.

The whole model that allowed Jumoke and Achievement First to achieve what they're doing in Hartford is now being shared with all of these Hartford public school administrators. They're being trained in the very same model, so it is what we hoped for when we first established charter schools in this state back in the 90s, namely, a sharing of best practices that hopefully lifts all boats.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Williams.

REP. WILLIAMS (68th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. And is it fair then to say that the school districts, the collective bargaining units in the school district, the housing school district that is, the City of Hartford, have agreed to this type of training that is being shared

by the charter school Jumoke Academy to the school district? Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, yes. I believe it would be illegal to put in place a professional development and training system that did not, in this instance for administrators, did not have some type of discussion and concurrence from the affected union of administrators. That's my belief. Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Williams.

REP. WILLIAMS (68th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm intrigued by this issue because I do find myself being a strong supporter of charter schools and of public school choice and of raising the bar in the way that the charter schools I think have so successfully done over the years.

I have some concerns, though. I feel like there's a better way for us to encourage this type of sharing of resources between charter schools and their

host school districts other than allowing the school district, which may be under-performing to take on the successes in their reporting of student achievement, to take on the successes of the charter schools.

I think what we should be focused on in better diagnosis of what the problems are in those host school districts, figure out a way that we can allocate more resources to them, or change their models, but I don't know that I feel very comfortable with the idea of inflating their test scores as a way to encourage this achievement.

So I'm certainly open to more discussion on this and happy to listen to other thoughts of people who may disagree, but at first blush, it strikes me as something that's probably not the way that we should be encouraging that type of partnership and instead should be figuring out how do we diagnose what the problems are in those school districts more successfully than we have been doing.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Thank you, sir. Will you care to remark further? Will you care to remark further on the bill before us? Representative Shaban.

pat/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

131  
April 24, 2013

REP. SHABAN (135th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, if I may, Madam Speaker,  
a question through you to the proponent.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. SHABAN (135th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I think Representative  
Williams covered most of what my questions were, but I  
guess the only one I didn't hear or may have missed  
regards funding sources.

Through you, Madam Speaker, can one of the  
memoranda of understanding enable, hypothetically at  
least, a charter school to get local funding, because  
my understanding is most charter schools receive their  
funding predominantly through the state or donations,  
philanthropy, whereas the locals obviously is local  
taxes and some state dollars.

So, rephrasing the question. Can these memoranda  
of understanding, hypothetically, give the charter  
schools access to some local funding? Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

pat/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

132  
April 24, 2013

Through you, Madam Speaker, I believe the answer is yes. If a local district wishes to provide some operating support to a charter, it may.

In the case of Hartford, much of the additional support being provided to the charters that I mentioned before is coming through the Gates Foundation grant, which would not have been available were it not for the collaboration that was ongoing.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Shaban.

REP. SHABAN (135th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Yeah, I, too, have some concerns similar to Representative Williams. It seems to me that blending scores could have the unintended consequences of hiding problems or directing resources to where they're needed, but I, too, will continue to listen to the debate. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Thank you, sir. Will you care to remark further?

Representative Lavielle. Good afternoon, madam.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

pat/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

133  
April 24, 2013

Good afternoon, Madam Speaker. Thank you so much. I have a couple of questions for the proponent for the purposes of legislative intent.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Please proceed.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

Thank you. My first question is, can the charter schools, or a charter school in this case and the public schools in the school district where they're located execute all of these exchanges that we've heard about, of resources and best practices and so on, if the charter school does not add its scores to those of the school district for indexing purposes?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker. I'm not sure. I haven't heard of any such an arrangement being proposed. I'm simply not sure.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Lavielle.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

pat/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

134  
April 24, 2013

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Then I would ask, is there any incentive for a charter school and the other schools in a district to exchange those resources and best practices without the I'll call it for lack of a better term, lending of scores for the purposes of indexing?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, not that I'm aware of.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Lavielle.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

Thank you. And one final question, if I may, and this is really for the purposes of intent.

What are the concrete benefits to a school district of raising its scores other than the exchange of these things with the charter school? Just pure and simple, what are the concrete benefits of it having its scores raised?

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

pat/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

135  
April 24, 2013

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker. First of all, I think when you have one of these agreements you have a better reflection of what is happening in a given district because all of those children are in public schools in the same district and now they are treated all alike.

In terms of benefits, again, I think the Gates Foundation speaks to this issue better than I, and their view is as follows. When you have districts and local and state charter schools all working in concert and collaborating on how they train their administrators or how they train their teachers, or the practices they use to make sure their curriculum is understood by their students, that is good for all of the students in the district.

So it's not simply that the scores get blended as Representative Williams put it. It's that all boats rise. At least, that's the opinion of the Gates Foundation.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Thank you. Representative Lavielle.

pat/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

136  
April 24, 2013

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I thank the Chair of Education for his answers.

I don't have a problem with the bill per se. I did vote for it in Committee.

I do, though, have some, I'm still not quite clear on why we absolutely must have the blending of the scores to arrange for this very fruitful type of collaboration, the benefits of which are very clear and do seem to lead to improvement and having all boats float.

It's just, it isn't quite clear to me why we need the piece of legislation to do this, but I don't have any real problems with it. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Thank you, madam. Will you care to remark further? Will you care to remark? Representative Ziobron of the 34th, you have the floor, madam.

REP. ZIOBRON (34th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have a few questions for the proponent of the bill, through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

You may proceed.

pat/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

137  
April 24, 2013

REP. ZIOBRON (34th):

Thank you. To the proponent, how exactly does one become an Alliance District? Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, it is a designation made by the State Department of Education based upon the district performance index, which is a blend of the scores of the school children in the district.

Through you, Madam Chair.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Ziobron.

REP. ZIOBRON (34th):

I thank the good Representative for that answer. And to follow up, could in fact a school district request to become a member of an Alliance District? Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, I'd encourage my good colleague to look at our statutes, which make it clear

pat/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

138  
April 24, 2013

that the 30 lowest performers on the district performance index are designated Alliance schools.

You can't request to be among the lowest 30 performers. It's where you end up.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Ziobron.

REP. ZIOBRON (34th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and as someone who is not on the Education Committee and is someone who's looking to my Chair for those answers, that's why I ask the questions, so I appreciate you telling me I should look at the statutes and I'll be sure to do that.

And to follow up, I guess my next question is, as we're talking about really looking at testing scores, Madam Speaker, again, I'm not a Member of the Education Committee and maybe the Chairman could explain to me how then does a magnet school, how do their test scores get allocated?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

pat/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

139  
April 24, 2013

Through you, Madam Speaker. My apologies to my colleague. I would ask that she please repeat the question. I was distracted on the Floor.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Ziobron, would you repeat please?

REP. ZIOBRON (34th):

Sure. Thank you, Madam Speaker, and again, I appreciate having the Chairman of Education Committee here to answer questions, as someone who's not a Member of the Education Committee.

So as I read the bill, and I read it several times today, it made me think of how testing scores are allocated for other types of schools and my question is just simply, I'm not aware of how a magnet school, how they allocate for their testing scores as it relates to a charter school, and I'm just curious if the Chairman would indulge me from Education on that answer. Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker. So there are different types of magnets. There are magnets that

pat/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

140  
April 24, 2013

are hosted by regional education centers and those are, have scores that are aggregated for the RESC.

There's some that are hosted by school districts and they have a blend of students. Some are from the town that's hosting. Some are from the other towns, and I believe the way it works is that scores are allocated according to the where the children come from.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Ziobron.

REP. ZIOBRON (34th):

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, and I thank the Chairman for that answer.

I was at a meeting last night with the Chairman of the Board of Education of one of my towns and he brought it to my attention that in, for instance, the Town of Colchester we're spending about \$190,000 sending our students to magnet schools and when I read through this bill, it made me wonder how those testing scores are allocated.

You know, I do share the concerns of my colleague, Representative Williams as far as a blending. I'm not sure what this is trying to

pat/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

141  
April 24, 2013

achieve, and I appreciate the Representative's answers to my questions.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Thank you, madam. Will you care to remark further? Representative Chris Davis of the 57th, you have the floor, sir.

REP. DAVIS (57th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I've been listening carefully to the debate trying to determine how I would vote on this bill. I understand the intentions of it appear to be very good. We're talking about trying to create collaboration between the charter schools and the public schools and ultimately trying to help both charter school students and public school students.

But listening to the questions and some of the comments of my colleagues, I do have a lot of reservations about this bill. It appears that the public school students are losing resources simply to make the city look good.

We're saying, you can take the test scores from the charter schools to make the city look good, when in fact, it's really not doing very much to help the

pat/gbr .  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

142  
April 24, 2013

students in that public school. We're giving this guise that the public schools are doing better when in fact they're not. We're simply just taking better test scores, potentially better test scores from those charter schools and including them in with the public schools.

And it's really nothing more than the public schools being able then to say, well, we'll give you more resources. We'll give you additional funding or we will provide services to these charter schools in return for making us look good.

So I have a lot of concerns about this particular issue moving forward. If we're going to continue to allow the public schools in our cities to fail and not really do what we are intending to do here, which is make sure our public schools are getting better.

So, Madam Chairwoman, I think I will be opposing this bill this afternoon, or Madam Speaker, sorry.

Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Thank you, sir. Will you are to remark further?  
Representative Kokoruda, you have the floor, madam.

REP. KOKORUDA (101st):

Thank you, Madam Chair. I rise to support this bill today. For those of my colleagues that are concerned about the blended scores or sharing scores, we have to remember, this is part of a much larger education reform package, and even though it seems odd for someone who has joined a lot of people with hours of debate, public hearings, forums, and discussions in this Chamber on education reform, the fact that we have collaboration between our public schools and our charter schools can't be underestimated. It is a significant step forward.

It does seem odd the way this is presented, but if this what it took, we've all listened to this battle for so long, I think this is such a step in the right direction.

When Representative Fleischmann talked about Hartford, Jumoke, am I saying that right? Jumoke, sorry. That wasn't just a great story we listened to. It was an historic story for Connecticut and it has to be done in order to really reach where reform needs to go.

So I think there's also some opportunities for grants because of this, but I am so delighted that the charter school/public school debate, or disagreements

pat/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

144  
April 24, 2013

have been quieted down and they're working together.

I just think, if this is what it took, then we can move forward with the debate and what we have to remember is these public school kids, charter school kids, they're all our kids and in the charter schools they're usually all of the kids of the same town and cities, so I support the bill. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Thank you, madam. Will you care to remark further? Representative Smith of the 108th.

REP. SMITH (108th):

Madam Speaker, thank you. You know, I, too, stand in support, not so much of the bill, but of the concept of the collaboration between charter schools and public schools. I think we need more of that. Any time we could work together, it's always a good idea.

I do have concerns raised, the same concerns raised by Representative Williams and some of the other colleagues who have spoken about really why are we using these test scores, or allowing the local scores to be used from the charters schools.

And my question to the proponent of the bill is, if we took away that very fact, if we took away the

pat/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

145  
April 24, 2013

right to use the test scores of the charter schools,  
what effect, if any would that have on this  
legislation?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker. Well, it's a bit  
speculative, but I guess the best way I can answer is  
to look at what was going on before we had the pilot  
in place five years ago and what transpired after.

Before the pilot there was no collaboration going  
on between public school districts and charter  
schools. In fact, there was massive antagonism.  
There were FOI requests going back and forth between  
local education authorities and charter schools about  
what they were doing. It was oftentimes a war.

After we put the pilot in place, the districts  
that started to use its tools, incentivized by the  
very simple device of the score sharing that has been  
discussed here, started to not only share resources,  
but to share best practices.

That is why there was a Gates Foundation grant  
awarded in this building a few months ago to the City

pat/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

146  
April 24, 2013

of Hartford public schools. That is why this is considered a national model, because when you have the incentive of shared scores and aligned goals, all sort of other things fill out.

In the case of Hartford and New Haven, it's meant joint training programs, joint professional development. We think this is just the beginning of the various collaborations that will occur thanks to this model.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Smith.

REP. SMITH (108th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and that was an interesting answer.

And I'm just wondering, besides the test scores are there any other incentives that the school districts, the local school districts have that led them toward the collaboration that we have now seen I guess, for the past five years, or is it just the test scores?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

pat/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

147  
April 24, 2013

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, again, this is speculation, but I would say you know, there were no discussions happening before the pilot. After the pilot was put in place, the Superintendent of Hartford started discussions with some of the local charter schools and we ended up with these agreements.

So I don't see absent legislation like this, an incentive for the two parties to work together with it. I see them aligning in their goals and their work.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Smith.

REP. SMITH (108th):

Madam Speaker, I thank the Chairman for his answers. It has helped me in my understanding of this legislation and I do appreciate it. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Thank you, sir. Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker, if I might, just a few questions to the proponent of the bill, please.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

pat/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

148  
April 24, 2013

Would you please speak into the microphone.

We're having trouble hearing you.

REP. MINER (66th):

Certainly. I have a short cord. I need to get a little longer cord.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. When students apply to go to a charter school are they all from the district to which their scores would be blended, or are some of these students outside of the home district? Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker. First, I'd like to point out, I, too, am kept on a short leash.

In terms of the substance of the question, I believe all of the students come from the home district.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Miner.

pat/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

149  
April 24, 2013

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. So every student that would attend one of the charter schools that is to be blended with the city school system would have emanated from that same school system, not from outside the school system?

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, yes, that's my understanding. Moreover, if there were a charter school created in the future that were a magnet school, I believe it would be required under State Statutes and regulations that scores would be allocated by student's district of origin. You can't count the score of a child from one district toward the results of another.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and so, you know, I've been part of these conversations about how we

pat/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

150  
April 24, 2013

appropriate money, how we set goals, how we try to improve school systems and this interaction between charter schools and public schools, and I do understand that there are some nuances that maybe provide certain flexibility in a charter school system that some of the public schools may not have.

I'm not sure yet why we need to blend the test scores in order to get collaboration. It would seem to me that the evidence of the test scores may be sufficient for an individual to say, let's try that.

And so maybe what we should be doing, and maybe that's what this bill does, is provides the public school system an opportunity to take advantage of any of the benefits that a charter school may have. Is that what's in this bill? And if it is, why do test scores have to be part of that? Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker. I think Representative Miner has done a good job of expressing what this bill promotes. It does promote the sharing of best practices and collaboration, and for Hartford,

pat/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

151  
April 24, 2013

what it took was, the sort of sharing of scores as a carrot to bring the parties together.

If there are other incentives that friends can think of, I'm certainly open to exploring them. But this is a pilot that's been in place for five years that has borne great fruit. The testimony before the Education Committee was really phenomenal.

All sorts of unintended consequences that benefitted students and educators in the public schools and the charter schools of the districts involved, so I hope my good colleague will join me in supporting this.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. So again, I'm trying to understand the carrot. What's the principle of assigning the carrot to someone who didn't earn it? Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker. There's a mixed metaphor there that I can't follow so I'll just try and reframe things as I understand them.

Prior to this pilot, you had charter schools located in districts that were struggling, and they would often tout their outstanding scores and the districts were resentful of the charters and the charters had some resentment of the districts because there were various FOI requests that were flying back and forth. There was animosity.

After we put the pilot in place, the parties started to look at each other differently. Public school systems started to realize, Hmmm, maybe if we provide a school building to this high performing charter, we can have an understanding that allows us not only to blend scores, but also perhaps to have some co-trainings of administrators, some co-trainings of teachers and that is what occurred and that is why this has proved such a fruitful model.

If you take away the notion of sharing scores, you take away the notion of alignment goals. You take away the notion that the district, which is low performing has a partner that is higher performing

pat/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

153.  
April 24, 2013

that it can be clearly working with and learning from  
in a way that is a win-win.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. And so, I think I  
heard the gentleman say that if the charter needed a  
building in exchange for support of funding for the  
building, the advantage of this was that the scores of  
the charter school then would be conferred to the  
population of the public school system. Is that, did  
I hear that correctly?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, yes. That is one of  
the things that parties can do. It essentially was a  
starting point for discussions that led much farther  
than that.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Miner.

pat/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

154  
April 24, 2013

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Now I see the carrot, and so the carrot that I see is, that in exchange for some support for capital investment into a charter school system that population of that school, with all the good effort that's been put into educating them, now in some way is blended with the public school system that may not have achieved those scores.

Is it conceivable then, that that public school system would lose funding as a part of this process? Could they potentially fall off that 30 town list that I think Chairman Fleischmann talked about, which is that group that you can't apply to get on, you have to actually qualify for?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, it is hypothetically possible that an Alliance District, through its performance, improved performance work in collaboration with local charters could end up moving off of the Alliance District list, but it's rather unlikely because the charter schools are actually

pat/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

155  
April 24, 2013

concentrated in our very lowest performing districts, the education reform districts, the ten districts with the lowest district performance indices.

So very unlikely that a local education authority would lose funding. What is much more likely is what we've seen in Hartford, namely, improvement across the district and funding from and outside source like the Gates Foundation. Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINRR (66th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. And the last question is, as the gentleman indicated in Hartford through the Gates Foundation, would this facilitate the possibility of such a foundation or some of those dollars flowing through to teaching the public school educators at the same time they're teaching the charter school educators?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, with absolute certainty the answer to that question is yes. The

pat/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

156  
April 24, 2013

Gates Foundation grant in fact was premised in the idea that we have public school administrators and teachers working side by side with these charter school administrators and teachers to advance their professional development and their best practices.

That award was for the Hartford public schools and its partners, Achievement First and Jumoke Academy and I think that that is the entire spirit of this bill, collaboration in which all parties benefit.

I'm not aware of any outside grants that have shown up as a result of this legislation that were for just one or the other party. All support, I believe, has been for both. Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I thank the Chairman for his explanations. You know, I think collaboration of this sort is very good. Everything that I've heard about the work that's been going on, not only by public schools, charter schools, but also in many of the cities with regard to public schools leads me to believe that we're headed in the right direction.

It's this notion of blending scores that kind of doesn't feel right and I think it's unfortunate that it takes that kind of a message to make people want to work together. I think most of our regional school systems, for instance, have chosen a whole bunch of reasons to work together, whether it's cost, whether it's to be able to provide a broader, more robust curriculum, what have you.

But I've never found the reason to be blending math and English and whatever scores as the impetus to bring people together. Certainly, the track record of, as I said, both the charter schools and the improvements in the public school system I think are heading us in the right way.

I just think that this bill speaking strictly about collaboration, about effort, about changes in philosophy, about things that actually have created a different interest on the part of students and teachers would have been purer if we didn't get into this blending of grades, and so I'll sit and listen and make a decision which way I'll vote. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

pat/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

158  
April 24, 2013

Thank you, sir. Will you care to remark further on the bill before us? Will you care to remark further? Representative Cuevas of the 75th, you have the floor, sir. Good afternoon.

REP. CUEVAS (75th):

Thank you, Madam Chair, Madam Speaker. To the proponent of the bill, a couple of questions.

Is the AYP formula going to be the same as the DPI formula that's used? Through you, Madam.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, those are two entirely different formulas. AYP is no longer used in the State of Connecticut.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Cuevas.

REP. CUEVAS (75th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, so the DPI, is it excluding ELL students from the calculation for the DPI? Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, as we wade through this alphabet soup, no. All students are included in the District Performance Index. ELL students are included. All the students of a district would be, I believe there may be a small sub-category of special ed students who are outside of the index, but everyone else is included, including ELL students. Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Cuevas.

REP. CUEVAS (75th):

Through you, Madam Speaker. And the question I asked is because in the past, in the AYP the ELL students were excluded from the calculations for AYP. That's why I was asking the question.

To further ask another question to the proponent, with all due respect. Charter schools are traditionally smaller class sizes and from my experience in the education field, I've seen the number of students coming out of charter schools being higher performing students, although there's a good representation from different districts and ethnicities and backgrounds.

However, my fear is that when we mix these students from charter schools and their scores with Alliance Districts, and it's not just Alliance Districts, I think, will it, it's going to be a heavy indicator of bringing the scores up on the index.

Will that hurt districts from gaining additional funds in their districts because we're including this into the index? Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, as I tried to indicate to another colleague who asked a similar question. It is extremely unlikely that a reform district or an Alliance District would lose funding as a result of this collaboration.

The differences in the scores between reform districts and other districts are so great, that this will help reform districts, but it won't suddenly pull them off the list. Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Cuevas.

REP. CUEVAS (75th):

pat/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

161  
April 24, 2013

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I guess I'm going to take into consideration some of the points by the proponent. I do have some concerns for the exclusion of ELL students as in the past they were excluded from AYP and particularly to first year students into the United States that come here and attend schools and they were excluded and I don't think where this does, but thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Thank you, sir. Thank you very much, sir. Will you care to remark further? Will you care to remark further on the bill before us? Will you care to remark further? Representative Noujaim, good afternoon, sir.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and good afternoon to you as well. Madam Speaker, I do have a few questions to Representative Fleischmann for clarification if I may.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Please proceed, sir.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

pat/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

162  
April 24, 2013

Representative Fleischmann, through the Speaker,  
I understand from this bill that, is Representative  
Fleishmann prepared, Madam Speaker?

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

I believe he's listening to your voice.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Through you, Madam  
Speaker, I understand that there is already a pilot  
program that has been establishes in three Connecticut  
cities, Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven.

Is there a potential in the future to expand this  
program to cover other cities within the State of  
Connecticut? Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, that is what the bill  
before us is intended to do. It would expand us from  
the three cities that my good colleague enumerated to  
30 school districts across the State of Connecticut.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Noujaim.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. And through you, Madam Speaker, I wanted to ask this question because specifically, reading the bill it seems to me there is a financial gain and a financial loss.

And from what I understand, some of the losses as I am reading the bill, it says that every loss will be captured by a new municipality qualifying for Alliance District.

So let us say for example, another municipality qualifies, let's say Bristol, for example. Would this mean that additional costs will fall on the City of Bristol for this type of program? Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, if I understood the question correctly, the answer is no.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Noujaim.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. And through you, Madam Speaker, again for clarification, and I can just read the analysis of the bill. It said the revenue loss

pat/gbr

164

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

April 24, 2013

would be captured by a new municipality qualifying for Alliance District funding, thus resulting in revenue shift. So this is clear to me that some municipality will be taking on some additional cost. Am I correct in this statement, or this statement as printed here is wrong?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, I believe the statement read was accurate. You know, it's all speculation. It relates to what kind of elements are included in the memorandum of understanding between a school district and a charter school.

So for instance, a school district may be downsizing, may have a school building that it can offer to a charter school. If it does that, that has no cost to the school district in operating terms, but it's a huge benefit to the charter school.

On the other hand, another district may choose to collaborate in training that may have some costs. There are benefits of course, to all the parties involved, so it depends on the memorandum of

pat/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

165  
April 24, 2013

understanding and that's the reason that the fiscal note and this discussion has to be per force a bit vague because we're talking about memorandums that haven't been written yet.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Noujaim.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm truly appreciative to Representative Fleischmann for the answer.

Obviously, the bill did not say what he just specified and I'm really glad that you brought it out to light and know and understand exactly that if a new city, municipality, applies for a school then they will somehow have to come up with a way to offset those costs, because the bill clearly states that there will be some cost to the new municipalities.

So as long as there is a way or a method for them to be able to negotiate so that they can alleviate those additional costs, I am in support of this bill and I am truly grateful that we brought it up to light and we discussed it so that we know exactly, a municipality will understand its option if they are in the process of applying for this program.

So thank you, Madam Speaker, and I'm appreciative to Representative Fleischmann for clarifying this issue for us.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Thank you, Representative Noujaim. Will you care to remark further on the bill before us? Will you care to remark further on the bill before us?

If not, staff and guests please come 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.  
Members to the Chamber please.

The House of Representatives is voting by Roll.  
Members to the Chamber please.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Have all Members voted? Have all Members voted. Please check the board to determine if your vote has been properly cast.

If so, the machine will be locked and the Clerk will please take a tally. And will the Clerk please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

Bill Number 6622.

pat/gbr 167  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES April 24, 2013

Total number voting	145
Necessary for passage	73
Those voting yea	126
Those voting Nay	19
Those absent and not voting	5

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

The bill passes.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar Number 201.

THE CLERK:

On Page 13 of today's Calendar, Calendar Number 201, Substitute House Bill 6383 AN ACT CONCERNING HIRING STANDARDS FOR ATHLETIC DIRECTORS, Favorable Report of the Committee on Education.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's still good to see you up there. I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

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

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

**S - 667**

**CONNECTICUT  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
SENATE**

**PROCEEDINGS  
2013**

**VOL. 56  
PART 16  
4803 - 5160**

cah/gbr  
SENATE

339  
June 4, 2013

The Senate will stand at ease.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

(Chamber at ease.)

SENATOR LOONEY:

Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes, Madam President, we have an additional item to place on the Consent Calendar at this time.

THE CHAIR:

Fantastic.

SENATOR LOONEY:

And that is an item on Calendar Page 4, Calendar 459, House Bill 6622, would move to place that item on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, so ordered, sir.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Good, thank you, Madam President, and if we might pause. We're quite close to having the next item ready. We're waiting for the preparation of an amendment with additional sponsors.

cah/gbr  
SENATE

355  
June 4, 2013

Madam President, seeing no objection, would this item please be placed on our Consent Calendar?

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, so ordered.

Senator Looney..

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, with that item being moved to the Consent Calendar, Madam President, there is an -- an item on the foot of the Calendar to be removed and, Madam President, on -- on the foot of the Calendar, Calendar Page 42, Calendar 648, House Bill 6660, 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.

Madam President, at this point if the Clerk would list the items on the second Consent Calendar so that we might proceed to a vote on that Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

House Bill 5607; House Bill 6509; House Bill 5027. On Page 4, Calendar 459, House Bill 6622; on Page 7, Calendar 536, Senate Bill 1163.

HB6591

Page 14, Calendar 651, House Bill 6565. On Page 15, Calendar 660, House Bill 6290. Page 17, Calendar 678, House Bill 6671. Also Calendar 686, House Bill 6528.

cah/gbr  
SENATE

356  
June 4, 2013

On Page 19, Calendar 689, House Bill 6677 and on Page 24, Calendar 484, Senate Bill Number 983.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk, will you call for a roll call vote on the second Consent Calendar. The machine is open.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate. Senators please return to the Chamber. Immediate roll call on Senate -- on Consent Calendar Number 2 has been ordered in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

If all members have voted, if all members have voted, the machine will be closed. Mr. Clerk, will you please call the tally.

THE CLERK:

On Consent Calendar Number 2.

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

THE CHAIR:

Consent Calendar passes.

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I would move for immediate transmittal to the House of Representatives of any items voted on the second Consent Calendar needing additional action by the House.

THE CHAIR:

cah/gbr  
SENATE

357  
June 4, 2013

So ordered, sir.

SENATOR LOONEY:

And also if there are any other items that were voted individually that may need additional action by the House.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered, sir.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Good, thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, that will conclude -- conclude our business for this evening or this morning at this point. Before adjournment I would yield the floor to any members for announcements or points of personal privilege.

THE CHAIR:

Any announcements or personal privilege?

Seeing none, Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Madam President, for a -- a Journal notation. Senator Coleman was -- was absent and missed votes today due to -- due to illness.

THE CHAIR:

So noted, sir.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, one other item. On the -- the -- the items on the foot of the Calendar beginning on Calendar Page 27, beginning with Calendar 59, on Calendar Page 27 at the beginning of the foot and

**JOINT  
STANDING  
COMMITTEE  
HEARINGS**

**EDUCATION  
PART 3  
724 - 1073**

**2013**

March 15, 2013

jmf/gbr EDUCATION COMMITTEE 11:00 A.M.  
 MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE, MIDDLETOWN, CT

efforts to be here, a chance to offer his testimony. The floor is yours.

COMMISSIONER STEFAN PRYOR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Am I audible? Good. And thank you for acknowledging -- I know everyone has conflicts today. I will stay as long as humanly possible. There is a P-20 Council meeting simultaneous, so please forgive me if after I testify I exit. I thank you for the opportunity, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, for the opportunity to testify. I'm back before you today to discuss several of the matters that are before you today at this hearing. Most of the comments I'm going to make pertain to Senate Bill 1097, but I will -- I will address other issues as well.

First, as pertains to 1097, I wish to reiterate my advocacy for no delay in the implementation of the evaluation and support system statement and in the adoption of the recommendations made on a unanimous basis by the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council. As you know, that organization, PEAC, was established by the General Assembly in statute as the advisory body on the evaluation process which we now conceive as the evaluation and support system in our state. PEAC -- though there have been tough discussions within PEAC to be sure among the stakeholders inclusive of the various school leader associations, district leader associations, and both statewide teachers' unions, RESCSs and others, those -- though the discussions have been difficult, we have always been able to reach resolution.

Most recently, to remind you, we tackled the question of implementation next year of the statewide eval and support system. We had heard loud and clear from superintendents,

SB1096  
HB6622  
HB6623

March 15, 2013

jmf/gbr EDUCATION COMMITTEE 11:00 A.M.  
MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE, MIDDLETOWN, CT

elements that were in my letter that was presented to you approximately 11 -- 11 days ago.

I offer two additional points. First, the original State Department of Education proposal specified that SERC should be subject to the Freedom of Information Act. Now it may be implicit in your bill and I'm sure it is intended, so no question there, that Chapter 14 of the state statutes apply, but it is not specifically referenced. It is in our original bill presented to you, and we would simply ask that for clarify, FOI be applied explicitly.

And second, we see that you've restored language in Section 2(b) regarding the Connecticut School Reform Resource Center to be contained within SERC. That was not contained within our bill and we simply would ask that you explicitly apply all of the rules that you've applied to SERC itself to the new center if you wish for it to be contained within. That center does not exist, so we are -- we are before you not requesting any action regarding it, but if there is to be a set of activities associated with this notion of a School Reform Resource Center, we ask that you do that.

Moving on very rapidly, Mr. Chairman, to two other points, if I may. H.B. 6622, AN ACT CONCERNING DISTRICT PARTNERSHIPS, I just want to note that we view that as important. In fairness to the alliance districts that are currently left out of the charter district affiliation statute, we ask that alliance districts be made eligible as a category. We think that would be equitable and fair.

And final point, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, as you know, the State of

HB 6623

jmf/gbr EDUCATION COMMITTEE 11:00 A.M.  
MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE, MIDDLETOWN, CT

point that the Committee needs to think about. And as usual, you're being thoughtful about it and seeing how complicated it is. So I think it's complicated to us, and I really appreciate you raising it.

REP. CANDELORA: Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Other questions for Representative Candelora?

If not, thank you very much for your time and for bringing this to our attention. I think Representative -- Senator Bye did a very nice job of giving you the context that we're dealing with. I'm hopeful that budget constraints don't lead districts to make decisions that are potentially dangerous and that we figure out ways to enhance security with personnel who know exactly what they're doing and we'll be glad to continue this dialogue.

REP. CANDELORA: That would be great. I'm happy to share any information I have.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you.

SENATOR BYE: Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: We go to Bill Phillips now to be followed by Paige MacLean. Welcome. The floor is yours.

BILL PHILLIPS: Thank you. I'm Bill Phillips, I am with the Northeast Charter Schools Network, and I am here to speak in favor of House Bill 6622 which is the district partnership act. You already have my testimony, so I'm just going to make some observations on that testimony.

The first observation I'm going to make is actually a correction. We had said that the -- the pilot bill that you're using now had passed last year, it was obviously 2008, so please accept that correction. Here's some reasons why we support the bill. So first it addresses a current area where I think we've struggled to see some of the benefits of chartering, and namely that's in a sharing of practices with the districts, you know, and as well as and I think this is a sharing of the performance.

The other observation that I'd like to make, or an additional one is that I would hope that you would see adequate protections in the bill, sufficient to make the partnerships permanent. You have a situation where both the districts and the charters have to agree, and then whatever they agree on has to be approved by the state board.

And then my last point is, and it was interesting, in a different -- on a different issue, the Commissioner mentioned the concept of unintended consequences which is usually in a negative fashion. As I was looking at how the pilot has worked, I was actually struck by the unintended consequences that have happened in a -- in a good way. And what I mean by that is the -- where we've seen the pilot is on Hartford. That originally happened where Achievement First agreed to work with the Hartford School District.

And what happened there is you were able to add a very strong school, the charter school got space and some -- and some funding. That in turn led to an application for a grant from the Gates Foundation which not only included the district, it included Achievement First and the Jumoke Academy. This was a good proposal. You

got the largest grant in the country and you had the smallest district.

And then lastly, now what you're starting to see is a sharing of teacher and leader training and actually some work with the Common Core implementation. I say this to you because I think when we started, we would not have been able to predict that all these things would happen. But the partnership itself, the act itself, was the platform under which these things sort of cascaded in a very positive way. So I would hope that you would continue to support this and that we could make it permanent. Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you for your testimony. I was fortunate enough to be in this role when we enacted the initial pilot. It was only -- only a pilot because that's what we were able to do initially. I think it's proven itself very well. My main question for you relates to what we've seen under the pilot. We've seen really wonderful collaboration in the City of Hartford. To my knowledge, Bridgeport, New Haven, they have not followed Hartford's lead on this. And I'm just wondering if you're aware of why that might be and whether that has any bearing on the -- the commissioner's request to expand this to, you know, a wide array of districts.

BILL PHILLIPS: Honestly, I actually don't know why it hasn't expanded. But I think one of the things you find with a pilot is you have a general -- you have a good idea. And you're never quite sure how people are going to take advantage of it. And so we're going to have a colleague speak a little bit later who has talked about an interest in doing this in New London. And I think it just may be that it's

going to take more time. And I know we've picked a -- I think we picked the most obvious places where it would happen. But I think we just have to sort of let the -- from the ground up decide how it would work best.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Makes sense. And that, of course, is the idea of a mutual consent arrangement that's in the pilot and in the extension.

BILL PHILLIPS: Right. You know, Mr. Chairman, I'll tell you so I represent schools in two states and we don't have this in New York and I think this is a fabulous idea. I mean you should expect we'll try to get this in New York. It's just a great way to do it.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Well, just credit where credit is due. My recollection is that I was approached both by folks from charter schools and from the leadership of the Hartford School System saying we'd like to do this. And I saw a potential win-win, and like you I didn't see all the additional positive unintended consequences that have been helpful.

BILL PHILLIPS: It would be nice to see good ideas spread, right?

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Absolutely.

Other questions from members of the Committee?

If not, thank you very much for your testimony on behalf of the bill.

BILL PHILLIPS: Thanks again for having me.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Page MacLean to be followed by Randy Collins.

PAIGE MACLEAN: Good morning.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Good morning.

PAIGE MACLEAN: Mr. Chairman, members of the Education Committee, thanks for the opportunity to testify before you this morning. My name is Paige MacLean, I work as Achievement First's Senior Director of Strategic Partnerships. And I wanted to testify in support of House Bill 6222, AN ACT CONCERNING DISTRICT PARTNERSHIPS.

HB 6222

One of my primary responsibilities at Achievement First is to work with our host districts in Bridgeport, Hartford, and New Haven, to establish partnerships that work to improve outcomes for all students in those cities. So I wanted to tell you a little bit about the partnership that we've established with Hartford that -- that Bill was just referring to.

Following establishment of the pilot district legislation in 2008, the Achievement First and Hartford Public Schools entered into an MOU whereby the district agreed to provide Achievement First Hartford Academy free facilities with custodial and maintenance services and per pupil operating support in exchange for a commitment from Achievement First to provide an excellent education to families from Hartford's North End, one of the most historically underserved sections of the city. As you can imagine, for our network the financial and other support that Hartford provided has been particularly vital for us in light of the disparity of funding and facility supports that charters receive in the state.

Through our affiliation with the Hartford

Public Schools, AF Hartford Academy has also been included in the district's portfolio in a larger sense, meaning that the students who enroll in the school do so through the district's school choice lottery. So our students come to our school just like any other student goes to a school of choice in Hartford. Last year AF Hartford Academy Elementary was the number one school selected by Hartford families for kindergarten in the Hartford Public Schools district choice lottery.

In addition, Achievement First Hartford Schools are making dramatic academic gains. In some grades and subjects, student performance at Achievement First Hartford Academy is now surpassing the gap-closing standards of the highest performing and most affluent suburban districts. For example, our eighth graders achieved 92 percent proficiency in reading, and 91 percent proficiency in writing on the 2012 CMT, outperforming their peers in nearby West Hartford, one of the state's most affluent communities.

But I also wanted to speak a little bit about those unintended consequences that Bill was referring to. The partnership that we've been able to develop with the Hartford Public Schools has really created an environment for cross-fertilization between our two organizations where the best ideas, wherever they are developed, can be shared in support of the education of all of the students in the city.

Just a couple of highlights, as was mentioned, we received a \$5 million grant through the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, through their District Charter Compact Initiative, to allow Hartford Public Schools, Jumoke, and

jmf/gbr EDUCATION COMMITTEE 11:00 A.M.  
MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE, MIDDLETOWN, CT

Achievement First to promote the sharing of best practices. And as he mentioned, this was the largest grant that was awarded of all of them and we are the smallest district that was awarded a grant. So I think it says a lot about the way the Gates Foundation felt about -  
- felt about this partnership.

We are also now working together to train and develop a core of future district leaders for Hartford through the residency program for school leadership that's run by AF. And we've created more high-quality seats for students with the opening of AF Hartford High in August of 2012 which is also a joint initiative with Jumoke Academy, so Jumoke Academy Middle School students can also filter into that.

We believe that much of this crucially important partnership work would not have been possible without the ACT CONCERNING DISTRICT PARTNERSHIPS, and we strongly urge you to support it, to make it permanent so that more of these types of partnerships can occur across the state.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you. I just would pose the same question to you that I did to Bill. There's been such an effective partnership in Hartford, do you have any sense of why Bridgeport and New Haven haven't followed suit in quite the same way?

PAIGE MACLEAN: It's a very good question. For example, the residency program that we're running, we are also running it with Bridgeport and with New Haven. So I think part of what's happening is that with Hartford having taken the lead in officially creating this MOU with us, that sort of opened the doors to other people to think about doing this type of

partnership work. So although we don't have an official MOU with those two cities yet, we do work -- we are working actively with them. We would love to sign an MOU with them because honestly other districts have not yet been ready to kind of pull up their end of the -- of the bargain on a lot of these other pieces at times around facilities and per-pupil operating support and things like that that Hartford has been willing to do.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you. And the other obvious follow up, so if this were to pass, the universe of districts that you could collaborate with would expand substantially. Do you foresee a number of potential MOUs coming out of the expansion?

PAIGE MACLEAN: As I say, we'd be happy to do that. I mean right now we operate in three districts in Connecticut, so I think those would be the logical next steps for us.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you.

Other questions from members of the Committee?

Representative Ackert.

REP. ACKERT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Paige, thank you for your time today. Just real quick, how many students are you serving and what -- do you know offhand what the percentage in those districts that that is?

PAIGE MACLEAN: We are serving in Hartford just over 800 students. So I see Dr. Kishimoto is here, she can give a better estimate of Hartford's -- the number of students that are in Hartford.

REP. ACKERT: Okay. Thank you, Paige. Thank you,

jmf/gbr EDUCATION COMMITTEE 11:00 A.M.  
MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE, MIDDLETOWN, CT

Mr. Chairman.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you.

Senator Bye.

SENATOR BYE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. First of all, thank you. I think this bill is a great thing and I think the partnerships are a great thing, and so thanks for your leadership. I just, I don't know if you've been around the hearings, but I've been asking a lot of questions around the funding disparity because it's said again and again and again. So I just want to get at that a little bit.

And just for your information, when you recognized West Hartford as a great school district, it is. We are now down to 138th in per-pupil funding because of the ECS funding. So while a lot of other schools are asking for funding increases, the average schools have remained flat year after year. And we've gone from the top ten to 138th. But because ECS is such a big nut to crack, we don't do that, but we keep doing little by little other types of schools. So since you're here, I just -- I just want to ask, so what are you getting now per pupil at Achievement First?

PAIGE MACLEAN: We are getting -- I should say that because I work on our partnership board, I don't think a lot about that side of things, but we're getting about \$3,000 less than the district on average.

SENATOR BYE: But I think you're getting 10,000 -- a little over 10,000 -- 10,200 per pupil?

PAIGE MACLEAN: Yeah.

jmf/gbr EDUCATION COMMITTEE 11:00 A.M.  
MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE, MIDDLETOWN, CT

SENATOR BYE: And does that include special education costs or do you -- does the city pay for those or how does that work?

PAIGE MACLEAN: Truthfully, I'm not the expert on that, so I'd be happy to get other -- other folks from AF to answer those things for you.

SENATOR BYE: Okay. So in terms of the 3,000, just so you understand, in West Hartford we get 10,500 per pupil and that's what we're spending per pupil if you take out special education costs. So I've been having this conversation with the charters at every public hearing that we have because I keep hearing we're not getting funded like the other schools and that is true because you don't have a tax base, I'm not disputing that. But I think the funding disparity is not really \$3,000.

I mean in this case it would be a \$300 disparity with the budget having -- the charters getting an increase that would then put them \$500 ahead of what West Hartford is getting per pupil. So I've been to your school in the North End, it was a wonderful morning I spent there, the quality was great. I'm so glad that you're partnering with districts and you've gotten this grant. So, you know, all kids deserve this high quality education. I'm just making the point that the public schools have been -- the ECS has been so long-term underfunded that it's such a big nut that now, in fact, the disparity currently would be 300.

But if the budget went forward, it -- we would -- the ECS in West Hartford would then be 500 less than charters at 11,000 per pupil. So I think we just need to think about what that really is. And anything you can do or anyone from the charter network to help me understand

that or anyone from the public school side. I've been after that all session because I'm not against either, but I think just because one is a smaller nut doesn't mean we should attack that and not attack the ECS issue. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you, Senator.

Are there other questions?

Representative Rojas --

REP. ROJAS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: -- to be followed by Representative LeGeyt and Representative Ackert, sorry.

REP. ROJAS: Similar to Senator Bye's concerns about the funding issue, I have a charter school in one of my towns, Odyssey Charter School, and they constantly share their concerns about the disparity in funding and how it's difficult for them to operate because of that. And I guess I -- you can add it to your list of questions for whoever can answer it, you know, is it really good policy to continue to expand schools given one, the declining school population, and, two, given resource constraints at both the local and state level?

PAIGE MACLEAN: I guess the issue -- and as I say, I'm no expert on this, but I guess the issue that I would raise is the average per pupil -- the West Hartford per pupil versus the per pupil because of the ECS cost-sharing formula, that goes to the districts for the children we serve. So we serve children in Bridgeport, New Haven, and Hartford. So I think if you look at the per pupil in those districts, it's

different than, you know, it's different than in some of the other districts you might be talking about.

REP. ROJAS: Yeah, I guess I'm talking about my own district, East Hartford, where my daughter attends school, where we're probably third to last on per pupil spending. And, you know, that concerns me because I see continued decline in the quality of education that we're able to provide my daughter and her classmates. And I wonder if it's coming at the expense of other programs like this. And again that leads to my question as to should we continue to expand the number of schools that we have in this state given a declining school population and given the resource constraints. So I know you can't answer that, but I put it out there for you.

PAIGE MACLEAN: And just to make sure I understand your question, what you're suggesting is if we're creating additional new schools, that's expanding schools overall, right?

REP. ROJAS: I think, you know, the more schools we have, the more administrative costs we have, the more transportation costs we have, and that all diverts money from direct instruction.

PAIGE MACLEAN: I totally agree, actually. And I don't think that anyone would suggest that if there are 100 schools in the district that we should add 10 more, those are charter schools and now we have 110. I think what we would agree is that we should either change or close those schools that are at the very bottom of that pile that are not doing well and that in whatever form they are, magnet, district, charter, that new schools ought to be started that are going to be really highly effective.

jmf/gbr EDUCATION COMMITTEE 11:00 A.M.  
MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE, MIDDLETOWN, CT

Because what we don't have is we don't have a lot of really high performing schools. We have a lot of schools but not ones that are really treating our kids the way they should be treated.

REP. ROJAS: I would agree with that. Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Any further questions for Ms. MacLean?

If not, thank you very much for your testimony and your good work.

PAIGE MACLEAN: Thank you.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Randy Collins to be followed by Sheila Cohen and Mark Waxenberg of CEA.

RANDY COLLINS: Representative Fleischmann and members of the Education Committee, thank you and good afternoon. My name is Randy Collins and I'm currently Staff Associate for the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents. But prior to my retirement in 2011, I had served as 30 years as the Superintendent of Schools, the last 20 of them being in Waterford, and worked very closely with Senator Stillman on a number of issues.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: And Senator Stillman sends her regards. She wishes she were here, she's voting right on transportation bills.

RANDY COLLINS: I'm sure she would love to hear this. The -- I speak today basically on the same two points on Bill 1097 that the commissioner mentioned. And I -- you've got written testimony from me and also from 30 plus superintendents across the state who share the same viewpoint. And they are the two points

jmf/gbr EDUCATION COMMITTEE 11:00 A.M.  
MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE, MIDDLETOWN, CT

Representative Ackert.

JAMIE LAZAROFF: By the way, I have a question for you. What was the

REP.. FLEISCHMANN: I'm sorry, sir, that's not how it works. Questions from the Committee, and Representative Ackert has a question for you.

REP. ACKERT: More of a comment, Mr. Chairman. Thank you so much for the opportunity. Thanks for coming this far and actually you helped build, you know, your comments help build what goes into some of the legislation. So thank you for taking the time and giving us your input.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Other comments for the witness?

If not, may I just say that those remarks I think represent the feelings of everyone on this Committee. Thank you very much for all your productive support of what we are doing.

Dr. Christina Kishimoto to be followed by Robert Cotto.

CHRISTINA KISHIMOTO: Good afternoon, distinguished members of the Education Committee. Thank you for allowing me to come here to testify before you. I am Christina Kishimoto, Superintendent of the Hartford Public Schools. I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 6622, AN ACT CONCERNING DISTRICT PARTNERSHIPS. I also want to take this opportunity to thank the Committee for your tremendous support of the Hartford Public Schools over the last few years in really helping us -- support us in what we have been able to accomplish.

jmf/gbr EDUCATION COMMITTEE 11:00 A.M.  
MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE, MIDDLETOWN, CT

As you know the pilot program for district charter partnerships was authorized by this Committee and the Legislature in 2008. The timing of the legislation was perfect for us. We are in the midst of framing our school reform strategy based on a portfolio district approach, and in doing so we were interested in attracting proven high-quality school designs. That year we implemented 13 new school designs including our partnership with Achievement First Charter Management Organization which produced AF Hartford in the City of Hartford.

Under the terms of the partnership, Hartford Public Schools provides Achievement First with a physical plant and operations support or operating support. In return, Achievement First provides a high-quality, high-performing school whose test scores and other pertinent information are incorporated into the district performance data and into our planning process. The partnership has been an incredible success because we are true partners sharing best practices across two organizations, and you don't necessarily find this often in traditional K-12 systems. Each of us adds value to the other.

Since 2008, the Achievement First Hartford Academy has expanded to include a K-4 elementary school, a 5-8 middle school, and now has a freshman year of what will become a 9-12 high school. The school serves 881 Hartford-only resident students who are chosen through our internal lottery process. Most importantly, the Achievement First Hartford Academy has become Hartford's highest performing neighborhood school with an SPI, as the state measures us, of 73.2 which shows a . over 30 point SPI gain in its short years of existence.

Most -- the relationship has been so successful, in fact, that the Hartford Public Schools in partnership with Jumoke Academy and Achievement First has been awarded a \$5 million grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for serving as a model of this type of partnership. If House Bill Number 6622 is not approved, the relationship between Hartford Public Schools and Achievement First via a board-adopted memorandum of understanding will automatically be voided leaving nearly 900 students without their school and a potential redistribution of the students throughout the state -- throughout the district.

Additionally, extending district charter partnerships to include all of the alliance districts creates a viable means of replicating the performance successes of Hartford and Achievement First partnership, a proven student-centered governance partnership model. We need to be willing to questions and change our ways of practice based on proven innovative school designs and leverage our capacity across organizations on behalf of our students. That's why you have -- that's what you have in House Bill Number 6622.

And I know a question that was asked earlier of the difference between the ESS -- ECS allocation between what is allocated to a Hartford student, it's about 9,000, to Achievement First per student would be 10,200, but that does not consider the all-funds budget in which case our students -- Hartford resident students would be -- would have an allocation of about 11,600 per student in an all-funds budget. An all-funds budget includes all of the entitlement grants and the city share. In a district that has over 92 percent poverty

jmf/gbr EDUCATION COMMITTEE 11:00 A.M.  
MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE, MIDDLETOWN, CT

rate, I take the position that all of our students regardless of their choice should be funded appropriately to be able to meet their educational needs.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you for your testimony and your support of this bill and all the good work that you've done to keep Hartford moving forward.

Are there questions?

Senator Bye.

SENATOR BYE: Thank you. Thank you. Thank you so much for your testimony and also for your willingness to build bridges versus guard turf. I think it benefits students and it seems like a real nice model, so I want to commend you for that.

CHRISTINA KISHIMOTO: Thank you.

SENATOR BYE: Since you were here I was going to ask you about the funding allocation, so -- so before special education dollars, Hartford gets how much per pupil or before entitlements did you say --

CHRISTINA KISHIMOTO: It's about 9,000 per pupil.

SENATOR BYE: Nine thousand. And so my second question is does Hartford provide any grant in addition to the grant that Achievement First -- so Achievement First gets 10,300 I think we said, or 10,200 from the State. Does the City of Hartford provide any grants in addition to that 10,200 to Achievement First.

CHRISTINA KISHIMOTO: We annually look at our per pupil allocation for our Hartford Public School

students. We close the gap between the -- the allocation that the charter receives and what we are -- have in terms of money following the child through our SBB, student-based budget process. We allocate -- allocated 2,600 per child to students who are going to our AF Hartford Academy.

SENATOR BYE: So then they receive -- what was the amount, two thousand what?

CHRISTINA KISHIMOTO: So they receive 2,600 in addition to their 10,200, so they're at 12,800 and that's the average allocation we have per child. And we have a differential if you're elementary versus middle versus high school.

SENATOR BYE: And does that 12,800 per pupil that Amistad or these Achievement First, I'm sorry -

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CHRISTINA KISHIMOTO: Achievement First -- AF Hartford.

SENATOR BYE: -- AF Hartford is receiving from you. Does that include special education costs?

CHRISTINA KISHIMOTO: That includes -- that includes everything except the -- some of the excess costs for special education where we need to do especially outplacements or anything like that that's outside of this.

SENATOR BYE: Okay. I'm sorry. I know it's complicated, but I just want to be clear. So it's 12,800 per pupil --

CHRISTINA KISHIMOTO: Plus the allocation of a building that we do not charge --

SENATOR BYE: Yeah, understand that. And I think

that's a great, I mean I think it's a great thing. So that 12,800 includes special education costs?

CHRISTINA KISHIMOTO: Yes.

SENATOR BYE: So if a student at AF Hartford has special education needs, the AF Hartford has to cover that and that goes into the 12,800. I just want to be sure, you know, what's all-in.

CHRISTINA KISHIMOTO: That's all-in except where we have some exceptions.

SENATOR BYE: Yeah, of course. If it's a student that is --

CHRISTINA KISHIMOTO: And we come together when there are those type of exceptions. Which I think it's the -- the beauty of partnership is that we're constantly at the table together discussing how they're serving our students in that neighborhood to make it look like a neighborhood school and run like a neighborhood school.

SENATOR BYE: Right. And I think it's -- it's a really neat model that the city is saying these are our students, this is a collaboration, and we're going to help these students meet -- we're going to help these schools meet the full cost. So -- so I think that's nice. My second question is back to the original partnership bill, are there -- does this bill allow for you to build the same kind of bridges or partnerships with the CREC schools that are in Hartford? Is there, you know, what goes on there in terms of bridge building I guess?

CHRISTINA KISHIMOTO: This bill is specific to the affiliation with a charter management

organization and we're using it to look at whether there are other partnerships we may want to establish. We don't have any active conversations beyond the conversation now that has started with Jumoke Academy, the three organizations are working together. CREC is not a CMO and we would not be using this bill to have those conversations with CREC.

SENATOR BYE: But might it make this bill stronger if we included, you know, that opportunity or is there anything that gets in the way, I should say, that could be ameliorated by this bill if we amended it to allow magnet collaboration as well?

CHRISTINA KISHIMOTO: I think that falls under a different set of kind of regulations around the -- that's also guided by the Sheff negotiations which you may be aware of, we're in the midst of negotiating right now and this is an entirely different process that we go through with that. CREC acts as a (inaudible) service center, so they still play that role. In terms of the school, they run very much like another school entity -- another district basically.

SENATOR BYE: Yeah. Thank you for those answers and thank you for your willingness to collaborate. That has not been the track record or history always in different districts, and I really credit you with your willingness to collaborate with successful schools in your district, and hope to watch it continue.

CHRISTINA KISHIMOTO: I hope that -- that serves of an example of being truly student centered, right, so planning from the student's need. Thank you.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER: Thank you, Madam Chair. And thank you so much for being with us this afternoon. To continue in the same vein as my colleague, Senator Bye, on the cost per pupil reimbursements, what is the typical public school student in Hartford, and would the \$9,000 from the State be the same and then the additional would be from the local contribution to that? And if that's the case, what would that be local contribution be in addition to the \$9,000?

CHRISTINA KISHIMOTO: You know, we receive around 190 or 187 plus million from ECS for our almost 23,000 students plus we have a local contribution of about \$93 million from the local city, plus we have another 100 plus from entitlement grants for an all-funds budget of 400 million. What the charter doesn't receive is obviously the local contribution plus the entitlement grant contribution.

SENATOR BOUCHER: More specifically, per pupil what does amount to?

CHRISTINA KISHIMOTO: Per pupil that -- what we've -  
- that was the amount that I calculated the 2,600 per pupil gap between how a Hartford Public School student is funded if they're in the K-12 system with us or if they are in the gap between how Achievement First is funded.

SENATOR BOUCHER: Just to be clear, and I'm sorry if I'm not being clear. You get 9,000 per pupil from the state, and then the local taxpayer contributes another 3,600 or 5,000? What does it come to per pupil just your regular public school student, I'm not talking about a charter

jmf/gbr EDUCATION COMMITTEE 11:00 A.M.  
MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE, MIDDLETOWN, CT

school student?

CHRISTINA KISHIMOTO: Our students are funded at  
9,000 through the ECS, approximately 9,000.  
They receive another 3,000 or so through the --

SENATOR BOUCHER: Taxpayer?

CHRISTINA KISHIMOTO: -- through the taxpayer, yes.

SENATOR BOUCHER: Three thousand?

CHRISTINA KISHIMOTO: It's a little over 3,000 on  
top of that. What we then fund Achievement  
First for is the per-pupil allocation which is  
-- which drivers our student-based budget. And  
then we off the top support all of our schools  
with the food services and transportation.

SENATOR BOUCHER: So I'm just -- so there are  
additional reimbursements above that such as  
your special education, excess cost sharing,  
over the \$9,000 per pupil. And then you would  
also have, did you say, other --

CHRISTINA KISHIMOTO: Food services and  
transportation.

SENATOR BOUCHER: -- food services would be in  
addition to that and transportation?

CHRISTINA KISHIMOTO: Yes, that's taking -- that's  
actually counted as centralized services in our  
budget.

SENATOR BOUCHER: So would you calculate -- your  
per-pupil cost overall would be in the  
neighborhood of 14,000 maybe?

CHRISTINA KISHIMOTO: Yes, close to that.

SENATOR BOUCHER: Fourteen thousand, okay. And just in a comparison study to the reimbursement rate with a state charter school, and in this case maybe a local charter school, there might be say a 2,000, well, maybe more, so that would be somewhere in the neighborhood of -- of possibly around 14 -- 4,000 or maybe 3,800 or \$3,500 difference in the disparity between the reimbursement you would get from the state for a public school student in a public school setting versus a public charter school in your same community?

CHRISTINA KISHIMOTO: In our community specifically, yes. And in the urbans you're going to find something closer to that. And I think not to go beyond it, but I know there were some -- there are some differences in how a -- when you're looking at a suburban school district and their funding system.

SENATOR BOUCHER: It's my understanding, you may not know the answer to this as my final inquiry, that in the New York Public School System, they have their charter schools as well, but the reimbursement rate is exactly identical to the public school student's reimbursement rate -- and while there's a mix -- much more of a mix there of both charters. In fact, it's my understanding that they're even in the same building in some places with big complexes, they'll have their charter school housed in the same building as --

CHRISTINA KISHIMOTO: That's true.

SENATOR BOUCHER: -- the public school students.

CHRISTINA KISHIMOTO: Yes, and in our case we provide a building for AF Hartford as our partner. So they are in one of our buildings,

we do not charge them for that.

SENATOR BOUCHER: Well, that's great. You've come a long way there.

CHRISTINA KISHIMOTO: And they -- they share that building actually with a non-charter.

SENATOR BOUCHER: Very good. Thank you very much, Madam Chair, much appreciated.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you, Senator Boucher.

Representative.

REP. MCCRORY: Thank you, Madam Chair. And I appreciate your testimony, Dr. Kishimoto, and I just want to commend you on the hard work you're doing to making sure our children in the City of Hartford is being properly educated. I guess along the lines of what my colleague, Boucher, was saying, basically it sounds like you're saying, and correct me if I'm wrong, the allocation from the state for the charter schools is approximately 9,000, and for your traditional public school is about 10. But it sounds like you do your best to try to level it out so they both are getting approximately the same amount of dollars, is that correct?

CHRISTINA KISHIMOTO: Yes. So each year when we allocate -- when we take off centralized services off the top of our budget, we then allocate 80 percent of our funds to the school, and we allocate it by child. We look at the per-pupil allocation difference between a student attending one of our traditional K-12 schools and the allocation that the charter school receives. So that a Hartford resident student is funded at the same level regardless of which school they choose. So it's really

jmf/gbr EDUCATION COMMITTEE 11:00 A.M.  
MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE, MIDDLETOWN, CT

driven by -- we believe in school choice.

REP. MCCRORY: Thank you. And again like most of my colleagues were saying, this is a great model and partnership you have developed with -- with AF -- AF Hartford and Jumoke and (inaudible) School, I think it's working out very well and continue your work.

CHRISTINA KISHIMOTO: Thank you.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you, Representative McCrory.

Anyone else have any questions of the superintendent?

Thank you very much. I'm sorry I came in in the middle of your testimony, but I was voting in the Transportation Committee. It took me an extra few minutes to get here. It's always a pleasure to see you and I congratulate you on the work you're doing in Hartford.

CHRISTINA KISHIMOTO: Thank you for your time and your support.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you.

Next is Robert Cotto followed by Don Macrino.

ROBERT COTTO: Good afternoon, Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Education Committee. My name is Robert Cotto, and I'm testifying on behalf of Connecticut Voices for Children. Raised Bill H.B. 6623 revises the law on state tests by modifying the definition of mastery examinations for children, and it also requires the Department of Education to study issues related to standardized tests. We support the commission

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

March 15, 2013

jmf/gbr EDUCATION COMMITTEE

11:00 A.M.

MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE, MIDDLETOWN, CT

earlier. I'm happy to say that ISAAC and the district have shared a healthy relationship since our inception and this agreement would be just the latest step in our continual collaboration.

With this agreement ISAAC would begin sharing our performance scores with the district and we would receive resource support in return. I cannot express enough how thrilled I would be to work with the district in this manner. As a small independent charter school, funding and resources are a constant struggle. While this arrangement doesn't solve all of our problems, it does allow us to focus more on what's most important and that's our students.

On the other hand, I think sharing our performance scores only stands to help the community as a whole. As I see it, we consider all of our district and charter school students as New London Public School Students. I believe this arrangement would be a step in the right direction in beginning to see us as one unified district, a school district with educational options to better diverse needs of all of our students.

There are already examples right here in Connecticut that we can point to in order to showcase how we hope this relationship will evolve. Recently -- you've heard earlier about Achievement First and I won't go into that, but these collaborations make you open to receive grants because large granting foundations like to see the collaborations in the community. So we're very excited about that and we'd like to bring those same kinds of accomplishments into New London.

With this in mind, I encourage you to see the

152

March 15, 2013

jmf/gbr EDUCATION COMMITTEE

11:00 A.M.

MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE, MIDDLETOWN, CT

great opportunity before us and the impact it can have on our state and our children. And I also urge you to vote in favor of House Bill 6622. Doing so will go a long way in helping to build upon incredible education reform progress that we've already made during the past few years. And I want to thank you all for letting me speak with you today, and thank you very much for your time. I still don't know how you do it sitting here all day like that. This is not a job for someone who is ADHD.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you. And you've testified before us several times so you understand the difficulties because you're also experiencing them.

Questions, comments from anyone?

I know the ISAAC school does an exceptional job. The relationship within the district is extremely collaborative as well. So I'm glad to hear that you're supportive. Thank you.

GINA FAFARD: Thank you.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Joseph Cirasuolo followed by Erik Good and then Jen Alexander.

JOSEPH CIRASUOLO: Good afternoon, Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, thank you for this opportunity to speak -- and members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to speak to you. I'm the Executive Director of the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents. You've received written testimony from us and I think there's about 33 other -- 33 superintendents in opposition to Senate Bill 1097, I'd like to summarize that quickly by making three points.

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.

HB6624

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



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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

Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, Senator Boucher, Representative Ackert, and members of the Education Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to comment on legislative proposals before you today.

I would first like to express concerns regarding Senate Bill No. 1097, which would delay by one year the implementation of the state's teacher and school leader evaluation and support system, among other changes. I advocate instead that this committee follow the consensus roadmap set forth by the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council, whose concept of a bridge year will provide districts with appropriate flexibility and resources as they continue to ramp up toward full implementation. PEAC's solution is the best path forward toward our shared goal of strengthening teaching, leading, and learning in our state.

As you know, the State Board's guidelines regarding educator evaluation were informed by the recommendations reached by consensus of the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council, or PEAC, a stakeholder group comprised of both statewide teachers unions, representatives from state education organizations including CAPSS, CAS, and CABE, RESCs, and SDE staff.

We have received regular and invaluable feedback from the piloting of the evaluation model and from other districts as well. We have heard – loud and clear – concerns from districts across the state regarding the program's ambitious timeline for implementation. That is why, following numerous lead-up discussions, PEAC reconvened on February 4<sup>th</sup> to address these implementation concerns.

I believe that the consensus we reached on that day represents the best path forward. Districts would begin implementation in 2013-14, but do so with requisite flexibility and choice to ensure a successful rollout leading into full implementation in the 2014-15 school year. Any district availing itself of these flexibilities would engage in a committee process including representatives of district teachers and administrators. PEAC's plan lets each district act collaboratively to adjust its approach within the bridge year based on local context and circumstances. And our budget proposal provides support by absorbing certain significant costs at the state level – including data management, training and technical assistance, surveys, and assistance in creating a system of evaluation-informed professional learning.

SB1097  
HB6622

HB6623

exist regarding the proposed Connecticut School Reform Resource Center, which should be subject to all of the rules being applied to SERC itself.

HB 6622, An Act Concerning District Partnerships, is also important. Currently Bridgeport, Hartford and New Haven participate in a pilot where charter schools located in those districts may work with a local district to create an agreement whereby in exchange for support or resources, districts may count the academic performance of charter school students in their district performance measures. The Department supports expanding eligibility to include all alliance districts, and we are therefore supportive of the proposal.

As you know, the State of Connecticut has adopted the Common Core State Standards, and districts have begun transitioning to Common Core-aligned curricula. In the spring of 2015, the State will move from administering the Connecticut Mastery Tests and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test to administering Common Core-aligned assessments authored by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. HB 6623, An Act Concerning Student Assessments, begins to make the changes necessary to allow for this transition to take place, by defining "mastery evaluation" as examinations approved by the State Board of Education to measure essential and grade-appropriate skills in reading, writing, mathematics and science. This flexibility is essential in being able to administer Common Core-aligned assessments. However, the Department has concerns with certain language in this proposal, specifically regarding testing in grade ten and eleven. We look forward to further discussing those concerns.

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

for and are responsible for implementation of this program and corresponding results. In order to do this effectively, they must retain final decision making authority.

S.B. 1097 would also delay the implementation timeline of the new system by one year, and require all school districts to fully implement the model in the 2014-15 school year. This overrides the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC) and the State Board of Education's (SBE) decision to phase-in the model gradually starting next year.

I have observed every public PEAC meeting for the last two years. All members of the PEAC approved the SEED model and its implementation plan. What's more, all 26 members of the Education Committee voted in favor of last year's landmark education reform law, which included the creation of the educator evaluator program. And public opinion is clearly in support of enhancing teacher quality this year. In fact, a recent Global Strategy Group poll of more than 600 Connecticut voters found that nearly three-fourths of voters (73 percent) believe that "evaluating teachers based on class performance" should be a priority for the governor and state legislators this year.

We owe it to our kids to stop delaying action. We owe it to our students to move forward with the new educator evaluation program. We cannot dial back our efforts to ensure great teachers, principals, and public schools for every child -- in a timely manner.

I strongly urge members of the Education Committee to reject S.B. 1097 and to follow through on the promises made to our kids in last year's landmark education reform law, including the new teacher and principal evaluator program.

#### H.B. 6622: An Act Concerning District Partnerships

In order to support the growth of high quality public school options in Connecticut, we need to promote collaborative efforts between high quality public schools of choice and their host districts. Instead of creating parallel systems within public education, the state must find ways to encourage districts to incorporate high quality options for their students into the current system.

H.B. 6622 can help accomplish this by extending and making permanent a district/charter collaboration option. If passed and signed into law, the bill would extend an existing pilot program that allows public charters to enter into agreements with their host districts to collaborate around data and funding. Under these agreements, districts can include charter school student performance data in their overall performance data (the State Department of Education's calculation of the District Performance Index). In return, the charter school can receive assistance from the district, like per student operating, facilities funding, the use of district-provided facilities, or assistance with renovation and facilities improvement efforts.<sup>1</sup> These arrangements help ensure that charter students are funding more equitably compared to district public schools students. Furthermore, H.B. 662 would also extend the program beyond the current pilot districts (Bridgeport, Hartford, and New Haven) to include all of the Alliance Districts. Without this bill, the pilot program will sunset this year.

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<sup>1</sup> Achievement First Hartford Academy 2010-2011 Annual Report to the Connecticut State Department of Education (p 28)  
[http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/equity/charter/reports/af\\_hartford\\_ar.pdf](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/equity/charter/reports/af_hartford_ar.pdf)

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.

**Testimony of Paige MacLean**  
**Achievement First**  
**Testimony submitted to the Education Committee**  
**March 13, 2013**

Chairpersons Stillman and Fleischmann and esteemed members of the Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you this afternoon. My name is Paige MacLean and I am here to HB 6222 testify in support of H.B. 6222, an Act Concerning District Partnerships. As Achievement First's Senior Director of Strategic Partnerships, one of my primary responsibilities is to work with our host districts of Bridgeport, Hartford and New Haven to establish partnerships that work to improve outcomes for all students in those cities.

Following the establishment of the pilot district partnership legislation, Achievement First and Hartford Public Schools entered into an MOU whereby the district agreed to provide Achievement First Hartford Academy free facilities with custodial and maintenance services and per pupil operating support in exchange for a commitment from Achievement First Hartford Academy to provide an excellent education to families from Hartford's North End, one of the most historically underserved sections of the city. The financial and other support that Hartford Public Schools is providing to Achievement First has been especially vital in light of the disparity between the per pupil funding and facilities supports available for students who attend our state's public charter schools and those who attend other public schools

Through our affiliation with Hartford Public Schools, AF Hartford Academy is included in Hartford Public Schools' district portfolio, meaning that students enroll for the school through the district's school choice lottery. Last year, AF Hartford Academy Elementary was the #1 school selected by Hartford families for kindergarten in the Hartford Public Schools District Choice Lottery. In addition, Achievement First Hartford students are making dramatic academic gains. In some grades and subjects, student performance at Achievement First Hartford Academy has now surpassed the gap-closing standards of

the highest-performing and most affluent suburban districts. For example, our eighth graders achieved 92 percent proficiency in reading and 91 percent proficiency in writing on the 2012 Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT), outperforming their peers in nearby West Hartford, one of the state's most affluent communities.

The partnership that we have developed with Hartford Public Schools has created the environment for an ongoing cross-fertilization of ideas and practices between our organizations to ensure that the best ideas, wherever they are developed, can help all of Hartford's children on their climb to college.

Highlights of this partnership include:

- Receiving a \$5 million grant through the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation District – Charter Compact initiative to allow Hartford Public Schools, Jumoke Academy and Achievement First to promote the sharing of best practices around leadership development, implementation of the Common Core State Standards and teacher evaluation. (This three-year grant was the largest of only seven given across the country.);
- The training and development of a corps of future Hartford Public School district leaders through participation in Achievement First's Residency Program for School Leadership; and
- The creation of more high-quality seats for Hartford students through the opening of AF Hartford High School in August 2012. This high school, which also serves students from Jumoke Academy middle schools, allowed AF to fulfill our promise to our Hartford families of being with them to continue the climb to and through college.

We believe that much of this crucially important partnership work would not have been possible without the pilot Act Concerning District Partnerships. We strongly urge you to support H.B. 6222 to make possible more permanent partnerships like the one we and the Hartford Public Schools have cultivated.

**Testimony of Gina Fafard**  
**Executive Director of the Interdistrict School of Arts and Communication**  
**Testimony submitted to the Education Committee**  
**March 15, 2013**

Chairpersons Stillman and Fleischmann, and respected members of the Education Committee, thank you for letting me testify before you today. I'm Gina Fafard, executive director of the Interdistrict School of Arts and Communication, also known as ISAAC, and I'm here to speak in support of HB 6622.

ISAAC is a state public charter school in New London that serves the 20 towns, cities and boroughs throughout Southeastern Connecticut. As an experiential learning community where students are challenged to discover their talents and strengths, we are now in our 15<sup>th</sup> year of providing a rich socially and culturally diverse educational experience with a foundational importance on music and art.

Our school is currently considering entering into an agreement with the New London public school district similar to what is being discussed here today. I'm happy to say that ISAAC and the district have shared a healthy relationship since our inception, and this agreement would be just the latest step in our continual collaboration.

With this agreement, ISAAC would begin sharing our performance scores with the district, and we would receive resource support in return. I cannot express enough how thrilled I would be to work with the district in this manner. As a small, independent charter school, funding and resources are a constant struggle. While this arrangement doesn't solve all our problems, it does allow us to focus more on what's most important – our students.

On the other hand, I think sharing our performance scores only stands to help the community as a whole. As I see it, we consider all of our district and charter school students as New London public school students. I believe this arrangement would be a step in the right direction in beginning to see us as one, unified district, a school district with educational options to better serve the diverse needs of our students.

There are already examples right here in Connecticut that we can point to in order to showcase how we hope this relationship will evolve. Recently, our friends at Achievement First and the Hartford school district won a large grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to improve professional development and student achievement. This grant was awarded to them because of the strong relationship they share together. It is my goal to bring that same kind of accomplishment to New London with our relationship with the district.

With this in mind, I encourage you to see the great opportunity before us and the impact it can have on our state and our children. I also urge you to vote in favor of HB 6622. Doing so will go a long way in helping to build upon the incredible education reform progress we've already made during the past few years.

Thank you again for letting me speak with you today, and thank you again for your time.

**Testimony of Bill Phillips**  
**President of the Northeast Charter Schools Network**  
**Testimony submitted to the Connecticut General Assembly**  
**Joint Education Committee**  
**March 15, 2013**

Chairpersons Stillman and Fleischmann, and respected members of the Education Committee, I'd like to thank you for allowing me to speak before you today in support of H.B. 6622, also known as the "District Partnerships" bill.

From the beginning, one of the purposes of public charter schools was to serve as engines of innovation, sharing best practices with other public schools and helping to improve student achievement.

The District Partnerships bill before this committee provides an opportunity to translate this promise into more of a reality. The bill would expand an already successful pilot program enacted last year in which Bridgeport, New Haven and Hartford school districts were allowed to create voluntary resource-sharing arrangements with the charter schools located in their towns. In exchange, the districts were permitted to include the performance of those charter schools toward the district's overall performance scores for accountability purposes. The current bill would make this pilot program permanent while expanding it to allow any Alliance District in the state to create these district-charter partnerships, with the approval of the state Board of Education.

Voluntary partnerships like these can be a win-win for both the district and charter schools involved. While the bill would leave the schools free to negotiate arrangements that make the most sense for everyone, there are a number of ways that these partnerships might work to benefit communities.

For example, district and charter schools might be able to work to locate schools in the areas of town that have the highest need and devise ways for those schools to reach the highest need students.

Districts and charters also could coordinate their purchasing to achieve greater economies of scale and reduce the costs of contracts for goods and services for all schools.

District-charter partnerships also give schools the ability to compete for funding from major philanthropic institutions that are also interested in finding innovative ways for district and charter schools work more collaboratively.

We do not need to travel very far for an example of how these partnerships can be effective. The Hartford public school district and the Achievement First charter schools network recently received a grant from Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to fund a leadership academy that trains and mentors future Hartford public school

principals. This same grant enables Jumoke Academy schools to partner with Hartford Public Schools to assist with the district's efforts to turnaround persistently struggling schools. The agreement between Hartford and Achievement First provides for many of the other collaboration-oriented benefits I described above like shared best practices, economies of scale in purchasing, and cooperation on finding new ways to reach high-need student groups.

The District Partnerships pilot program has already offered some early indications that when we create incentives for strong district and charter school collaborations, all of our public schools stand to benefit. I urge you to build upon this success, make the program permanent, and pass H.B. 6622, the District Partnerships bill.

I'd like to thank you all again for letting me testify, and thank you for your time.

**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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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.