

PA13-207

HB6623

Education	835, 841-842, 926-932, 1051, 1054, 1067-1071	17
House	3145-3171	27
Senate	4829-4846, 5043-5044	20
		64

H - 1159

**CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
HOUSE**

**PROCEEDINGS
2013**

**VOL.56
PART 10
3086 - 3445**

Are there any other announcements or introductions? Announcements or introductions? Hearing none we will return to the call of the Calendar. Will the Clerk please call Calendar number 156.

THE CLERK:

On page six, Calendar 156 -- got it 156.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

I've made a mistake, Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

Okay. You want 305 first?

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Three oh five. Will the Clerk please call Calendar number 305.

THE CLERK:

We'll call whatever you want, Madam Speaker. Page number 15, Calendar number 305, favorable report of the joint standing Committee on Education, substitute House Bill 6623, AN ACT CONCERNING STUDENT ASSESSMENTS.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Andrew Fleischmann, you have the floor, Sir.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Thank you, Speaker Linda Orange. I appreciate it. I move acceptance of the joint committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

The question before the Chamber is on acceptance and passage of the bill. Will you remark, Representative Fleischmann?

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Yes. Thank you, Madam Speaker. The bill before us in essence is one that will allow us to transition our student assessments from the current CMTs and CAPT tests to the new smarter balance assessments that have been in the process of being developed for the past several years. More specifically it will permit administration of the mastery exam system to grade 11 public school students. It will allow a study of all standardized testing happening in Connecticut.

It will eliminate a prohibition that currently exists on incorporated academies from using these tests for their promotion or graduation. We're not sure why that prohibition was there and we're getting rid of it. And extends from October 1, 2007 to April 1, 2013, the deadline for the Education Commissioner to develop and implement this new assessment that I

just referred to. You'll note that I said April 1, 2013 which has already passed. So in that light, Madam Speaker, the Clerk is in possession of an amendment, LCO number 6116. I would ask that the Clerk please call and that I be given permission to summarize.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Will the Clerk please call LCO number 6116 which will be designated as House Amendment Schedule A.

THE CLERK:

House Amendment Schedule A, LCO number 6116
introduced by Representative Fleischmann et al.

THE CLERK:

The Representative seeks leave of the Chamber to summarize. Is there objection? Is there objection? Hearing none, Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. This amendment is so brief I will simply read it. In line 86 it replaces the number 2013 with the number 2014 making the bill sensible, fixing a -- just a typographical error that happened as it was put together. I move adoption.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

The question before the Chamber is on adoption of

law/gbr
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

39
May 9, 2013

House Amendment Schedule A. Will you care to remark on House Amendment A? Representative Ackert.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. And it is just a clerical change. And it's a good -- it's a good piece of -- it's a good correction. Put it that way, Madam Speaker. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Thank you, Sir. Will you care to remark further on House Amendment Schedule A? Will you care to remark further on A? If not, let me try your minds. All those in favor please signal by saying aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

All those opposed nay. The ayes have it. The amendment is adopted.

Will you care to remark further on the bill as amended? Will you care to remark further on the bill as amended? Representative Ackert of the 8th.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

And as the good Chair already mentioned, this is getting us in line with where we've already started

and that's going with the common core, putting our smarter balance assessments into place. I just want to let the Chamber know what the smarter balance includes and that gets us kind of into the -- where we need to be in terms of testing and getting us more into the technical end and there will be some investments made by this -- the State in terms of IT and because the smarter balance testing is computer based.

So we will make sure that as we move forward that that is taken into consideration as we look to fund our education and assessment. A very good piece to this legislation and I got to thank the -- the Chairs on this was to incorporate looking at actual value of the standardized. Has it actually achieved anything since -- since its inception? Have we moved and accomplished the goals of understanding the -- the education process and actually the inclusion of the overall testing. So it's a very good bill. Necessary and I would look for everybody to support this. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Thank you, Sir. Will you care to remark further on the bill as amended? Representative Sawyer.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. We know in education that we had certainly a run of increased testing when no child left behind came about. And we had at that time been testing every other year and it had gone up to grade ten starting in grade three. I'm sorry. It was four, six, eight and ten. Madam Speaker, through you a couple questions to the distinguished Chairman of the Education Committee.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Please proceed.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Thank you, Ma'am.

Mr. Chairman, in the changes that we made we had to increase the testing to the odd years as well. Does this bill do anything to remove those odd years? Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker. I don't believe so. I think rather it's permissive, allowing for all of the years that are covered with the understanding that the State will implement what is appropriate under the

next version of the elementary and secondary school act at the federal level. Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Sawyer.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Thank you, and through you, Madam Speaker. I see that it is now -- gives a vary -- a variance between tenth and eleventh grade and it gives the -- it looks like in line 52 it says match examination for each tenth or eleventh grade student. Could you just describe the reason for the option there? Who makes the decision? Is it per school? Is it per child? Is it up to the board of education to make that decision? Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Chair. This was language that was requested by the State Department of Education and I believe supported by the State Board of Ed. It reflects the fact that there is at the moment uncertainty about whether it will be tenth grade or eleventh grade that will be optimal. And so given the fact that there's some -- some decisions to be made at

the federal level as well as the State level yet to come that will determine that they wanted to leave the flexibility.

I believe that the State Board of Education will at some point in the next few years give guidance to school districts as to which it shall be. Through you, Madam Chair.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Sawyer.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and through you. The amendment that we just passed for line 86 it changed the date from 2013 to 2014, does that have any effect on this particular section for the mastery examination for each tenth or eleventh grade? Is that decision date 2014?

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Chair. No. That date change was with regard to the development of a developmentally kindergarten assessment which is referred to in subsection F. Through you, Madam Speaker.

law/gbr
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

44
May 9, 2013

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Sawyer.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Thank you. Through you, Madam Speaker, is there a date certain when the State will be making decisions whether it's going to be tenth or eleventh grade?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Chair. I don't know of the exact date but I believe yes there is a -- is a timeframe for the State Board of Education to come to its decision and then promulgate a guideline that will go out to all the school districts. Through you, Madam Chair.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Sawyer.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Thank you and through you. Is there another place in the language where it refers back to the State Department of Education making this decision?

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker. You know I don't see it in the bill before us. I believe it may be in another part of title ten of our Connecticut General Statutes. But this is an area where the State Board of Education gives guidance to districts. Through you, Madam Chair.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Sawyer.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Thank you. And I would like to ask the Chairman if he has a further -- further thought on that question.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann. Further thought, Sir.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Yes, Madam Speaker. Thank you and I thank my good colleague. It's been brought to my attention that actually it is in the bill before us at line 35. You know there's a definition of the mastery examination and it's clear that it's an exam that will be approved by the State Board of Education to measure essential grade appropriate skills in reading,

writing, math or science. And so at the same time that the State Board is approving these exams it will be determining which grades they are applicable to. Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Sawyer.

REP. SAWYER (55th):

Thank you. Thank you, Madam. I was scrolling to find line 35 and that line does describe mastery examination. It means the examination or examinations approved by the State Department of Education but it doesn't refer to -- it talks about the examinations but not -- and it talks about the measure essential and grade appropriate skills in reading, writing, math or science. Grade appropriate skills though does not refer to the grade.

So perhaps in the future Mr. -- through you, Madam Speaker, Mr. Chairman we can tighten up that language so that boards of education don't think they are to determine because I read that also and I was confused as to who decides when the test is going to be given. Is it going to be tenth grade or eleventh grade? Is it because certain kids aren't ready and they want to -- and they think at age -- or

law/gbr
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

47
May 9, 2013

appropriateness but we can talk about that further.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. And I appreciate the Gentleman's efforts at trying to answer those questions.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Thank you, Madam.

Will you care to remark further on the bill as amended? Representative Lavielle.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Good morning to you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Good afternoon.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

I'm so sorry. It goes so fast. I am certainly in support of assessing our -- our assessment procedures and tools because I think while all of us recognize there are -- there is certainly a need to implement testing in our school system we also have some doubts as to the efficacy of the instruments that we have and need to know more.

So I -- I certainly applaud the leadership of the Education Committee for putting together a bill to do that. I do have some questions however for legislative intent if I may.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

You may.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

Thank you, Madam Chair. So to the good Chair of the Education Committee, I was curious as to -- and I think he's answered it already but just to get it on the record. Why at the same time the bill provides for a study of all that we do in testing and yet goes ahead and makes a change in the grade level at which we allow testing. Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker. We are required to administer tests pursuant to federal statute which of course preempts State statute and it is expected that there will be reauthorization of the relevant federal statute sometime in the next few years. So this bill anticipates the reauthorization and the fact that it could be grade ten or it could be grade 11 that's used in the next -- in the next round.

Meanwhile even though it's required of us to do all of these exams pursuant to federal law we feel as a State that it's appropriate to try and see how

effective all of this testing has been in advancing the cause of academic growth. So we view these two efforts as appropriately simultaneous and reinforcing.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Lavielle.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

Thank you very much. And then I have some questions related to lines 66 to 70 which refers to using mastery examinations as the sole criterion of promotion or graduation. So first, I -- can the good Chair tell us whether prior to this bill were public schools allowed to use a test as the sole criterion for allowing a student to graduate from high school, public schools. Through you, Madam Chair -- Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker. No.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Lavielle.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

And no private schools were allowed to either?
Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker. We don't speak to the private schools standards in statute. Rather there's refer to endowed or incorporated high schools or academies. And I believe that's simply three or four academies in the State such as Norwich Free Academy in your part of the State that have a special status. They're sort of quasi-public high schools and those are referred to here. I don't -- I don't believe that we speak to the question of -- of the private school standard. Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Lavielle.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

The Chair is correct. I made a mistake. It does say endowed or incorporated high school or academy. But to my -- to my prior point this is the first time then if this bill continues along its way and passes, this is the first time that our -- our schools will be allowed to use a test as the sole criterion for graduation from high school. Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

law/gbr
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

51
May 9, 2013

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker. I don't believe -- it's -- it is theoretically possible that some high school might choose it as the sole criterion though I don't view it as immediately likely. But the reason for this language being in this bill as I understand it is as we move towards this new system of exams there is the potential that we will have an eleventh grade exam that is a summative high school exam that actually will allow a student to demonstrate whether they have achieved key levels of competency and mastery across different domains like reading, writing, mathematics and science. And so this new exam could potentially become like the regency exam in the State of New York, an exam that would be appropriate as a criterion for high school graduation. Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Lavielle.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. And this -- this brings me to -- to a point where I admit I am confused because when we were discussing another bill in appropriations that would in fact allow students to

place out or graduate from high school with an eleventh grade exam, I had understood that there was always -- there was already some kind of provision in our laws that would allow that but we had never implemented it and that we needed that bill to do so. So what's -- what's the difference if that was already allowed do we need to take further steps? Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker. If -- if memory serves, that other bill was to go ahead and put a -- a very tight timeline on the State Board of Education developing a series of exams that would allow someone to test out of high school. This -- and it's really targeted at -- at kids who have a range of gifts and talents and are feeling stuck in high school and could easily test out if there were only the series of exams created by the State Department of Education. This is about something different.

This is about what is going to be a new assessment probably for eleventh graders that would be a key component in saying you've achieved what is

necessary to receive a high school diploma in Connecticut. So someone would not graduate from high school in eleventh grade, rather once they pass the exam and finish their course work in twelfth grade they would graduate and if they failed to pass this exam they would have to retake it if that is indeed the approach the State Board of Education moves toward. Through you, Madam Chair.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Lavielle.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

Thank you. So do I understand that any of these mastery tests that are administered to eleventh graders would they have an assessment purpose that would help to determine what sort of needs that remain for them to be filled in twelfth grade or are they administered more for the purpose of allowing them to place out entirely? Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker. They are not intended to allow a student to place out entirely. That purpose was served by the bill that we enacted

previously but it is more along the lines that my good colleague described at the opening of her question to -- to assess a student's progress, hopefully show that the student has achieved mastery in various areas and if not where it is that they would need further instruction and growth. Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Lavielle.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

Thank you. So we are making a clear distinction then and this -- this is the particular concern I really wanted to address. We are making a distinction between exams that are designed to assess skills and ability and knowledge and exams that are designed to allow for example the award of a credit or the award of -- you know completion of a particular courses Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker. Yes, that distinction remains and I guess the only clarification I would add is that in some sense it's anticipated that this new eleventh grade smarter balance

assessment may serve two purposes. It may both show a student's level of attainment and be a benchmark for whether a student is going to be ready for graduation from high school. Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Lavielle.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. And one final question for the Chair if I may. There -- there is a reference in lines 189 to 200 of the bill which is old. This was already said in statute so we just have it here to look at. But it did at the time require that local and regional boards of education would specify basic skills necessary for graduation for classes graduating in 2006 and thereafter.

So I would assume or I will ask whether in the exercise of going through studying our current testing and so on that particular assessment and specification that was done back in 2002 the aim is to revise that. Am I correct? Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker. Yes, I believe that

law/gbr
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

56
May 9, 2013

is a correct analysis of the bill before us.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Lavielle.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

Thank you. Well that -- that concludes my questions for the good Chair who I thank for his answers. And I'll just say again that I certainly strongly, strongly support this review of our testing and assessment tools. I think it's absolutely necessary given all the activity that we're trying to implement in education and our efforts to achieve the achievement gap. However -- and I -- I have said this in committee before, I hope that we'll be very prudent in any effort to encourage more and more students out of our public school system too early.

I have a lot of personal reasons for that but I do believe that there is some type of social learning that goes on when people are required to coexist with and learn to live with people who are part of their age cohort and their -- their life stage cohort. And one of my fears with the other bill that I -- I think do not apply here is that these -- these place out exams will begin to apply to people when they're in ninth grade and tenth grade.

And there's another concern that I have with that as well which is financial. Our college costs are escalating at a very, very rapid rate. And it has been possible up until now for students who were quite advanced to actually to accumulate college credits while they are in high school if they're doing particularly well and instead of getting out early and incurring their expense right away and having to get all their college credits and pay for them while they're in college they can actually accumulate some of them in high school and shorten the time they will need to be paying those very high rates. So I would just note those two concerns but I do support the bill. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Thank you, Madam.

Will you care to remark further on the bill as amended? Representative LeGeyt of the 17th.

REP. LeGEYT (17th):

Thank you so much, Madam Speaker. Good morning. Good afternoon to you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Good afternoon to you too, Sir.

REP. LeGEYT (17th):

I have a -- I have an abiding concern regarding standardized tests from my experience at -- of being a teacher of young children and this is a convenient time to express it I think and -- and perhaps ask a question of the good Chairman of the Education Committee in the process. Standard -- standardized tests in my opinion are a -- are a contrivance that attempts to paint a picture of a student's abilities, aptitudes, performance and as such are fraught with inconsistencies and shortcomings.

And that is never more evident than in the past couple decades when the onus of using standardized tests to measure someone's intelligence quotient, IQ has been replaced by other methods of determining someone's intelligence considering the fact that there are now understood to be several intelligences that need to be tested to determine someone's capabilities. Many of those intelligences require different forms of testing to get an accurate appraisal of someone's capabilities.

I see in the bill that the focus -- one of the focuses of the bill is to study -- SDE is going to study the use of standardized tests with respect to the fiscal administrative and educational impacts that

the use of these tests has.

And so my question, through you, Madam Speaker, is is there any consideration being put to studying or doing a comparative study of the actual quality of the tests that may or may not be chosen over and above the fiscal administrative and educational impact so that some gain can be made in choosing a testing vehicle that will get the most accurate results for what it purports to examine? Through you, Miss -- Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker. So the State of Connecticut has been part of a consortium of states that had been working together to develop the new exams. And these are exams that are a lot smarter than any that have come before because they -- given the fact that they are administered by computer and tied into algorithms they -- they allow for branching in testing.

So for example if a child gets a -- a given question there isn't necessarily automatically the same question next for each child. The child who got

the -- the answer wrong might get a follow up question in the same domain that further tests their understanding of the concept. A child who gets the answer right may go on to a different domain. So that is the whole notion of the smarter balance assessment that the State Board of Education has been you know supportive of and having folks from the State Department work with other state departments around the country to develop.

It's our -- it's our sincere hope and aim to end up with tests that are far better than the ones that are used today. The study when it talks about educational impact it is certainly the intention of -- of myself and -- and my co-chair and others in the General Assembly that the good questions that Representative LeGeyt raised about the quality of tests are included in that study that is in this bill. Through you, Madam Chair.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative LeGeyt.

REP. LeGEYT (17th):

Thank you so much, Madam Speaker. And through you, thank you to the Chairman of the Education Committee for that response. I'm -- I'm comforted

law/gbr
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

61
May 9, 2013

that the things that I'm concerned about are being addressed. I appreciate the time. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Thank you, Sir. Will you care to remark further on the bill before us? Will you care to remark further? 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 seat. The machine will be opened.

THE CLERK:

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

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Have all members voted? Have all members voted? If all the members have voted please check the board to determine if your vote is properly cast. If so the machine will be locked and the Clerk will take a tally.

And the Clerk will please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

Yes, Madam Speaker. Bill number 6623 as amended by House A.

law/gbr
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

62
May 9, 2013

Total Number Voting	139
Necessary for Adoption	70
Those voting aye	139
Those voting nay	0
Absent and not voting	11

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

The bill as amended passes. Are there any introductions or announcements? Are there any introductions or announcements? Representative Hampton.

REP. HAMPTON (16th):

Good afternoon, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Good afternoon to you, Representative Hampton.

REP. HAMPTON (16th):

Madam, I rise to welcome some good friends who are in the gallery today. One of my constituents, Chris Doyle who is a teacher at the Watkinson School has brought his class here today to learn more about State government. So I would ask my colleagues and friends to welcome these distinguished guests in the gallery. I'm so happy that they're here and give them a heartfelt welcome.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

S - 667

**CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SENATE**

**PROCEEDINGS
2013**

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

rgd/gbr
SENATE

27
June 4, 2013

Mr. Clerk?

THE CLERK:

On page 8, Calendar 580, Substitute for House Bill Number 6623, AN ACT CONCERNING STUDENT ASSESSMENTS, favorable report of the Committee on Education.

THE CHAIR:

Good afternoon, Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Good afternoon, Madam President.

I move the joint committee's favorable report in concurrence with the House.

THE CHAIR:

The motion is on acceptance and passage in concurrence with the House.

Will you remark, ma'am?

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Yes, thank you, Madam President.

Yes, I asked for passage of this bill which allows students to take their final mastery examination in grade 11 beginning in the 2013 to '14 school year, changes references to the testing system which is already an existing law from a statewide mastery exam to a mastery examination.

It allows the Department of Education to approve -- rather to approve the provision administration of all mastery exams and it moves a deadline for the education commissioner to develop and implement an assessment tool for measuring a child's kindergarten readiness. And also -- and then there's a statutory -- eliminating a statutory requirement about mastery testing just so we can conform with the No Child Left Behind Act.

rgd/gbr
SENATE

28
June 4, 2013

And I move passage. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark? Will you remark?

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you, Madam President.

I rise to support the bill and hope that everyone else will and move for its passage.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Will you remark? Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

Through you, I have a couple questions to the proponent of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

In the OLR analysis, Senator Stillman, it talks about allowing students to take their final mastery exam in grade 11, as opposed to grade 10.

Can you explain the difference involved in the change of grades?

Through you.

rgd/gbr
SENATE

29
June 4, 2013

THE CHAIR:

Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Thank you, Madam President.

Through you, one of the reasons for the changes is that we're going to a different testing system and it's on more of a nationwide basis, and that is the change so that it will no longer be in 10th grade. It will now be in 11th and we're slowly aligning all those dates with the new national standards.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

And those national standards that you talk about were put in place recently? Or a number of years ago and we are late in the game? Or is this something new that we should be adhering to?

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Oh, I'm sorry, Madam President.

Senator Kane, would you kindly repeat your question?

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Could you repeat that, sir.

rgd/gbr
SENATE

30
June 4, 2013

SENATOR KANE:

Of course. Thank you, Madam President.

My question was the national standards that you mentioned. Is that something that is new? Or is that something that may have been instituted a few years back or a while back that we have yet to catch up with? I'm just curious in the time frame of the change.

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Yes. Thank you, Madam President.

Through you, it is recent.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

And in talk about the Department of Education to approve rather than supervise the provision of the administration of the mastery exams, is that to something new? And if so, is that because of some questions or questionable practices that have taken place in certain school districts in regards to these exams?

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Thank you, Madam President.

Through you to Senator Kane, it's through this whole new process. It would be very difficult for the department to supervise every single exam in every single school. We want to make sure that they approve them and then they will be supervised locally as they should be.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

I appreciate that answer. It also talks about the education commissioners, to develop and implement an assessment tool for measuring a child's kindergarten readiness.

Can you speak to the details of that assessment, if you could?

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Yes. Thank you, Madam President.

Through you, well, we have extended the deadline to April 1st of 2014. Originally it was supposed to be this past April. Obviously that date has come and gone and they are in the process of developing those new assessment tools so they can be implemented appropriately.

Through you, Madam President.

rgd/gbr
SENATE

32
June 4, 2013

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

But I guess what I'm, you know, I'm just trying to understand what's involved in that assessment tool when we're talking about kindergarteners.

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Thank you, Madam President.

Through you, I think when we're talking assessing children in terms of their readiness for kindergarten it fits into this whole program and concern that we have to make sure that every child is ready for kindergarten, that they receive appropriate pre-K education, that they know how to -- that they will be able to adjust easily to a kindergarten classroom in a kindergarten program that's appropriate for them.

And so that's why we talk about readiness. We talk about reading readiness as they move through the grades. We talk about readiness for kindergarten, we talk. So it fits into this whole continuum of readiness that we make sure our children are prepared properly for school.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

And when you talk about pre-K, I think you said if I -- hopefully, I think you said standardization, or of the pre-K -- not every student enters a pre-K program. Or do they?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Thank you, Madam President.

Through you,, it's our hope that they will. That's what we're working on as we work to establish an Office of Early Childhood, to make sure that every child, no matter what their socioeconomic background, is ready to attend kindergarten. And the quality education they will receive there, we want to make sure they receive a quality, quality early childhood education, which we all think of as pre-K.

And so it fits into that, that whole concern, which is why we need to assess the children properly because as you stated, some of them might not be quite ready. So we want to make sure that if they're not, that we can introduce whatever particular programs are necessary to make sure that they are ready.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

And when you talk about the study of standardized tests, are we not using standardized tests now? Or is that a term we, you know -- hate to say it, like, paint with one brush?

rgd/gbr
SENATE

34
June 4, 2013

I always thought of standardized tests -- are we not -- are they not standardized? It may sound like a silly question.

But through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Thank you. Through you, Madam President.

Yes we are. We just want to make sure they're appropriate.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

And when you say, appropriate, what does that mean?

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Thank you, Madam President.

We want to make sure that the standardized testing that we're doing in public schools meet the measure -- that the children can meet the measure of those tests, that they can give us the results. And in the sense that they can assess -- also continue to assess the child as the child goes through school.

And so we want to make sure that the department

rgd/gbr
SENATE

35
June 4, 2013

which -- and this was a request of the department -- have an opportunity to study the use of how we use standardized testings in school, to make sure that we're doing the right thing for our children.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

But I guess what I mean by standardized is, you know, English, math, vocabulary. Am I incorrect in not speaking to the actual curriculum that's -- or not? Maybe not curriculum. Maybe that's not the right word, but certainly the categories that will be placed on this standardized test?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Thank you.

Through you, Madam President. I didn't catch the last part of his comment. The acoustics here at this end of the Senate -- are not quite clear at that and. It's an historic room. I wish we could fix the acoustics, but we can't.

So I didn't catch the very end of his phrase. If Senator Kane would very kindly repeat it.

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

rgd/gbr
SENATE

36
June 4, 2013

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

I guess the benefit of the 32nd district is the acoustics at this end of room. And I get to sit next to Senator Linares, too, so that's equal benefit.

My question was in regards to the actual curriculum or, subjects, I guess, is maybe the better question, that is in the standardized test. You seem to talk about the approach to it and the appropriateness and things like that, but I was just wondering about the actual testing.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Yes. Thank you. Through you, Madam President.

In terms of the standardized testing in public schools we want to make sure that as the department conducts the study that they include fiscal, administrative and educational impacts of standardized tests and a review of the standardized tests currently implemented and proposed in the State. And as I said, they need to complete this by the middle of next year.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

And when you say the fiscal impact of the test, what does that refer to? The mandate of it? Or the cost then associated with giving it? The costs in tabulating?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Thank you, Madam President.

I would say all of the above.

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

I'm glad I figured that one out. I appreciate Senator Stillman for answering my questions.

Having not served on the Education Committee it's interesting when these bills get to come to the floor and I'm able to view them. And I appreciate it and will look forward to passing the bill.

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark?

Senator Linares.

SENATOR LINARES:

Thank you, Madam President.

It's been a privilege to serve on the Education Committee alongside the good Senator Stillman. We are constantly looking to improve in our formula for providing the best education system possible for the

rgd/gbr
SENATE

38
June 4, 2013

students across Connecticut.

And there's been a lot of talk over throughout and over the past few days about the importance of continuing to improve on the way we educate we students in all areas, but more specifically in the areas of math and science. And I just have a few basic questions for legislative intent for the proponent of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR LINARES:

The Department of Education shall establish, within this bill, within available appropriations a high school mathematics and science challenge pilot program.

I would just ask the good Senator for legislative intent if she can just explain to us what the change is made in this challenge pilot program from what we currently have in our school systems?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Thank you, Madam President.

Through you, to Senator Linares, as you stated a few minutes ago we are placing this new emphasis on STEM here in Connecticut which we've been doing. We've been gradually working towards a STEM curriculum. And I believe that that is what the department is looking for as we look at science and technology and engineering and math. Those -- for the folks who might be listening, that's what STEM stands for.

And so we want to make sure that those curricula are appropriate and that our children can achieve so they

rgd/gbr
SENATE

39
June 4, 2013

can meet the challenges in those areas once they complete high school and move on to hopefully higher education and go out into the world and become citizens and having good jobs. We want to make sure that we prepare them properly and that they can get the best education they can.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Linares.

SENATOR LINARES:

Thank you, Madam President.

And thank you, Senator Stillman for your excellent answer to my question. I did also want to ask you how this policy will apply to technical schools.

Is it the same? Will it be the same as our local schools? Can you just touch on that for us?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Thank you, Madam President.

Through you, it will apply to them. I mean, here technology is part of STEM. And so certainly they should be part of it as our technology high schools have -- they're onboard and they have an opportunity to adopt those particular programs that the department encourages them to do so, and to make sure that they're implemented properly.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Linares.

rgd/gbr
SENATE

40
June 4, 2013

SENATOR LINARES:

Thank you very much, Senator. And once again, and it's been great to serve with you on the Education Committee as well as with Senator Boucher. I think that we've done a lot of good work here and I wanted to thank you for that.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Will you remark?

Senator Welch.

SENATOR WELCH:

Thank you, Madam President.

I'd like to thank Senator Stillman for bringing this bill forward. I think it's going to help our education system. I hear a lot about testing in the district a lot from parents, a lot from teachers and even some from kids, so I'm glad that we're going to be taking a hard look at student assessments.

I do have two questions for the proponent of the bill, if I may, through you Madam President?

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR WELCH:

Thank you, Madam President.

The first is I noticed that science seems to be excluded from the renaming of the examinations and I'm curious as to whether or not there's an actual reason for that.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Through you, Madam President.

If Senator Welch would kindly indicate where an in the bill he has a concern I would appreciate it.

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Welch.

SENATOR WELCH:

Sure. Thank you, Madam President.

And I think I probably just unartfully articulated a question. When I look at the OLR report and it talks about the number of things that this bill does, the second one refers to changing references to the testing system from statewide mastery examination to mastery examination.

And then there's almost a parenthetical that says, except for science, and I'm just curious, through you, Madam President as to what that means?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Thank you. Through you, Madam President.

Those science exams many times are -- can be a little more unique from the traditional reading and writing and mathematics, as is stated in the bill. That doesn't mean they, the department won't be looking at those standardized tests around science.

rgd/gbr
SENATE

42
June 4, 2013

But in terms of the fact that many times -- and they are actually, the science aspect of the exam process is constantly changing more so than reading or writing. As you know, science changes. Every day we read something new and so it's not quite included in here, but it doesn't mean it's eliminated.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Welch.

SENATOR WELCH:

Thank you, Madam President.

And my last question, or maybe two questions has to do with the study of standardized testing that we're going to ask SDE to do. And I know lots of times we ask for studies we have a particular thought in mind or a particular question or there's a particular issue that we're trying to get a better understanding around that maybe might be a little bit more specific than just kind of a broad topic. And I'm wondering if that is indeed the case here. And perhaps Senator Stillman can just share her thoughts as to where the study is going to go and what it's going to try to achieve.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Thank you, Madam President.

It's certainly my hope the first place it will come when they have completed it is back to the Legislature through the Education Committee so that we can review those results so that we can have input. And based on what -- and we can also receive further input from our schools that will come and be able to testify on behalf of those results. I think it's very important for us to have that input based on the results that

rgd/gbr
SENATE

43
June 4, 2013

the department finds so that we can come up with the best legislation we can.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Welch.

SENATOR WELCH:

Thank you, Madam President.

And I appreciate that answer. Just to kind of follow up, do we expect SDE just to kind of look at maybe the effectiveness of the particular standardized testing they're using today? Or the concept in general? Is there any -- or all of the above?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Thank you. Through you, Madam President.

The last one, all of the above.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Welch.

SENATOR WELCH:

Thank you, Madam President.

And thank you, Senator Stillman, for your questions.

You know, it's ironic that the conversation that we are having today and a conversation we've had over a number of years in this State and in this country with respect to these kinds of exams aren't unique to Connecticut and they're not unique to America.

rgd/gbr
SENATE

44
June 4, 2013

In fact, just a few weeks ago I was talking to a chief risk officer at a major corporation in London. And he was sharing with me kind of the ins and outs of what his kids are going through in the public schools over there and some of the challenges that they face. It's important for us to kind of get an understanding as to how our schools are performing, how are teachers are doing. Are our kids learning? And it's really tough to sometimes balance that with, are they really learning everything they really need to be learning? Or our curriculums now really kind of geared towards individual testing?

So there's a lot that we need to take a look at. I really applaud Senator Stillman for charging SDE to take a look at it and I will be supporting this bill.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Will you remark? Will you remark?

If not, Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Yes. Thank you, Madam President.

If there isn't any objection I'd like to place this on the consent calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, so ordered.

Mr. Clerk?

THE CLERK:

On page 10, Calendar Number 608, House Bill Number 6384, AN ACT CONCERNING THE DISPROPORTIONATE OR INAPPROPRIATE IDENTIFICATION OF ENGLISH-LANGUAGE LEARNERS AS REQUIRING SPECIAL-EDUCATION, favorable report of the Committee on Education.

rgd/gbr
SENATE

241
June 4, 2013

Page 3, Calendar 422, Senate Bill 978; on page 4, Calendar 475, Senate Bill 1052; on page 8, Calendar 567, House Bill 6387; Calendar 568, House Bill 6445; and Calendar 580, House Bill 6623.

On page 9, Calendar 583, House Bill 5149; and Calendar 590, House Bill 6680; page 10, Calendar 607, House Bill 6688; and calendar 608, House Bill 6384.

Page 11, Calendar 612, House Bill 6448; and Calendar 621, House Bill 6488. On page 12, Calendar 634, House Bill 6403; and Calendar 636, House Bill 6394; page 13, Calendar 645, House Bill 6454; and page 14, Calendar 652, House Bill 6702.

On page 16, Calendar 674, House Bill 6441; page 17, Calendar 677, House Bill 6644; on page 18, Calendar 685, House Bill 6009; and on page 23, Calendar 380 Senate Bill 1054; page 24, Calendar 452, Senate Bill 1142; and Calendar 566, House Bill 6375.

Page 25, Calendar 646, House Bill 5844; and on page 26, Calendar 304, Senate Bill 1019.

THE CHAIR:

At this time, Mr. Clerk, will you call for a roll call vote on a first consent calendar?

The machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate. Senators, please return to the chamber. Immediate roll call on the first consent calendar has been ordered in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

If all members have voted? All members have voted. The machine will be closed.

Mr. Clerk, will you please call the tally?

THE CLERK:

rgd/gbr
SENATE

242
June 4, 2013

The first consent calendar.

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

THE CHAIR:

The consent calendar passes.

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, would move for immediate transmittal to the House of Representatives of all items acted on thus far today requiring additional action in that chamber.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Also, Madam President, on an item previously placed on the foot of the Calendar, would now seek to remove that item and just mark it PR, and that is an item calendar page 16, Calendar 672, House Bill 5480, AN ACT PROHIBITING TAMPERING WITH HYDRANTS. Would just move to remove that item from the foot and to mark it PR.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

**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

March 15, 2013

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

Connecticut has adopted the Common Core State Standards, a very important move and a move in the right direction. H.B. 6623 is AN ACT CONCERNING STUDENT ASSESSMENTS. I believe we've had preliminary conversations around this in other contexts, but just to remind you in shifting from the current Connecticut Mastery Tests and CAP Test to the Smarter Balanced Assessments, we are part -- we, Connecticut, are part of the Smarter Balanced Consortium of States which are the -- which are the Common Core Aligned Assessments.

We need to change our statutes to ensure that we no longer simply represent the CMT and the CAPT as our tests and we also need to adjust the grade levels appropriately. There may be some correction language required on that particular point, 3 through 8 and 11 will be the SBAC or Smarter Balanced Assessment grades going forward. So we thank you for making the necessary changes. Again there may be some corrections that are still required simply as pertain to the grade levels. And, Mr. Chairman, I thank you for the opportunity to address this Committee.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you for your speedy and comprehensive testimony. Just for the understanding of the Committee, do you have a hard stop by which time you need to head to your next meeting?

COMMISSIONER STEFAN PRYOR: I think realistically if there were a 15-minute interval, I could stretch it a little bit further, I would then make it to my appointed time at the P-20 Council which is a meeting that is already underway as you know.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: We will try and respect that and

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

of a study to determine the educational, administrative, and financial issues of current and future standardized testing, and we propose several modifications of the bill such as reducing tests to every other year.

Connecticut Voices for Children supports the use of multiple criteria to evaluate children's development and well-being. Standardized tests can be one way of measuring the development of children's academic skills. In addition to standardized tests, public schools should use a variety of qualitative and quantitative measures to evaluate children's development and well-being. These might include assessments of application of skills and knowledge, observation by skilled educators of instructional support practices, and evidence of a positive culture and climate.

Connecticut Voices for Children supports the commission of an independent study to determine the educational, administrative, and financial impact of current and future standardized testing. This is -- this is in the bill and I just want to emphasize that we support an independent study to the extent that it's possible. The state needs an independent analysis of the state's current and future testing system. In our report, *Addition Through Subtraction: Are Rising Test Scores in Connecticut School Districts Related to the Exclusion of Students with Disabilities*, we found that the results of the reading and math portions of the Connecticut Mastery Tests, but not writing, were distorted by exempting students with disabilities from taking the CMT.

Instead, roughly one-third of students with disabilities in the state were given a modified assessment, or the MAS for short. The

percentage of children who met or exceeded the proficient level on the CMT apparently increased in part because fewer children with disabilities had taken the standard exams in math and reading. These children were also disproportionately black, Latino, and low-income. The evidence from our analysis suggests that the state's testing system and the way in which results are used need -- need an independent review and perhaps modification.

So just in closing, going back to the mastery test definition, mastery tests currently are defined as an examination. The bill proposes to define mastery examinations as examination or examinations, so we're not sure whether that means that this would be an expansion of current testing or not. Finally, we suggest that we could save perhaps up to \$10 million by reducing the testing schedule to grades 4, 6, 8, and 10, and I've brought this up with other members of the Committee at various points. This is what we used to do between 2000 and 2005 where we went 4, 6, and 8.

When we went to grades three through eight, we actually doubled the amount of money that we spent on testing. It went from about \$5 million to \$13 million. Currently today we're about to spend about \$20 million on the development of mastery exams. So we think scaling it back to 4, 6, 8, and 10 could save us potentially millions and perhaps up to 10 million. We're not exactly sure about that particular number. So thank you and we applaud you for putting this study into the bill on standardized tests.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you very much. Thank you for your testimony and I appreciate your remarking on that particular part of the bill.

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

Actually that had been suggested to me by a constituent. And I thought, gee, have we ever done -- how long has it been since we've done this. And so I'm delighted to get the feedback from you and will continue to look at it. I know there are, including myself, there are many folks that I work with or that live in my district that are not fans of teaching to the test and think we teach too much to the test, et cetera. And I think we do need to look at our testing process, so I appreciate your input on that from the Voices.

Anyone have questions?

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Just a quick question on the part of your testimony related to the issue of examination versus examinations, I believe that the state department may have had an interest in -- in having latitude where, for example, certain tests that were already happening in schools could be counted or if they move to a new Smarter Balance Assessment that there's one that's in one area, one that's in another. Have you had any conversations with the state department about why they were interested in that tweak and what their intentions were?

ROBERT COTTO: I have not. I have reached out, but I haven't gotten a response back yet about some of the -- some of these particular issues. But I think it's -- it would be a good decision to follow up with them. And thank you for letting me know that, I appreciate it.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Absolutely. And I -- so, Sarah Hemingway, who is the sort of external liaison for the department is the logical person for you to talk to. And if -- if you haven't been

able to reach her, let me know. We'll make sure that you guys are in touch and I'm hoping the clerk is noting this that we're trying to make sure that we've got Voices for Children in touch with the department so that -- so that hopefully you can get on the same page.

ROBERT COTTO: Okay.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER: Thank you, Madam Chairman, and that you for your testimony as well. The issue of testing has been a hot topic for some time, no question, and it's really important I think to have this review. I think this is really commendable that it's being brought up, in fact. And there is discrepancy between whether or not it should be a -- a state -- Connecticut-based test or should be using national tests, and at what grade levels is most effective?

Usually tests are, you would hope, are being used to improve the instruction of the student and to give the teacher a tool in which to use in order to find out where weaknesses can occur and move the student growth more quickly. At least that's the way it should hopefully work. Have you -- do you know of any, in addition to the inquiries that you're going to do, what the standard procedure is for other states so that we have kind of a gauge?

Is Connecticut going on its own path or are there other trends and movements in other states regarding the testing schedule? And I would, you know, first ask if you know of it and, if not, maybe that's something you might

want to pursue. Thank you, Madam Chair.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you, Senator.

Anyone else have questions for the gentleman?

I think we're all set. Would you like to respond?

ROBERT COTTO: I was -- I just wanted to know whether the Senator wanted a response right now or in writing, what would you prefer?

SENATOR BOUCHER: Well, if you do know if there is, you know, a more common practice in other states and, if not, if that's something that you would pursue and get an answer to.

ROBERT COTTO: I would say there's -- there are a number of states that are moving forward with, for instance, the Common Core testing, SBAC, testing, maybe a year or two ahead of us. I think Kentucky has already done this, and New York has already kind of aligned its particular testing with that. I think we're pretty common in terms of having the local assessment and a kind of variety of assessments. And then we also have the NAEP, the National Assessment of Educational Progress, which I would add we do at a fraction of the cost of what we do for the CMT.

And I find that we get very good information from it because it's a random sample of students rather than every single student, every single year. We're able to kind of corroborate what we see on the CMT in 4, 6, 8, with that test. So I think our practices are pretty much aligned, we're probably a year, maybe a year or two behind on the SBAC stuff. But what this study will also do is take a look

at what are the costs of the Common Core and what the practices are. Now that some states are ahead of us a year or two, we can perhaps look over our shoulder and see how is it working out for those other states as well.

SENATOR BOUCHER: Thank you, Madam Chair.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you, Senator.

Anyone else?

Thank you very much.

ROBERT COTTO: Thank you, Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Don Macrino. Welcome, it's nice to see what I think are friendly faces from home.

DON MACRINO: Nice to see you.

SENATOR STILLMAN: And I want to thank you --

DON MACRINO: Thank you, members of the Committee. My name is Don Macrino, I'm Principal at Waterford High School. And I'm here today representing the Connecticut Association of Schools to provide testimony on Senate Bill 1097. And I will begin by saying that we are not in support of Sections 1(a) and 1(b) of that bill, 1(a), of course, being the delay of the evaluation until the year '14 - '15, and the second being the diminishing of authority given to boards of education regarding the evaluation plan.

I would like to say I can bring news from the front. I am a principal at a high school that is in the pilot. I'm only 28 years old and this is what it has done to me. I should begin



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 4th 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 Regarding Student Assessments
Raised Bill H.B. No. 6623: An Act Concerning Student Assessments

Robert Cotto, Jr., Ed.M.

Education Committee

March 15, 2013

Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, and Distinguished Members of the Education Committee

I am testifying today on behalf of Connecticut Voices for Children, a research-based public education and advocacy organization that works statewide to promote the well-being of Connecticut's children, youth, and families.

Raised Bill H.B. 6623 revises the law on state tests by modifying the definition of mastery examination for children in public schools and it also requires the Department of Education to study issues relating to standardized tests. **We support the commission of a study to determine the educational, administrative, and financial issues of current and future standardized testing and we propose several modifications to the bill such as reducing tests to every other year.**¹

Connecticut Voices for Children supports the use of multiple criteria to evaluate children's development and well-being in school. Standardized tests can be one way of understanding children's development of basic academic skills. In addition to standardized tests, public schools should use a variety of qualitative and quantitative information to evaluate children's development and well-being. Such information might include, but is not limited to, assessments that ask children to demonstrate meaningful application of knowledge and skills, observation by skilled educators of instructional and support practices, and evidence of a positive culture and climate in schools.²

Connecticut Voices for Children supports the commission of an independent study to determine the educational, administrative, and financial impact of current and future standardized testing.³ The state needs an independent analysis of the state's current and future testing system. In our report, *"Addition through Subtraction: Are Rising Test Scores in Connecticut School Districts Related to the Exclusion of Students with Disabilities?"* we found that the results of the reading and math portions of the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT), but not writing, are distorted by exempting students with disabilities from taking the CMT. Instead, roughly one-third of students with disabilities in the state were given the modified assessment (MAS).⁴ In short, the percentage of children who met or exceeded the proficient level on the CMT increased, in part, because fewer children with disabilities have taken the standard exams in math and reading.⁵ These children are also disproportionately Black, Latino, and low-income.⁶

The evidence from our analysis suggests that the State's testing system and the way in which results are used need an independent review and modification. Indeed, the various test data presents conflicting information. For example, from 2007-2009, the increases on the local Connecticut Mastery Test have outpaced increases on the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) that tests a representative sample of children rather than all children every year.⁷ In other words, the CMT, which is a test used to also evaluate schools and educators, has shown greater improvements than the NAEP, which is a diagnostic test. Daniel Koretz, a testing expert at

Harvard University, explains that this discrepancy could mean a distortion of data from either test, test score inflation on the local test (CMT), or a change in which children are taking the tests.⁸

An independent study would help determine other unintended consequences of the state's testing system. In addition to the discrepancy between the changes on the CMT and NAEP, the State reports that number of curriculum hours in several subject areas has declined, while the number of hours for other subject areas has increased. Between the years 2002 and 2009, Connecticut's second graders have had on average fewer hours of instruction in computer education, health, language arts, and social studies and more hours in mathematics and foreign language.⁹ In other words, there is evidence that the incentives and sanctions attached to the testing system *could be* forcing schools to narrow the curriculum to "core" subjects, such as mathematics and reading, at the expense of a broad curriculum that includes language arts, social studies, science, and the arts.

State spending on testing has increased substantially over the last decade, but the net cost of testing is still unclear. Because the number of children that were required to take standardized tests doubled, the amount of money spent to develop the tests more than doubled from \$5.3 to \$13.4 million from 2005 to 2006. The Governor's biennial budget estimates that the cost to "Development of Mastery Exams Grades 4, 6 & 8" will be \$19,050,559 in FY 2013 and recommends spending of \$20,148,978 for FY 2014 on test development.¹⁰ Nevertheless, the available numbers do not include any assessment of the opportunity costs such as lost instructional time, administrative costs, or increased spending on test preparation products and services.

At present, the State Department of Education indicates that it does not know the fiscal and educational impact of the "common core state (*sic*) standards" on districts and the State.¹¹ Therefore, the study should also include an analysis of the costs of "common core."¹²

Finally, the definition of "mastery test" is vague and this definition *could* open the possibility for increased testing each year.¹³ The revision to the law would keep the testing period in March or April. However, the law would change the definition to "mastery examination" from "examination" to "examination or examinations." This language *could* allow for multiple tests within one subject area per year, which would be an expansion of testing when compared to current practices.

We propose several modifications to H.B. 6623. First, the definition to "mastery test" should be limited to an *examination*, rather than "*examination or examinations*."

Second, changing the mastery test schedule could save millions of dollars. We estimate that millions of dollars could be saved, perhaps up to \$10 million or half the current spending, in fiscal years 2014 and 2015 by changing the state's standardized testing schedule to only grades four (4), six (6), eight (8), and ten (10), rather than all grades three to eight and ten.¹⁴ This funding could instead be used to increase the ECS grant, school based health centers, or other educational programs.¹⁵ Connecticut used this every-other-year testing schedule between the years 2000 to 2005.

Thank you for your time and considering our testimony. Please contact me should you have any concerns or questions.

¹See Raise Bill H.B. 6623, Section 2, LCO No. 4249, January Session 2013.
<http://www.cga.ct.gov/2013/TOB/H/2013HB-06623-R00-HB.htm>. The bill states, "Sec. 2. (*Effective from passage*) The Connecticut Voices for Children

Department of Education shall conduct a study of the use of standardized tests in public schools. Such study shall include, but not be limited to, (1) the fiscal, administrative and educational impacts of standardized tests, including the impacts on instructional time, curricula, professional flexibility, administrative time and focus, and school district budgets, and (2) a review of standardized tests currently implemented and proposed in the state. Not later than January 1, 2014, the department shall submit such study and any recommendations to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes."

²See Metric. Data Interaction for Connecticut Mastery Test, 4th Generation. "Connecticut Mastery Test Vertical Scales 2009 Interpretive Guide" 30 Dec.

2011. <http://solutions1.emetric.net/cmtpublic/UI/Guides/VSIInterpretativeGuide.pdf>. The state department of education cautions against solely using vertical scales, or other CMT results, to make important educational decisions. The guide states, "Note. Vertical scale scores (like all other CMT scores) are based on the performance of individual students on the day of testing. When interpreting growth, care should be taken not to base important educational decisions solely on vertical scale results. CMT results can best be used in conjunction with classroom assessments and classroom work to identify potential strengths and needs of students in the content areas assessed."

³See Raise Bill H.B. 6623, Section 2, LCO No. 4249, January Session 2013.

⁴Cotto, Jr. Robert. "Addition through Subtraction: Are Rising test scores in Connecticut related to the exclusion of students with Disabilities?" Connecticut Voices for Children. New Haven, CT. Jan. 2012. Web. <http://www.ctvoices.org/sites/default/files/edu12addthrusubtract.pdf>.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷Cotto, Jr. Robert. "Addition through Subtraction: Are Rising test scores in Connecticut related to the exclusion of students with Disabilities?" Connecticut Voices for Children. New Haven, CT. Jan. 2012. Web. <http://www.ctvoices.org/sites/default/files/edu12addthrusubtract.pdf>.

⁸ See Koretz 2008, particularly Chapter 10: "Inflated Test Scores" for an overview.

⁹Connecticut State Department of Education. *Connecticut Education Data and Research (CEDaR) Data Tables*. "Hours of Instruction by Subject Area-Grade 2." CT Department of Education, 2011. Web. 1 Dec. 2011. http://sdeportal.ct.gov/Cedar/WEB/ct_report/DTHome.aspx.

¹⁰ See Malloy, Governor Dannel P. "Connecticut FY 2014 – FY 2015 Biennium Governor's Budget Summary." Section B, Department of Education. <http://www.ct.gov/opm/cwp/view.asp?a=2958&q=518400&PM=1>.

¹¹ See Connecticut State Department of Education. "Department of Education Legislative Proposal - 2013 Session: Changes to Assessment Statutes to Enable Smarter Balanced Assessments." 25 Jan. 2013. The proposal to change statute to allow the "Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium tests" based on the Common Core State (sic) Standards. The proposal background states, "The State's adoption of the Common Core State Standards necessitates a corresponding shift to a new assessment system. The Smarter Balanced assessments will be piloted in the 2013-14 school year, and implemented statewide in the 2014-15 school year. This legislation authorizes the state to require administration of these assessments." However, the state writes that the fiscal impact is "To be determined"; and about the municipal impact the state says, "Districts have considerable new responsibilities to modify curricula and train personnel in light of the shift to the Common Core. The CSDE is assisting districts with these tasks." Also see Rabe Thomas, Jacqueline and Pazniokas, Mark. "The repercussions of national education standards." *CT Mirror*. 5 Dec. 2012. <http://ctmirror.com/story/18354/repercussion-national-education-standards>

¹² The Governor's recommended budget encourages any additional state funding be used for preparation for the "Common Core State Standards" and associated tests. It is particularly important to review the state's spending on testing because at this time the Department of Education does not know the financial impact of the battery of tests associated with the Common Core Standards. See Governor's Bill No. 6357, Sec 3(h) and Sec. 4(c)-(d).

¹³ See Raise Bill H.B. 6623, Section 1, LCO No. 4249, January Session 2013. Section 1 states, "Section 10-14n of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2013*):

[(a) (1) Each student enrolled in the fourth grade in any public school shall annually take a state-wide mastery examination. For purposes of this section, a state-wide mastery examination is defined as an examination which measures whether or not a student has mastered essential grade-level skills in reading, language arts and mathematics. The mastery examination shall be provided by and administered under the supervision of the State Board of Education. (2) Each student enrolled in the sixth grade and each student enrolled in the eighth grade in any public school shall annually take a state-wide mastery examination. Such mastery examination shall be provided by and administered under the supervision of the State Board of Education.

(3) Annually each student enrolled in the tenth grade in any public school or any endowed or incorporated high school or academy approved by the State Board of Education pursuant to section 10-34 shall take a state-wide mastery examination. Such mastery examination shall be provided by and administered under the supervision of the State Board

Connecticut Voices for Children

of Education.

(b) Beginning in the 2005-2006 school year, the state-wide mastery examinations pursuant to subsection (a) of this section shall be administered in March or April

(c) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsections (a) and (b) of this section, the state-wide mastery examinations pursuant to this section shall be administered as follows:

(1) Beginning in the 2005-2006 school year, each student enrolled in grades three to eight, inclusive, and ten in any public school shall, annually, in March or April, take a state-wide mastery examination that measures the essential and grade-appropriate skills in reading, writing and mathematics; and

(2) Beginning in the 2007-2008 school year, each student enrolled in grades five, eight and ten in any public school shall, annually, in March or April, take a state-wide mastery examination in science]

(a) As used in this section, "mastery examination" means an examination or examinations, approved by the State Board of Education, that measures essential and grade-appropriate skills in reading, writing, mathematics and science

(b) (1) For the school year commencing July 1, 2013, and each school year thereafter, each student enrolled in grades three to eight, inclusive, and grade ten or eleven in any public school shall, annually, in March or April, take a mastery examination in reading, writing and mathematics

(2) For the school year commencing July 1, 2013, and each school year thereafter, each student enrolled in grades five, eight or ten in any public school shall, annually, in March or April, take a state-wide mastery examination in science

[(d)](c) Mastery examinations pursuant to subsection [(c)](b) of this section shall be provided by and administered under the supervision of the State Board of Education.

[(e)Student](d) The scores on each component of the [state-wide tenth grade] mastery examination for each tenth grade student may be included on the permanent record and transcript of each such student who takes such examination, [provided, for a] For each tenth grade student who meets or exceeds the state-wide mastery goal level on any component of the [state-wide tenth grade] mastery examination, a certification of having met or exceeded such goal level shall be made on the permanent record and the transcript of each such student and such student shall be issued a certificate of mastery for such component. Each tenth grade student who fails to meet the mastery goal level on each component of said mastery examination may annually take or retake each such component at its regular administration until such student scores at or above each such state-wide mastery goal level or such student graduates or reaches age twenty-one.

[(f)](e) No [such] public school [or endowed or incorporated high school or academy] may require achievement of a satisfactory score on [the state-wide] a mastery examination, or any subsequent retest on a component of such examination as the sole criterion of promotion or graduation.

[(g)On and after July 1, 2003, mastery testing pursuant to this section shall be in conformance with the testing requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act, P.L. 107-110. The joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education shall, on or before February 1, 2004, evaluate the estimated additional cost to the state and its local and regional boards of education for compliance with the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act, P.L. 107-110, net of appropriated federal funds for such purpose, and the comparable amount of estimated federal funds to be received by the state and its local and regional boards of education pursuant to the No Child Left Behind Act, P.L. 107-110 and report its findings and recommendations, if any, pursuant to the provisions of section 11-4a.]

[(h)](f) [Within available appropriations, the Commissioner of Education shall, not later than October 1, 2007,] Not later than October 1, 2013, the Commissioner of Education shall develop and implement a state-wide developmentally appropriate kindergarten assessment tool that measures a child's level of preparedness for kindergarten, but shall not be used as a measurement tool for program accountability pursuant to section 10-16s."

¹⁴See Malloy, Governor Dannel P. "Connecticut FY 2014 – FY 2015 Biennium Governor's Budget Summary." Section B, Department of Education. <http://www.ct.gov/opm/cwp/view.asp?a=2958&Q=518400&PM=1>. On page B-98, the Governor's budget estimates \$19,050,559 for "Develop of Mastery Exams Grades 4, 6 & 8" in FY 2013 and lists \$20,148,978 in "Current Services" for FY 2014. This line item would be reduced into a line item called "School Improvement" in 2014 according to the Governor's budget proposal. In order to comply with the No Child Left Behind Act, Connecticut began giving tests to all children in grades three through eight and ten. Because the number of children that were required to take standardized tests doubled, the amount of money spent to develop the tests more than doubled from \$5.3 to \$13.4 million from 2005 to 2006. We estimate a reduction of testing by roughly half the number of children could reduce the amount of money spent for the mastery test budget by half, or roughly \$10 million dollars per year. The evidence demonstrates that changing the testing schedule could open up time and others resources available towards teaching and learning, while not losing important information produced by the CMT and CAPT such as the performance of subgroups

¹⁵See Malloy 2012 "Connecticut FY 2014 – FY 2015 Biennium Governor's Budget Summary." Section B, Department of Education. The recommended budget proposes reductions to school transportation aid, school-based health centers; and proposes increase in ECS funding and various choice programs