

PA13-64

SB1002

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**JOINT
STANDING
COMMITTEE
HEARINGS**

**EDUCATION
PART 2
358 - 723**

2013

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EDUCATION COMMITTEE

March 4, 2013
11:00 A.M.

PRESIDING CHAIRMEN: Senator Stillman
Representative Fleischmann

MEMBERS PRESENT:

SENATORS: Bartolomeo, Boucher, Bye,
Linares, Maynard

REPRESENTATIVES: Ackert, Bolinsky, Carpino,
Conroy, Cook, Davis,
Demicco, Genga, Giuliano,
Grogins, Hampton,
Holder-Winfield, Johnson,
Kiner, Kokoruda, Lavielle,
LeGeyt, McCrory, Miller,
Molgano, Rojas, Sanchez,
Srinivasan, Stallworth,
Walko

SENATOR STILLMAN: Okay, are we getting? Before you
all get settled, you'll probably have to stand
up and take another chair, the first few folks.
Good morning, everyone. We'll begin the
Education public hearing.

SB 1002

Just as a reminder to folks that when you are
speaking you can turn your microphone on so we
can hear you and when you have finished, would
you please turn it off, otherwise we get
terrible background noise in the transcript,
and also it makes it easier for us to hear you.

And of course, please identify yourself before
you speak so we make sure that you are
correctly identified in the tape as well as the
transcript. So just a couple little things.

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Cell phones, please put them on vibrate or turn them off. If you must take the call, we'd appreciate it if you'd step out of the room, okay?

My Co-Chair, Representative Fleischmann, will be here shortly. He has said if I'd like to begin I can do so. So I will do that because we have a lengthy public hearing today.

The first part of our public hearing is going to be devoted to a bill on our agenda on community schools. It's Senate Bill Number 1002 and the first 20 minutes or so we're going to have a panel of folks. That's not unusual for us to have a group of folks come and testify all at once.

So I'd like to ask Senator Williams, Shital Shah, Dr. Ben Foster, Werner Oyanadel and Mark Waxenberg and I apologize if I have mixed up anybody's names. But they are the first group that are here to testify on community schools.

And just a reminder to everyone that if you could keep your testimony as short and concise as possible so we have time for questions and with that, Senator Williams, you have the floor. Welcome, sir.

SENATOR WILLIAMS: Good morning, Madam Chairman Senator Stillman and Members of the Committee. Thank you very much for this opportunity to testify in favor of Senate Bill 1002.

You have my written testimony. I'm not going to repeat it in the interest of time, but I do want to stress that this bill, which is about community schools, takes a different and vitally important approach to turning around, helping to turn around some of our schools in the greatest need.

I think that too often, especially in the atmosphere, which emphasizes testing and evaluations, that we lose sight of the big picture and the essence, quite frankly, of whether a student is ready to learn when he or she comes to school.

I mean, let's just review very quickly some of the important facts about some of the schools in the greatest need in the State of Connecticut.

In those schools hunger is an issue for our children. I've heard reports of students actually going through a trash can at the cafeteria searching for food because they come to school hungry.

Healthcare is an issue, access to adequate healthcare so that students are healthy and ready to learn.

English as a second language is a barrier for many students and in many of our schools the resources do not exist to properly address that.

Special education needs are significant at these schools and again, too often we lack the resources to identify early and then provide the necessary resources for that child.

The attrition rate in our urban schools in the State of Connecticut is 25 percent. Think about that in terms of the challenges for that school system and those teachers when a quarter of the classroom at the beginning of the school year will be gone, replaced by other students throughout the school year. It's a constant system of triage for those educators and those

schools, trying to meet the needs of those students.

How can we do that? What is a community school about? It's about emphasizing the values and programs that too often we consider add-ons, we consider extras.

What am I talking about? I'm talking first and foremost about quality early childhood programs and universal access to quality pre-K, first and foremost.

And we took some steps last year by creating a thousand new early childhood slots. It's a good first step, but that doesn't address the need of those students at our schools in the greatest need.

School breakfast programs, to address the issue of hunger that I've talked about. We've made progress in the last two years. We've gone from 33 percent of our schools participating to 45 percent, a very significant increase. But keep in mind, 55 percent of our schools, a majority, do not provide school breakfasts.

School-based health clinics. Again, we've made progress, but we're not there yet. We don't have that universal access to healthcare that the children in the schools of greatest need depend on.

Family resource centers. We know how important they are.

Parent academies. And why do I say parent academies? Because in these schools where we need to target our resources, we have children coming from families where in their community they have the highest unemployment rates in the state.

We ought to be providing parents with the opportunity of not only being connected to their children's education, very important for their children's success, but also having the doors open to their own continuing education and to employment opportunities.

When those parents are able to get jobs then that is terrific for the children in those families. This is common sense. We ought to be targeting, quite frankly, more of our economic development resources in those neighborhoods. This is what a community school really means.

So again, you have my testimony, but we have to connect the dots because these are not extras and add ons. We should not be surprised that the highest test scores in our state generally are at the schools in the wealthiest neighborhoods with the lowest unemployment rates, and the lowest test scores. Where are they? In those communities of the greatest need with the highest unemployment rates and the greatest social service needs.

That's why fundamentally looking at a community school model, which has been tried in many other states, California, Washington State, Cincinnati, Syracuse, Washington, D. C., the data is in. When we commit to these resources so that our children come to school ready to learn, they do better academically. They do better in terms of their self esteem. They do better across the board.

And you know what? Fundamentally when you think about it, that's no surprise. We know, we don't need the studies, which are there to confirm this, but we don't need the studies because we know that's common sense.

to pay for magnet school tuition for children in pre-school programs that they are not otherwise responsible for educating.

Connecticut Statutes do not require that school districts provide or support pre-school programs for resident students. This new unfunded mandate that was included in Public Act 12-1 is estimated at over \$3 million and applies to 55 public school districts or about 33 percent of the school districts in the state.

HB 6507 corrects this unfair burden while at the same time provides for the development of a sliding tuition scale based on family income. This is a fair way to determine the tuition paid by parents for these pre-school programs.

This proposed bill is consistent with the practice that parents are responsible for pre-school programs.

In summary, we applaud the efforts of this bill and I would be happy to answer any questions with respect to it.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you, sir. Questions for the gentleman? Anyone? Thank you.

DAVID LENIHAN: Thank you.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Sue.

SUSAN WEISSELBERG: Good afternoon. My name is Susan Weisselberg and I am Chief of Wrap Around Services for New Haven public schools.

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LAOISE KING: And I'm Laoise King from United Way of Greater New Haven.

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SUSAN WEISSELBERG: We're here to testify on Senate Bill 1002 AN ACT CONCERNING COMMUNITY SCHOOLS and Laoise will start off.

LAOISE KING: Good afternoon, Senator Stillman and Members of the Committee. As many of you I'm sure are aware back in 2010, the City of New Haven launched a comprehensive school reform initiative.

That initiative has three main goals, which are to close the achievement gap, cut the drop-out rate in half and make sure that all of our graduating students are academically and financially able to go to and succeed in college.

In order to reach those goals, the City came up with three main strategies. The first had to do with having a portfolio of schools.

The second had to do with talent development, including our nationally recognized teacher and principal evaluation and development system.

And the third piece had to do with community. At that time the mayor and superintendent recognized that in order for our students to meet these goals that we had set for them, the City and the school district were going to need to start supporting our students and all of their needs, not only just their academic needs both inside and outside of the school day.

But we all know that that is very expensive to provide those types of wrap-around services, so they came to the United Way and asked United Way whether we would be willing to help develop a program of delivering wrap-around services to New Haven public school students using, by leveraging and finding resources that were

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already existing in the community and bringing them into schools.

So our program BOOST was born. It's a three-way partnership between the City of New Haven, New Haven public schools and United Way, and when we first started we met with folks from the National Center for Community Schools.

We received a grant from J.P. Morgan Chase to work with the Children's Aid Society and the National Center for Community Schools to develop a customized community school program for New Haven.

Some of our main considerations were, we were looking to create a community schools model that could be implemented district-wide. Many community school models across the country are in a limited number of schools in a district where a large amount of investment is made in two or three schools to bring in and support provision of services by outside partners.

We were looking to create a system that could be in all of our 47 schools. I'm happy to go into the details of how it works. It is very much along the same lines as Senate Bill 1002 but there are some significant differences in the way that we implemented it in New Haven that we'd love to talk to you about more. Sue.

SUSAN WEISSELBERG: So we are in 11 schools right now and our plan is to add 5 schools a year if not more. The type of school operations audit that the bill talks about, we are in the midst of preparing to do that with every school in our system.

We are collectively working on what you call the community operations audit because our goal is to bring resources as Laoise said to as many

schools as possible, understanding that every school is different, that its needs are different and its gaps are different.

And so, we're trying to bring a deliberative cohesive and collaborative effort to our schools.

So we're here today to say, we love what we're doing. We think it's working. We want to keep growing it. So we also support what you have in Senate Bill 1002 and we would ask that you acknowledge in the bill that there can be additional models that can achieve many of the same goals because we really do want to continue what we're doing as it's growing, as a variety of community partners continue to participate and we expand that partnership.

To us it's important to keep that going and with 80 percent of our students in free and reduced price lunch, to try and reach as many schools and as many students as we can to help bring them along so that they can succeed in school.

We're happy to work with you and others on any changes. Our testimony outlines some suggestions. Thank you.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you. So the program that you have, BOOST, I'm still not, it's not clear to me how different it is than a community school. Can you outline some of the differences?

LAOISE KING: It's very, very similar, and actually we call it a community school and so does the National Coalition of Community Schools.

The way that it differs from what is set forth in the bill is, we use a part-time BOOST

coordinator. We also agree that there needs to be a point person in the school to help coordinate all of the different services that are being provided both by the school and by external partners.

We leave it up to the administrator and the school leadership team to select who that person will be. We want it to be somebody who the principal has faith in and can delegate some of this responsibility to. That person needs to sit on the school leadership team to be part of decision making in the school.

What we've done is supplement that person's time with a full-time, what we call BOOST service core member. We are working with AmeriCore Vista, Public Allies and the Episcopal Service Corps to provide a full-time person that's going to be arms and legs for person. That's one place that it differs.

We've also incorporated decision making around BOOST to be SSST, student, staff support teams, which are part of the Komar School development model that we use in New Haven. That's a multi-disciplinary team made up of the school social worker, guidance counselors, school psychologists, the nurse, after school coordinators, so they're all in a meeting on a regular basis to discuss the needs of the school.

One of the major differences between what we're doing and what's proposed in the bill is the additional support that we are able to provide schools from the district level.

So in our system, United Way acts as an intermediary organization. We help to pull together data about both conditions in the

neighborhood and in the city and in the state to form demographics.

We collect information from around the district on student well being in four categories, physical health, social emotional behavioral health, family engagement and student engagement and we're able to put that information together for each individual school so that they have something to look at.

One of the things we noticed in the bill is that that responsibility is placed on the school staff. What we have found that is that's very overwhelming to try to pull all of this information together from such a variety of sources and then also we're able to provide them with the technical assistance of, what does this data mean and how do you use it to make decisions.

So that kind of umbrella support is something that's been very helpful for the schools in our district.

SUSAN WEISSELBERG: I just want to supplement that briefly. I think one key difference is that this bill has someone hired full time to be the community school coordinator. Our model, the BOOST coordinator, is someone who is from within the school staff, and so therefore they are already familiar with people at the school, including after-school programs if they have them and we believe that doing that plus supplementing the person, that person's work with a service core member is cost effective and helpful and it's an alternative model.

It's certainly not something we would say has to be in lieu of what you're proposing but it's a model that in our efforts to be cost

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effective and reach as many schools as we can, that's working for us.

The other piece is what you call the community operations audit or the inventory. It's a lot of work to do and the information changes all the time because the bigger providers don't really change but the smaller ones do on a regular basis and that requires a lot of collaborative effort I think on a district level, to get all the information.

Lastly, on our school operations audit school staff does do it, but they do it as a team because no one person has all the information and our goal is to link that with the student's success plans as well.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you. You're doing this now, obviously. You have some history behind this. You've been doing this for several years.

Whether we do this bill or not doesn't affect your program, I assume. I'm trying to figure out is this bill important for you to continue what you're doing?

LAOISE KING: Well, we have a few, I would say in response to that, we definitely support this bill because we think that this is really important work and would like to see it happening in other districts across the state.

We do want to, though, avoid the situation of getting into having two different models for providing what we see as the same result, so per the bill, three schools should be selected and the model outlined in the bill is very prescriptive as to how that should be implemented, and that's slightly different from the way that we're implementing it, so we would

not like to be in the situation where we have, you know, as of next fall we'll have 16 BOOST schools.

We don't want to have 16 BOOST schools doing it one way and three schools doing it a separate way.

So we'd like to see some flexibility in the legislation to incorporate some of the other community school's models out there.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you very much. I think I understand what it is that you're suggesting. Questions from any Members? Yes. Senator Bartolomeo.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO: Thank you. In reading on the third page of your testimony for Section 2, you are concerned about the part of the bill that gives priority to elementary schools with family resource centers.

Can you expand upon why?

SUSAN WEISSELBERG: Yes. We have five family resource centers in New Haven. We have 29 schools that are pre-K elementary and middle and so some of the schools with family resource centers are BOOST schools, some are not.

We're already working with the family resource centers in expanding what they're doing and linking with what we're doing. But I think for us, we just didn't, when we evaluate what school becomes a BOOST school, we look at a range of factors and we just wanted the ability to not have to give priority, but let it be permissive because we look at a range of factors from neighborhood to data on need as well.

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SENATOR BARTOLOMEO: So your suggestion then is about your particular situation, not necessarily about how, for instance, if you were getting flexibility within what you currently have, you don't necessarily think this is a bad model moving forward for other communities, it's just because it doesn't mesh with what you currently have and you're concerned as having a variety of models out there.

LAOISE KING: Yes. Specifically for example in Section 2, which you asked about, we have four K-8 schools in the Fair Haven section of New Haven. We currently have BOOST in two of them.

The one that has a new family resource center actually is quite coordinate in a lot of what it does and may not need to be a BOOST school next or community school next because it already has a number of components of community schools. We might look at a different school to go that is not as cohesive in its work.

And so, it's having that flexibility that we're talking about specifically to us because we think that we're at a point where we're looking at that, the range of criteria at this point.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you, Senator. Anyone else? Representative Ackert.

REP. ACKERT: Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you for your testimony and thank you for your pretty good work and foresight from what it looks like here.

2009 you started?

LAOISE KING: We started talking about it 2009. 2010 was when the BOOST project was conceptualized and we started doing the site

visits, looking at best practices, working with the National Coalition for Community Schools and designing it. So it went into effect in the 2011-2012 school year.

REP. ACKERT: Okay, so too early to look at really some tangible outcomes to date, right?

LAOISE KING: So we can't definitively say much about the outcomes. However, the early indications are very positive. In my testimony, which is the one with the little BOOST logo at the top, you can see that, let me see what page it is, on Page 3 we have the CMT results from last year, so we had five BOOST schools that year, four of them were K-8 and as you can see, all four of them greatly surpassed both the state and district averages at both proficiency and goal on the CMTs, which we're very proud of.

We also have some other stats on the previous page, you know. Across all four of our domains we've had good results. For instance, at one school with parent engagement, before we came into the school they had 28 percent of their parents coming to report card night and within one year they're up to 64 percent because that school had focused on parent engagement as one of their key focus points. And there's other numbers.

REP. ACKERT: Thank you. I appreciate that, and my daughter works in New Haven, so I have a connection there, as a teacher, so.

What drove New Haven to do this? What sparked their interest? It wasn't legislation. I mean, it was done by New Haven itself. What model did you use and who was the pusher of it?

LAOISE KING: The mayor and the superintendent were the minds behind this. Basically what they said, they knew that they set these big goals. They had plans about how they wanted to move to a portfolio's schools approach. They knew that they wanted to work with the teachers. This all came out after a really historic contract was reached between the American Federation of Teachers and the district on basically a new way to work together to reach these three big goals that they had set.

But they felt like there was a gap, and we heard the same thing when we were out talking to school administrators and parents and students, that students face so many challenges in their outside of school lives, that that sometimes interferes with their ability to what we say is, to be present and ready to learn when they're in the classroom.

And we really felt there was a great need to support children and families in their outside of school time, but there was no additional money.

So we were trying to see how can we patch together from, I mean New Haven is a very resource rich community and we wanted to be able to take a look at what we had there and how we could really marry what the community had to offer with what the district was working to achieve.

REP. ACKERT: Okay. Do you know of other communities doing similar efforts like your other mayors, whether it's in Waterbury or Danbury or Bridgeport or any others? Do you know of any that are already driving to do this?

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LAOISE KING: So Hartford, I'm not sure if they testified earlier, but Hartford has a robust community school model as well. I believe that they have 7 community schools going. Their model is closer to the traditional community school model like what is outlined in the bill.

Ours, we work directly with the community schools both down in D.C. and New York to help customize it for New Haven to be a district-wide model rather than a model aimed at the lowest performing schools in the district.

REP. ACKERT: Well thank you. I appreciate your testimony.

SUSAN WEISSELBERG: The other point I'd like to make is that as a district-wide model, we see a great many community members joining us, whether it is to be on a steering committee for a parent university, whether it's to work with us in BOOST or other community efforts and that I think are what's behind community schools for students and families to really benefit from each other and what the community has to offer. We're seeing a lot of that.

REP. ACKERT: Great. Thank you, Madam Chair.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you, Representative.
Anyone else? Thank you both very much.

LAOISE KING: Thank you very much.

SUSAN WEISSELBERG: Thank you.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Oh, wait a minute. One more.
Yes, Representative, you're on.

REP. GENGA: Thank you, Madam Chairman. Susan, good to see you again.

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SUSAN WEISSELBERG: You, too.

REP. GENGA: Always a pleasure, and you did great work (inaudible). Miss that. I've had a chance to view your community a few years ago when I first got on this Committee and applauded the mayor and the superintendent and the people, and I believe you were part of the group that took us around to view the community.

But one of the concerns I had, based on what I heard earlier today from Senator Williams and what I'm hearing from you here, is Section 7, making funding available is critical to the success of the model.

If this legislation passes and minimal funding is provided, going further, he said that, well this would be in the alliance because he was talking about alliance districts so that the funding that was already in the alliance would be used for this.

So how do you reconcile what you said with what he said?

SUSAN WEISSELBERG: Unfortunately, we were not able to be here when Senator Williams spoke and it wasn't clear to us when we read the bill that the alliance district funding was anticipated to be used for this.

We've put a structure in place that actually takes advantage of grant dollars from First Niagara Bank and United Way, and United Way also helps to raise additional funds.

And in looking at this cohesively, our goal has been to not utilize general fund dollars for this, which we think benefits everyone.

So for us, if alliance district dollars are used for this, we understand that that may be helpful for people. In New Haven it may be that we would want to look at different ways to use those alliance district dollars because we have this in place.

So the other point we were trying to make is that it's difficult to do this program in any model without any resources, that the, whether it's the coordinator, the school operations audit, the community operations audit, or pulling it all together, it's a lot of work, and a lot of collaboration.

And I think that's the point we were really trying to make, that that doesn't come completely free. For us, fortunately it's come through community resources.

LAOISE KING: Can I answer that, too. I would like to say the amount of community resources going into this from both First Niagara and from United Way is really only a fraction of what the students are receiving in terms of services. I mean, if you look on the chart I have on the second page of my testimony we have 194 community partners that are in these 11 schools working with our students every day.

Each school is given \$30,000. That's it. Thirty thousand dollars to get these partnerships off the ground, but the majority of the support is coming from the community organizations themselves, I mean, and that's one of the things that we really work with, negotiating with community partners about where they have room to grow, where they have excess capacity and where we can support them in a transition time for them to start writing school-based programming into their general operating budget.

So I do want to say, you know, in New Haven, the whole community has taken this on, so some of it is through grants, some of it's through United Way, but a lot of it is also borne by the agencies and town who care so much about our students.

REP. GENGA: Thank you. You made your point and you're obviously doing it the smart way.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you, Representative. You know, something you just said sparked a thought for me about community partners.

There are some communities that have extremely limited partners compared to New Haven.

LAOISE KING: Yes.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Do you have any idea as to, so that doesn't necessarily work in some of the communities that need that, that children could benefit from a community school but the partners aren't there or they're there but their resources are limited as well. Could you respond to that please?

LAOISE KING: Yes. I think that that's why it's so important that there be flexibility in the bill. In the traditional community schools model there's usually a lead partner who takes the lead in being the main provider of wrap-around services in the building and then they work with other partners to support them.

Many communities, even New Haven, doesn't have enough nonprofits that are big enough to be able to take on that type of task, so you have to be really creative about how you do it.

I mean some of it is, like for instance we're working with, the YMCA is working with Troup School, which is a school down the street from the Y. What we're doing is, bringing kids from Troup to the Y to participate in the programs that they already have going on.

So it's just making that connection, making sure there's communication between the provider and the school to take advantage of existing resources and making them available to students of that school based on the needs of that school identified.

So it's not having to create a new program and the Y is not having to spend additional funding or make new programs. We're just able to bring in kids to fill where they have some additional capacity, and I think that can happen in other communities.

SENATOR STILLMAN: What's the average financial commitment to be a partner, or is it more, you know, someone to give advice or volunteer within the school?

LAOISE KING: It really runs the gamut and it varies. What we do is, after the schools complete their needs assessment and asset maps they identify a series of gaps where they feel like they could really use some additional supports from the community.

We then put that call out to the community. You know, the first year we did it we had the five schools. They gave us their list of things that they were missing. Right?

For instance, they might say we don't have enough after school activities for a seventh and eighth grade girl or we need additional behavioral support services.

We got back 72 responses from folks in the community saying that they could meet those needs. And now, there are a variety of things. Some things were, we can come in four times a year and do a puppet show about nutrition. That's one partnership.

Another place might say, we're going to come in very day and do an after school program, but that might cost some money, at least for the first year while we get it off the ground and have some time to write that into our ongoing budget.

So I would say one of the key benefits that schools get when they're a BOOST school is the technical assistance and training. But how do you negotiate with community partners? What's okay to ask for? How can you make sure that the expectations are the same on both sides or there's going to be right space available? Who's going to recruit the kids? Who's going to transport the kids from the classroom to the program, and what's the long-term sustainability plan for this program staying in the school?

Is the school going to pay for it? Is the partner going to pay for it? Are you going to do joint fund raising? To being able to talk about that at the beginning so everyone's on the same page can lead to a whole host of types of partnerships.

SUSAN WEISSELBERG: My sense is that the bill has similar expectations of knitting and weaving together what already exists with what can be added and to do that thoughtfully.

And your other question about bringing in additional resources, that's a tough question

because we are resource rich in New Haven and we have the community really stepping it up to work with us.

And maybe we have a convening of community folks from different parts of the state to talk about that and best practices.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you very much. Appreciate it. Oh, Senator Bartolomeo.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO: Thank you. I was just wondering, as you were speaking about how involved these community partners are, do you, have you had any difficulties with community partners maybe doing it for one year and then saying, this is just really too much and, you know, not following through? Have you seen that to be a problem?

LAOISE KING: I don't know if I would say it's a problem, but that's definitely happened, and that's one of the things that we're really encouraging schools to do is, at the end of each school year, sit down with partners and figure out what's working, what's not working. We don't want schools to continue partnerships with partners that aren't delivering the results that they're looking for. I mean, that's another thing we do in our partnership agreement forms is you know, the school articulates the purpose for bringing in that partner, right?

It's not just that we want to have a lot of partners. We are bringing in this partner because we need to reduce the obesity rate amongst our students, or, we are bringing in this partner because we want to increase parental involvement, and we have metric, we use results-based accountability to track it and throughout the year both the partner and

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the school sit down and say, is this working? Are there things that need to be tweaked? And then at the end, we only keep partnerships that are actually working.

So, and if there's a problem where a partner is having difficulty with the school, then we can help to work that out.

SUSAN WEISSELBERG: We meet regularly with the BOOST coordinators from each school to talk through what issues they may be facing, what's good, what isn't good, how we might tweak things as we go as well.

LAOISE KING: But this is another reason that having kind of an umbrella over it is helpful because leaving a lot of this stuff to a staff person at an individual school could be quite overwhelming.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you. Thank you, Senator. Thank you very much.

SUSAN WEISSELBERG: Thank you.

LAOISE KING: Thank you.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Maria Lamb. Maria Lamb. Ruth Sullo, followed by Gerry Pastor. He's here, and then Garland Walton. Welcome.

RUTH SULLO: Thank you. Good afternoon Senators and Representatives. I am here to second a testimony you have from Professor Susan Dinocenti. We are speaking in behalf of Raised Bill 1000 to give advancement to academically gifted students.

It goes way beyond giving them their senior year off. I'm here to second what Susan has said and to add my perspective.

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DR. BRUCE DOUGLAS: Yes, well I don't have the number in front of me, but I can provide you with the data tomorrow, okay?

Just to say that from what I recollect, it's not statistically significant, but also there are significant numbers of parents who intended to use that strategy who remained at the school.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: That doesn't surprise me given the excellence of the schools. Seeing the data would be helpful, I think --

DR. BRUCE DOUGLAS: Sure.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: -- in our trying to figure out how we wrestle this problem.

DR. BRUCE DOUGLAS: I'll get that to you as soon as possible.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Any other questions? No. Thank you, sir.

DR. BRUCE DOUGLAS: Okay. Thank you very much.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Melodie Peters followed by Lauren Costello and Maria Lamb together. Welcome.

MELODIE PETERS: Thank you. Good afternoon, Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, Members of the Committee. My name is Melodie Peters and I am President of AFT Connecticut.

I am not as gifted and talented as the previous speakers on some of the bills I'm going to identify, so please bear with me. I do thank you for the opportunity to testify briefly on

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House Bill 6503, Senate Bill 997, Senate Bill 1000 and Senate Bill 1002.

House Bill 6503 AN ACT CONCERNING PUBLIC SCHOOL POOL SAFETY, we're supporting the recommendations in the bill but we express concerns, and if you're following my testimony, you might just as well throw it out because I learned a lot since I've been sitting here today.

That we have concerns about the shifting of students to other PE classes, thereby overpopulating those other phys ed classes.

And the question that came up about a number of 25 students, I think that needs to be clarified because we're not sure whether those 25 are all in the water or out of the water, and that needs to be looked at a little bit further.

Senate Bill 997 AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN EDUCATION PREPARATION ADVISORY COUNCIL, I would like to say that we do agree that CAS should be added to the bill and agree with Representative Fleischmann that it was just a gentle omission.

We agree with the concept of the bill that a committee will develop a system of feedback regarding the preparation of future teachers, the data regarding teacher retention, educator preparedness, the effectiveness of recruitment efforts, especially the ability of high academically performing students and feedback from school districts regarding the readiness and effectiveness of such program graduate is a commendable choice for the Committee.

We have concerns about using the teacher evaluation and student achievement data without appropriate safeguards and there is a consideration on that, wow that was fast,

consideration on the placement of the school choices that these students have.

Quickly, I'd like to say on Senate Bill 1000 we have concerns about Section 1(b)2. We're not aware of any student that is required to enroll in grade 12 as long as they meet the course requirements for graduation.

If the idea is to, and this has been a learning experience for me as well. One of the ideas is to actually encourage our students to enroll in our schools and we do that viz-a-viz some scholarships or grants or whatever so that they stay in the state, I get that. I was at first ready to say I'm not in favor of it but I get that now.

But I would also like some recognition for those students that are not identified as gifted and talented but graduate early as well, and I would place that for your consideration.

Community schools. There's been discussions all over the place about community schools. Let me just emphasize that, you know, this is to be incorporated as, a recommendation to be incorporated as a model, one of the models of the alliance districts and the Commissioner's network. There is no one-size-fits-all. We certainly support and appreciate what New Haven's doing with the BOOST schools.

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However, you know, there is less parental programs involved. You know, we have seven schools in Hartford that are doing a version of a community school and they're not doing the totality of what a community school should look like.

Just because you give a free lunch at noontime doesn't call, give you the, in my opinion, the

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right to call yourself a community school. I mean, there's much more to a community school as we've identified, as you've identified in the legislation that's before you.

It's a draft. It's a draft, and I know you're very capable to put out a bill that speaks to all the concerns that are mentioned here today.

With respect to the monies, I'm told that if we do have reference to community schools in our statutes, that there's a lot of federal money that's available to us in order to be able to implement these programs going forward.

So that's all I'm going to say. I thank you very much for your hard work and appreciate what you're doing.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you very much. Appreciate your input and hanging around all day. I'm glad you learned something. We have, too.

MELODIE PETERS: Well, as a nurse and a former Legislator --

SENATOR STILLMAN: Right.

MELODIE PETERS: -- and a teachers' union, it's a little, you know, it's a learning curve so it's great.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you. Questions?
Representative Lavielle.

REP. LAVIELLE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Good afternoon. Thank you for your testimony. Just a quick question for you.

Could you give me some, could you help me with the circumstances in which students routinely graduate early from high school?

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will ensure accountability across the board.

It is important that (inaudible) one student struggle instead of passing blame and responsibility around. Students who do not succeed in the alternative programming are told there are no more options. They are oftentimes encouraged by staff to sign out.

If there is quality control over what educational services are being provided in the alternative school settings, there will be better chances of school achievement, and I thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

SENATOR STILLMAN: That's the testimony on behalf of both of you, correct?

LAUREN COSTELLO: Right.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Okay. Questions anyone? Thank you very much.

LAUREN COSTELLO: Thank you.

MARIA LAMB: Thank you.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Becky Tyrell, followed by Jillian Griswold. Is Jillian here? Oh, good. Followed by Patrice McCarthy. Welcome, Becky.

BECKY TYRELL: Thank you. My name is Becky Tyrell. I'm a member of the Plainville Board of Education for 11 years, a member of the CREC Council for those same 11 years and a member of the CAFE board of education, the CAFE Foundation as well, the CAFE association as well for the past three years.

Thank you, Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann and Members of the Committee for

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And on Senate Bill 1002 AN ACT CONCERNING COMMUNITY SCHOOLS, I know that earlier today you had heard some testimony and certainly the community schools are a very valid concept.

However, I think the recommendation, or the requirement that the alliance districts be able, have to include these into their programs is a little bit of a burden for those schools and some of those alliance districts vary greatly, you know, a difference between New Haven and Killingly, for instance and the resources they have available.

So again, that would be something that we would be in opposition to. So thank you very much for your time.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you very much. Did you submit testimony? I don't have a copy. Okay, I'll get it later, then, but thank you. I did make note of the bills that you raised, had concerns about. Questions? Representative Fleischmann.

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

I wanted to give you a chance to respond to a point that was made by Bruce Douglas, Executive Director of CREC, which was something that I hadn't really considered when we put forward this sliding scale tuition bill for pre-school. HB 6507

Namely, on the one hand we would be relieving the burden from districts like yours and mine for a lot of the costs of pre-school that were imposed by the recent act's mitigation plan.

On the other hand, in terms of which districts would pay costs, the poorest districts would have the highest tax to pay for pre-school, so

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You know, the conversation that my staff has with the children is not custodial conversation, but it's more educational conversation, so I'm just urging you to please take care of these buildings. They're very valuable to us and to our children.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you very much. I think we all appreciate the work that Good Shepherd and East Shore Child Development Centers in Milford are doing. Sounds like a delightful place. Sign me up. I could use a little R and R once in a while, you know.

But it's, and I think it's also important for us to understand and we are, through your testimony, that your facility is full of children and it's not as though you've built this facility and have this debt service that you have to repay as well to the state and you know, and the building's half empty.

GLORIA HAYES: Right.

SENATOR STILLMAN: So it's good to know it's well used and obviously was an important project for those children. So thank you for coming and sharing that with us. Does anyone have any questions? No. I think we're all set.

GLORIA HAYES: Thank you very much.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you. Robert Cotto, followed by April Goff Brown. April here? Ray Rossomando. He was here. He left? Okay, I'm not going to go through this list any further because I'm not having any luck. So, Mr. Cotto, you're on.

ROBERT COTTO, JR.: Thank you. Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, distinguished

SB 1002

Members of the Education Committee. I'm testifying today on behalf of Connecticut Voices for Children.

Connecticut Voices for Children supports the concept of community schools. By pairing high-quality educational experiences with services that reduce some of the challenges to learning that low-income children may encounter, such schools can better support children's learning while addressing underlying inequities in family well being.

Although Connecticut Voices supports the proposal to add to the number of community schools and to evaluate them using multiple criteria, we have several concerns about Senate Bill 1002's proposed method of funding the programs, the district's capacity to implement the programs, and the requirement that district select schools for participation.

The community school project is a very promising concept that several Connecticut districts have already begun developing. The goal is to improve academic development, build school and community engagement and improve the skills, capacity and well being of the community in which the school is located.

The model is based on research that overwhelmingly establishes that out-of-school factors such as family income, health and neighborhood safety strongly influence children's achievement as measured by standardized tests.

For example, there's a statistically significant and large negative correlation between the percent of children eligible for free and reduced meals and standardized tests results in school districts in Connecticut.

In other words, as poverty rises, scores decline.

This research suggests that the out-of-school supports offered by community schools, in addition to quality educational programs could help reduce the out-of-school challenges through children's academic success and well being.

The community schools plan would promote the use of multiple criteria to evaluate children's development and well being. The proposal would require a school and community operations audit to document academic and socioeconomic needs of the families and children that attend the selected schools.

Based on these audits, a full-service community plan would address the holistic, academic, socioeconomic and physical needs of the children in the community.

It's important to evaluate the community schools project using multiple criteria because single measure academic indicators such as proficiency rates on the CMT or CAPT would provide a distorted picture of success or failure.

Because SB 1002 does not guarantee sufficient resources for the new community schools, it risks becoming an unfunded mandate for the state's 30 poorest cities and towns. Additionally, implementation could be hampered by a lack of district capacity. Some districts such as Hartford, for instance, may have greater staff capacity and experience working with community schools to implement the project than other districts.

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As an alternative, we propose that the bill be amended to eliminate the proposed mandate and instead provide the 30 high-need districts with the option to select schools to participate in the community schools project and that the State Department of Education be directed to provide support through planning grants and technical assistance for instance, to districts that opt in. Thank you for listening to my testimony and I'll take any questions that you might have.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you. Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you. And thank you for your very well organized thoughtful testimony. So to sum it up, would you simply take Section 2 and switch shall into may?

ROBERT COTTO, JR.: That's absolutely what we, Representative, sorry to cut you off.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: So if we were to do that and change that one word and keep the bill as is, we would have a bill that while not a mandate, would still be incredibly prescriptive. It gives all of these criteria for what a community school is.

Under current law we allow for community schools and we're not so prescriptive. What's the advantage about creating such a delineated model when it's an option available to districts now, but with greater latitude?

ROBERT COTTO, JR.: I think from our perspective, one of the benefits of having the prescriptive process that's there, particularly the thing that I looked at was the instructional audit and the very, I think, rigorous measures and evidence that needs to be compiled and

collected throughout the process. I think that's what's lacking at a number of the community school projects that currently exist.

In our testimony we also note that Hartford has seven community schools and they had a final evaluation report, in which the evidence was mixed about the results of it and they concluded that there needed to be a better process of collecting evidence to see how this all worked.

And I think from out end, that part of the process we think being prescriptive is very helpful so that the state can know what they've gotten out of the investment that they've made into this.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Well, that brings up another question that really relates to this question of a model that works. Sometimes it does, other times.

So an earlier witness pointed out well, the state funds charter schools and some are good and some are not so good, so this is no different.

But when it comes to turning around low-performing schools, the state has chosen only to partner with charter management organizations that have a demonstrated record of efficacy.

So you've got Jumoke Academy turning around Milner School in Hartford. You have, I think Achievement First helping to turn around another school somewhere else in Connecticut, but they are school operators who already have demonstrated we know how to do this.

In the case of community schools, every time you start one, you're starting afresh, and so that one-third successful, one-third so-so, one third failure rate, if that is over time proven out to be a standard for this school model, we've got a major investment for a net lack of change.

So I'm wondering, with our limited resources, as I've said before, I mean, I don't want any child going to school hungry. I don't want any child who needs certain wrap around services not getting them.

But I'm just not sure that this overall very prescriptive model is what's needed to address those problems and be interested to hear why Voices for Children has a different vantage point on that.

ROBERT COTTO, JR.: I think those are fair questions, and I think that if you look at, for instance, you mentioned Milner and the takeover by Jumoke, Jumoke at no time in my analysis served the type of population that was ever at Milner Elementary School in terms of English language learners, in terms of a mixed race and ethnicity population, in terms of the percent of students that were eligible for free and reduced lunch.

So they may have been successful in their model but in terms of serving the kids that were at Milner, that was never the case and I can share that information with you.

And so when you look at the Milner turn around plan and the instructional audit, what you find, and also some evidence from the community schools evaluation, is that there was some qualitative evidence that the community schools

project improved some of the outside factors at Milner Elementary before it was turned around.

So for instance, a reduction in suspensions, a notable, it was noted that there was increased kind of parental buy in into the program, and so although we didn't see it in the test scores for instance at Milner before it was taken over, there was some evidence that the community schools project was improving the school in a number of qualitative ways.

And we wouldn't have known that information if it wasn't for the qualitative evaluation that the state actually did as part of the turn round plan. They kind of came in and did this very rigorous plan.

So I think from our perspective, we want to be able to see those sorts of changes as well, in addition to the test scores because the test scores are probably the easiest thing that we have that we can look at and understand what's happening at the schools, but it's these other things such as suspension and culture and climate that we really don't know a whole lot about that this model could kind of improve and we could also document whether it's improved or not.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you. So I have great ambivalence about some of what you just said because it's good to hear that the community-based approach that had been taken at Milner was having some impact.

But in terms of those test scores we still had virtually no children who could read by third grade. None. And so it's good that there were fewer suspensions. It's good that there were kids who were attending school more often.

But if kids were not able to read by grade three, then they were not able to properly learn in subsequent grades, and that was the concern for the parents of that community and for anyone who cares about those children, which I would guess includes everyone on this Committee.

So I'm interested to understand. Are you saying that because of the data that you've seen that there was in fact improvement in these areas outside of academia for the kids at Milner prior to the Commissioner's network approach, that the community school model should have been adhered to longer?

ROBERT COTTO, JR.: No, I don't think that's the case necessarily. I think it had maybe two or three years, the community school project at Milner, and I think it still is ongoing even though Jumoke has now taken part of the operations of it.

I'm not saying that it should continue or not continue. I guess what I'm saying is that there are some unidentified problems at many of these schools at which they're having difficulty, that I would say precede the struggles and academic achievement and I think that part of this model is kind of learning about how it would help those, the kind of achievement that you're looking for in terms of improvement.

I will say, in terms of Milner, something that the instructional audit also noted, is that although in terms of absolute levels of achievement that were relatively low, there was some growth in terms of the growth measures, in terms of the vertical scale scores.

The state also noted in its kind of evaluation of the school, that there was actually a great debate in the school as to which children should even count at Milner in the achievement test results because there were so many children before it was taken over and turned around, that were coming in and out of that school that there was a debate whether the administration and between the teachers as to who should even count.

And so I think that that's something that, the test scores aren't going to tell you that sort of thing, that you have such a population of kids that's turning over so frequently that people are just kind of up in arms as to how they should be held accountable.

So those are the things that I think, you know, moving forward, I think we sufficiently express caution in moving forward with this, but we want to know those other things that are happening in the schools so we could hopefully address them because we think they precede struggles in academic achievement.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: So just very briefly then, would it be fair to say that Connecticut Voices, and I'm guessing others, would support more full instructional audits in schools where we see under-achievement? Maybe even schools that aren't being considered for the Commissioner's network that are clearly struggling, that we have more of these full instructional audits going on to identify the full scale of challenges to be addressed?

ROBERT COTTO, JR.: Absolutely. In our reports, for instance in our addition to subtraction report that looked at the modified assessment we recommended that the state move to a model that looks at schools much more holistically and

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tries to get this sort of qualitative data that you wouldn't otherwise get with the data that the state provides, the basic achievement test results.

So we wouldn't recommend it for every single school, Representative Fleischmann, but we would say that it could be a part of understanding why schools are struggling so much in different parts of the state.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you. This dialogue was very helpful to me and I appreciate your taking the time.

ROBERT COTTO, JR.: No problem.

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

ROBERT COTTO, JR.: Thank you.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Michelle Doucette-Cunningham. Is Michelle here? Yay! Got a winner. David Porteous. Yes. That's who you are. You've been sitting here all day. And then Marsha Cattanach. Great. Michelle, you're on.

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MICHELLE DOUCETTE-CUNNINGHAM: Good afternoon, Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, and Members of the Committee. My name is Michelle Doucette-Cunningham and I'm the Executive Director of the Connecticut After School Network.

I'm here today to talk in support of the community schools bill that we were just discussing a moment ago, so I'm glad to be part of that conversation.

I've submitted written testimony but I really want to talk a little bit more about how after school plays a role in community schools.

In many ways community schools, the model itself is kind of like after school on steroids. It's before school, after school, summer school. Those programs already exist. They don't exist everywhere and certainly the threat to the funding in the Governor's recommended budget is a big concern, and I spoke before you a couple of weeks ago about that.

But many of these after school programs do parent engagement. They provide lunch, or I'm sorry, snack and dinner in many cases. During the summer they might provide all three meals a day. They're already working on programs for special needs.

What they don't have, what's missing from the model is healthcare and mental healthcare. Those places that have school-based health centers and after school programs in many ways are already running a kind of baby community schools model.

But the piece that I really liked about this bill is the creation of having a school, community school coordinator. In many districts that we work with, that's the piece that's frequently missing or is done by someone who's already got a full-time job.

And earlier today, I heard testimony where someone said that this bill is really about mandating coordination, and I agree with that because it's really about the ability to have all of the different community partners line up and agree who's going to do what to what degree. It's really not necessarily about

building new programs from scratch because there's a lot out there. But if you could get them all lined up in the same direction, or at least head, not opposing one another, I think that that alone could create a lot of efficiencies.

It's not going to fix every ill. It's not going to make every test score of every child go up. But we already know that the after school programs that are being run in the state are having a lot of success with some of the kids that they're working with and are improving grades, are improving attendance, are improving some of their test scores.

It's not perfect, but I think that there's a lot that can be invested in, in terms of building coordination with schools and communities and I encourage you to look at this model very carefully, not necessarily in its full implementation because this is a tough budget year and certainly doing three schools in every alliance district would be a pretty pricey deal.

But I think that it has tremendous potential and we're already doing some of it and I think a lot more can be done to coordinate between the after school and the different health facilitators. So I'd be happy to answer any questions you might have.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you very much. Questions?
Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just briefly, for my edification and others on the Committee, could you mention some of the types of programs that would come before school time or after school time that you're referencing,

that would be wrap around and that you'd like to see better aligned and coordinated.

MICHELLE DOUCETTE-CUNNINGHAM: So certainly there are some before school programs where the school will open up early and provide school breakfast so that parents who have to go to work early can drop their children off ahead of time.

Some of those programs provide academic support. Some of them are just child care. The best programs really provide what I call stealth learning, so that they make it really fun so the kids want to be there, and yet are able to incorporate literacy and numeracy and link to the curriculum during the school day.

The same is true after school except you have a longer period of time, so frequently it's project-based learning. There's science that can happen in a three-hour period that just cannot happen in a 50 minute block of time.

It's really a chance to build and also career and college readiness in the older grades. The after school programs I'm talking about run for kids from kindergarten through twelfth grade and some of the programs for the middle school and the high school are very exciting and look more like personalized learning patching to the students' choices and what they're most passionate about. So it includes all different aspects of the curriculum as well.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you. That's very helpful and it leads me to just one follow up question, which is. So we're in tough budget times and we're looking at a budget right now that does not include any of the after school dollars that have been in the state budget for years.

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It also does not currently include dollars for these community schools that are proposed. As we try and figure out if we can find any dollars and where to put them, how will you prioritize between after school programs, out-of-school programs and this community school model that draws upon them?

MICHELLE DOUCETTE-CUNNINGHAM: I think that in many ways the after school funding is really the beginning first step because they're providing one of the basic foundation parts of community schools.

You really couldn't hire a community school's facilitator in a school that had just lost its after school program because there would be very little for them to coordinate. They've got this whole block of time that would be great.

So if I had my choice of course, I would put the money in after school, but that being said, I'm not sitting in your seats. I would also find other ways to build this into the budget in future years if it couldn't be done this year. There are certainly triggers and other ways to look for that down the road that might be useful.

REP. FLEISCHMANN: Thank you for that very honest answer.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Any other questions?
Representative Ackert.

REP. ACKERT: Thank you, Madam Chair. Can you reference where you have either worked for or seen the after school programs in use in more of the community? Is it locally or, what towns have you seen it in and if you could give me those, reference those if you could.

MICHELLE DOUCETTE-CUNNINGHAM: I'd be happy to give you the full list of the towns that are receiving the \$4.5 million state funded after school grants. That's the funding that we were just referencing that's at risk of being cut. It's in 27 cities and towns, but it includes small towns as well as cities. It's not exclusively a program that runs only in alliance districts.

For example, there are some in Barkhamsted, some in Newtown, some in Stafford. It also includes most of the alliance districts, I mean, the largest part of them are alliance districts but there really are a lot that serve some of the smaller rural towns that don't otherwise have any access to this type of funding.

REP. ACKERT; Well, I know about the after school programs, but you were more commenting on the whole community school, not just after school, but you know, completely what's tied in there. Is there another one you've seen beside that because I know Windham has a good program that they've been using after school.

A young man I know works there and they've come here and talked to us about how much needed those funds are, so I know about the after school program.

MICHELLE DOUCETTE-CUNNINGHAM: Right.

REP. ACKERT: But you're talking more about the community schools.

MICHELLE DOUCETTE-CUNNINGHAM: The community school model I've seen in other parts of the country. One of the benefits of my job is I've been around the country to see these types of

programs. There's an excellent one that receives federal funding in Providence, Rhode Island, so it's certainly close enough to drive to and it's incredibly well coordinated. But on the other hand, it receives federal money. I've also seen some in Portland, Oregon.

REP. ACKERT: Because we heard a great testimony about the BOOST program, that didn't need this legislation.

MICHELLE DOUCETTE-CUNNINGHAM: Right.

REP. ACKERT: I mean, they were, the mayor was proactive, and superintendent there and they just said, this is what we need. These are out needs. And they wanted more flexibility rather than picking and choosing schools, they wanted, we have resources that we're going to take advantage of those resources in existing schools.

So where do you believe that this piece of legislation can benefit if we can already put these together and let the towns be a little bit more flexible?

MICHELLE DOUCETTE-CUNNINGHAM: I think that the different audits that it requires is an excellent way of thinking about what needs to be coordinated, but I'm not sure it needs to be so prescriptive as it's written right now because I do think that in some communities this is working perfectly well.

If I had an example from a community where they needed this language, I might, you know, change my mind on that, but I haven't heard that yet, so I would have to say that for those communities where the after school and community school coordination is happening, it's happening kind of against a strong

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headwind and with a lot of support from private philanthropy.

So if there were some way to, you know, reduce the headwind or give it some, you know, wind behind its sails, that would be good.

REP. ACKERT: Right. Thank you so much. Thank you, Madam Chair.

MICHELLE DOUCETTE-CUNNINGHAM: You're welcome.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you very much.

MICHELLE DOUCETTE-CUNNINGHAM: Thank you.

SENATOR STILLMAN: I understand that we have, I hope is the right name now, John Paoline, followed by Marsha Cattanach, and Rhonda Evans. Is Rhonda Evans here? Oh, you're over there, okay.

JOHN PAULINO: Thank you. I'm speaking in the place of David Porteous but David and I are working on a project together, so I'll make it up to him somehow. I'm John Paulino, a resident of East Hampton and actually a former gifted student. I work as Associate Director of Talcott Mountain Science Center in Avon. I've been an educator working in science education statewide, including high ability students for 32 years. I'm also incoming Co-President of Connecticut Association for the Gifted and served as a board member and Vice-President of CAG on a volunteer basis.

A plan for advancing high ability, high potential learners in Connecticut secondary schools is desirable if not essential. I believe Raised Bill 1000 addresses this need and should be supported, passed and implemented.

**JOINT
STANDING
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March 4, 2013

TESTIMONY CONCERNING SB 1002, AAC COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Good day, Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Education Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Laoise King and I am Vice President of Education Initiatives for United Way of Greater New Haven. I am here today to testify on Senate Bill No. 1002, An Act Concerning Community Schools.

Background

As many of you know, in 2010 New Haven launched a nationally acclaimed, comprehensive and far-reaching school reform effort, the New Haven School Change Initiative which aims to:

- close the academic achievement gap with the rest of the state;
- cut the drop-out rate in half, and
- ensure that every student has the academic ability and financial resources to go to and succeed in college

The School Change Initiative has three key strategies: schools, talent and community. As part of the Community leg of the School Change Initiative, the Mayor and Superintendent asked United Way to partner with the City to create Boost!, the wraparound services component of the initiative. Boost! is based on the knowledge that in order for children to succeed academically, they need a range of supports and services.

Boost! New Haven Community Schools

When the idea for Boost! was born in 2010, NHPS, the City and United Way received a technical assistance grant from JP Morgan Chase to develop and design Boost! using the Community Schools Model. Over a six month period we conducted interviews, focus groups, did site visits to numerous Community Schools Sites, and worked directly with Sarah Jonas, Director of Regional Initiatives for the Children's Aid Society National Center for Community Schools to design our model. With help from the Children's Aid Society and the National Center we were able to design a custom Community Schools model that works for New Haven. Boost! is currently a member of the National Coalition of Community Schools, we participate in monthly meetings of the Coalition, and recently invited to be members of the Community Schools Leadership Network.

Like the model proposed in SB 1002, Boost! helps broker, monitor, and enhance a wide variety of school-level partnerships. Boost! facilitates partnerships ranging from local arts organizations providing after-school enrichment opportunities to local mental health clinics providing critical social, emotional and behavioral supports to students during the school day. The exact combination of services varies from school to school and is tailored to respond to the unique needs identified by parents, teachers, school leaders, school support staff, and other community stakeholders.



Central to these partnerships is the philosophy that, in order for students to meet academic goals, NHPS must increase focus and accountability around quality wraparound supports and services within the schools. *Boost!* complements NHPS School Improvement Plans by “wrapping around” the school day with programs and services that have been shown to contribute to academic success, enhance students’ ability to focus and learn inside the classroom, and directly support student learning outside of the classroom. These services may be provided by the school system, other public agencies, community-based, faith-based, non-profit organizations and/or other community partners.

Boost! provides a crucial leverage point in ensuring that the work of outside agencies and organizations is aligned to educational efforts of the public schools. Boost! is designed to improve coordination and facilitate access to critical support services for youth and families, improve the quality of services, promote best practices, make most efficient use of existing and new resources in schools and in the community, and use data to leverage citywide policy and systems change -- all aimed at giving New Haven’s youth the educational foundation they need to escape the cycle of poverty

Each Boost! School has identified 50% of a current school staff member’s time to act as Boost! Coordinator to facilitate this process. During the pilot year of the program, we learned that one half time person was not enough to tackle the huge needs in the schools. Beginning in the summer of 2011, Boost! partnered with Americorps/Vista, to add additional staff capacity to schools to manage coordination of wraparound supports, and the Boost! Service Corps was launched. The Boost! Service Corps expanded in 2012 and is currently comprised of 6 Vistas, 3 Public Allies and 2 members of the Episcopal Service Corps.

Boost! provides schools with data on how their students are doing in the areas of physical health and wellness; emotionally and behaviorally, how engaged they are in school and how involved their parents are in their education. Using this information, Boost then helps the school leadership team, made up of the principal, teachers and parents, together conduct a needs assessment to determine the areas of greatest need. The team then completes an “asset map” of all of the current resources they have aimed at addressing the identified needs. Once this is completed the team identifies where they have gaps in services. Boost then shares this information with the wider non-profit community. In the first year of implementation, 72 non-profit organizations responded to this request. Approximately 50% of the organizations responding had the current capacity to come into the school and provide a needed service. The remaining 50% had the ability to provide the services, but needed some additional funding to be able to implement the program. Boost! then supplied each school with a small “leverage fund” to use to bring in new programs. The school and the new program then had one school year to find a sustainable funding source to keep the program running in the future. Boost! then helps schools track the effectiveness of each program, to ensure that students are benefiting from the services provided.

Boost! launched in five pilot Schools in 2011, and expanded to six more in 2012. Boost will continue to expand at a rate of five to ten schools per year, until it is in place in all 47 NHPS schools.

United Way of Greater New Haven

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Boost! Results

The initiative is designed to be scalable and sustainable and we are already seeing results:

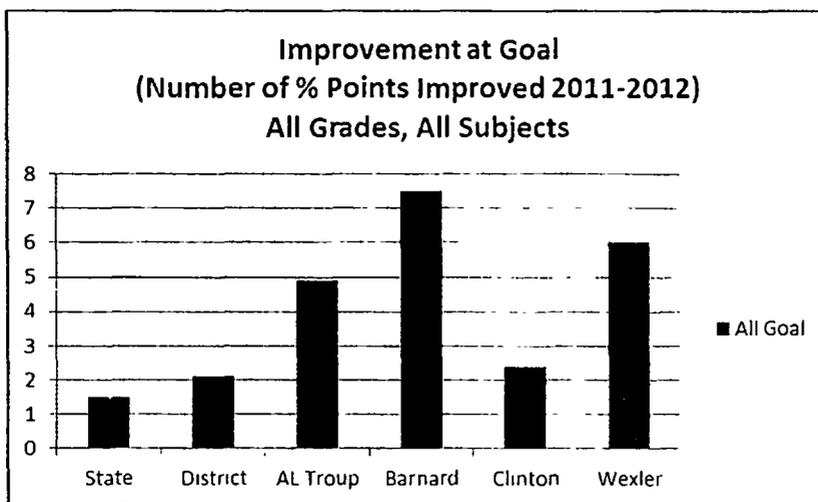
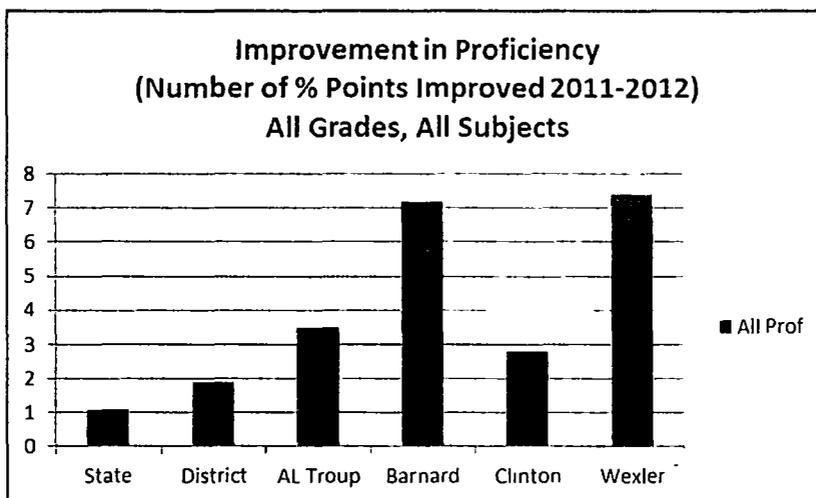
THE NUMBERS	Numbers 2011-12	Numbers 2012-13
Boost Schools	5	11
Boost Service Corps Members volunteering full time in Boost! Schools	5	11
Community Partners	59	194
Unduplicated programs and services available to Boost students	129	260
Total programs and services available to Boost students	215	388

THE RESULTS	Results 2011-12	Results 2012-13
Boost! Schools in the top 10 most improved CMTs	3	To be determined
Percentage points gained by Wexler-Grant students on the 2012 CMTs, an increase 7 times the state average and 3 times the district average	7.4	
Percentage points gained by Troup school students on the literacy portion of the CMTs	19	
Percent of MBA students participating in Boost! activities who improved their attendance	42	
Percent of Barnard students receiving counseling who had a decrease in referrals to the office	64	
Percent of parents attending Spring 2012 parent-teacher conferences at Clinton Avenue School – up from 28% in Spring 2010	64	
Percent of students at Barnard participating in enrichment activities with external partners	97	



Schools saw dramatic decreases in behavioral problems and discipline incidents, increases in family involvement, improvements in school climate as measured by the annual school learning environment surveys and increases in standardized test scores well above state and district averages.

Boost! Schools showed greater improvement than both state and district averages at both proficiency and goal. Three Boost! schools, Barnard, Troup and Wexler-Grant ranked among the top ten most improved schools district wide. Overall percentage of students reaching proficiency across all subjects at Troup increased by 3.5 percentage points, with 7.2 percent gains at Barnard and 7.4 percent gains at Wexler-Grant. Although not in the top ten - Clinton Avenue school also posted gains at more than twice the state average – and had particular success with third graders reading at goal – with an impressive increase of 44.7 percentage points.





MBA was the only Boost High School during the 2011-2012 school year. In that school year, 10th graders taking the CAPT at MBA improved performance at Goal across all subject areas by 4.9 percentage points – which is twice the average district increase (2.3 percentage points) and over 4 times the state average increase of (1.1 percentage points).

Recommendations Regarding SB 1002

My Boost! Partner, Susan Weisselberg from New Haven Public Schools, and I would like to highlight the differences between our model and the model in the bill. We believe that both are equally valid and important and we respectfully request that, in the bill, you allow an alternative community school model based upon what we are doing systemically in New Haven. We would be happy to work with you and provide draft language.

Our analysis of the bill and where we would seek changes:

Sec. 1 In the definition, under “full service community school,” we suggest that language be added to reflect our model in the definition. Also, we suggest that wraparound services not be limited to non-school hours. We are bringing some services in during the school day, and they are helping. Our work at the schools is through a single point of contact, and many of the definitions are pertinent to what we and our partners are doing in the schools.

Sec. 2. We would suggest that this section reference our alternative model. In addition, we like our family resource centers and are expanding their work and capacity. However, we have five family resource centers and 29 K-8, elementary and middle schools,. We request that, in the alternative model, the BOE may rather than shall be required to give priority to elementary schools with family resource centers.

Secs. 3 and 4. New Haven Public Schools allow for choices in enrolling in our schools, whether they are interdistrict magnets, intradistrict magnets, or neighborhood schools; we have various preferences established and then it is on a space available basis. We conduct an inventory and a version of a school operations audit. We believe that the inventory and audit are critical to the success of a systemic, deliberative approach to a wide range of services necessary for a community school. However, the local community school governance board can result in a system of competition for resources rather than coordination of them among schools. We have an advisory committee for Boost! also meet regularly with the Boost! school coordinators and the Service Corps volunteers. We suggest an alternative in Sec. 3 that allows for a districtwide community school governance advisory board, with representation from the community schools – we believe this has the potential to bring in and coordinate more resources. Many of the schools in alliance districts have needs for these services beyond the three schools identified in Sec 2, and the districtwide board allows for more dissemination of services.

Some of the items in the community operations audit in sec. 4(d) appear to be subjective and a challenge to collect. Is it the community/city in which the school is located or is it the neighborhood within which a school is



located? If there is choice, and less than half the students at a school live in the neighborhood, how does that interplay with the notion of community here? What does access to technology mean? Access for the students, the family, or both? Is it access in the school, at home, in a library, in an after school program, in a faith-based institution, on a smart phone?

The full-time coordinator position is one model. Our model is for a relatively high level staff person at the school to spend about 50% of his/her time coordinating the Boost! services and efforts, aided by a Service Corps member from AmeriCorps, Public Allies, or Episcopal Services. And, our school Boost! coordinator works with other school staff in discussing status and issues, at a School Planning and Management Team (SPMT) meeting or a Student Staff Support Team (SSST) meeting. We believe that this model integrates well with the school. In addition, to implement the model contemplated in the bill, a full-time coordinator at 16 Boost! schools working full time on community schools would be costly in these difficult budget times. We do not want to limit our efforts to three schools – we want to expand them, as stated previously. We are in three high schools and eight elementary/K-8 schools now.

Sec. 5 The community resource assessment of potential resources is logical and necessary. In conducting a similar assessment in New Haven, we find that information from the schools and the community is difficult to gather quickly and cohesively. We have utilized information from grantors, such as United Way of Greater New Haven and The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, from community-based coalitions, from the City of New Haven, and from many other sources. The larger, more institutional providers, such as Boys & Girls Club or Clifford Beers Clinic, are easy to include. The smaller providers change all the time, depending upon staffing and funding, and so accurate information is a challenge to capture.

Sec. 6. The full service community school plan is an excellent goal. It truly will require an entire village to meet it. In putting that degree of work into one school's plan – and looking at how we define community – it still makes sense to look at this more broadly. We do not have that many community services in Dixwell/Newhallville and we utilize Boost! to bring in more. So, again, the definition of community is important and allowing for a broader range is important. The list at this stage will require an entire city and not just a community/neighborhood to be accurate and comprehensive. Otherwise the services are siloed. And putting the plan together will be a challenge that needs broad based, widespread assistance.

Sec. 7. Making funding available is critical to the success of the model. If this legislation passes and minimal funding is provided, it will be extremely difficult to make the community school program a success - the level of work required to implement this needs significant time, funding and collaboration. And, the reporting information without the concomitant funding will be burdensome for schools and districts.

Some additional points we think are critical to consider. Boost! is a district wide solution to the Community Schools model, which is usually limited to a small number of schools in any given district. The use of an intermediary agency (such as United Way in our case) also helps to provide schools with the tools, technical assistance, guidance and relationships to help them organize, manage and negotiate with community partners.



This is often a challenge for schools, and leaving it up to one staff member without the additional support and relationships an intermediary can bring to the table could pose a challenge.

We applaud your efforts and would like to work with you. Having embarked on this effort, albeit with a parallel but alternative model, we appreciate the challenges – and we applaud the results. We look forward to working with you so that the legislation can also incorporate our model.

Thank you.

CONNECTICUT VOICES FOR CHILDREN

Independent research and advocacy to improve the lives of Connecticut's children

Testimony Regarding Community Schools Raised S.B. 1002: An Act Concerning Community Schools

Robert Cotto, Jr., Ed.M.

Education Committee

March 4, 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.

Connecticut Voices for Children supports the concept of community schools. By pairing high-quality educational experiences with services that reduce some of the challenges to learning that low-income children may encounter, such schools can better support children's learning while addressing underlying inequities in family well-being. Although CT Voices supports the proposal to add to the number of community schools and to evaluate them using multiple criteria (rather than only test scores), we have several concerns about Senate Bill 1002's proposed method of funding the programs, the districts' capacity to implement the programs, and the requirement that districts select schools for participation.

The community school project is a very promising concept that several Connecticut districts have already begun developing. Raised Senate Bill 1002 proposes that the thirty highest-need districts in Connecticut, "will establish full service community schools to begin operations in the school commencing July 1, 2014" in the thirty highest need districts in the state. These schools would provide comprehensive educational, developmental, family, health and wrap-around services during non-school hours.ⁱⁱ Their goal is to improve academic development, build school and community engagement and improve the skills, capacity and well-being of the community in which the school is located.ⁱⁱⁱ

This model is based on research that overwhelmingly establishes that out-of-school factors (such as family income, health, and neighborhood safety) strongly influence children's achievement (as measured by standardized tests). For example, there is a statistically significant and large negative correlation between the percent of children eligible for free and reduced price meals and standardized test results in school districts in Connecticut – as poverty rises, scores decline.^{iv} This research suggests that the out-of-school supports offered by community schools, in addition to a quality educational program, could help reduce the out-of-school challenges to children's academic success and well-being.

In 2003, a review of twenty community school evaluations suggested various positive academic and developmental outcomes, depending on the program.^v However, the review also suggested the need for sound methods and sufficient data to evaluate the quality and impact of community school programs.

For example, Hartford, Connecticut has seven community school programs.^{vi} The final report on these programs yielded mixed results and it called for an improved process of collecting evidence.^{vii}

The community schools plan would promote the use of multiple criteria to evaluate children's development and well-being in school.^{viii} The proposal would require a school and community operations audit to document the academic and socioeconomic needs of the families and children that attend the selected school.^{ix} Based on these audits, a full-service community plan would address the holistic academic, socioeconomic, and physical needs of children in the community.^x

It is important to evaluate the community schools project using multiple criteria because single-measure academic indicators such as "proficiency" rates on the CMT or CAPT could provide a distorted picture of success or failure.^{xi} By 2015, the bill would require a robust program evaluation of the full service community schools, including data on the effectiveness of the partnerships, a broad array of indicators of children's academic development and well-being, and financial information.^{xii} The information above could prove useful in rigorous studies of the impact of community schools compared to other school models with similar demographic groups.

However, because SB 1002 does not guarantee sufficient resources for the new community schools, it risks becoming an unfunded mandate for the state's 30 poorest cities and towns. The bill proposes that the Department of Education, "within available appropriations" shall provide an annual grant to the local or regional board of education for the school districts,^{xiii} yet requires that these thirty high-need districts select three schools for participation regardless of whether the state provides any grant funding, and indeed regardless of whether they are capable of funding the project on their own.

Additionally, implementation could be hampered by a lack of district capacity. Some districts, such as Hartford, for instance, may have greater staff capacity and experience working with community schools to implement this project than other districts. In light of the tremendous policy demands that the thirty high-need, or "alliance", districts currently face, districts should elect to participate in the community schools project.^{xiv}

As an alternative, we propose that the bill be amended to eliminate the proposed mandate and instead provide the 30 high-need districts with the *option* to select schools to participate in the community schools project and that the State Department of Education be directed to provide support through planning grants and technical assistance to districts that opt-in. However, the other aspects of the model would remain unchanged for districts that choose to participate. For districts that have the capacity and interest to participate, the community schools may be able to provide children and families with significant support towards academic growth and improved well-being. To achieve this end, the community schools bill should be amended to read:

Sec. 2. (NEW) (Effective July 1, 2013) On or before August 1, 2013, the local or regional board of education for each school district designated as an alliance district, pursuant to section 10-262u of the general statutes, may shall identify two elementary schools and one high school located in the school district that will establish full service community schools at such schools to begin operations in the school year commencing July 1, 2014. The board of education shall give priority to those elementary schools with existing family resource centers.

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

¹ Raised Senate Bill No. 1002, "An Act Concerning Community Schools." LCO No. 3747, January Session 2013. <http://www.cga.ct.gov/2013/TOB/S/2013SB-01002-R00-SB.htm>. Section 2.

² *Ibid.* See Section 1. See Rothstein, Jacobsen, and Wilder. *Grading Education: Getting Accountability Right*. Economic Policy Institute; Washington, D.C. Teachers College Press; New York, NY: 2008. In Chapter 8, Rothstein recommends improving the quality and resources available for after school hours as part of an improvement strategies for children's academic growth and well-being.

³ *Ibid.* See Section 1

⁴ See Cotto, Jr., Robert. "Breaking Down the District Performance Index." Connecticut Voices for Children. Jul. 2012. Presentation. A correlation for the 2010-2011 district performance index data revealed that the percent of students that are eligible for free or reduced price meals in a district and the district performance index were significantly related, $r = -0.942$, $n = 181$, $p < .000$, one tail.

⁵ See *Making the Difference: Research and Practice In Community Schools*. Coalition for Community Schools. Washington, D.C. 2003. Web. <http://www.communityschools.org/assets/1/Page/CCSFullReport.pdf>. In this review of twenty initiatives, the impact on young people attending community schools varied from program to program. The impacts ranged, but included: improved grades in schools courses and/or scores in proficiency testing, improved attendance, reduced behavioral or discipline problems and/or suspensions/expulsions, increased access to physical and mental health services and preventative care, greater contact with supportive adult, improvement in personal or family situation, abuse, or neglect, increased promotions or on-time graduations, increased sense of personal control over academic success, decrease in self-destructive behaviors, including irresponsible sexual activity and drug use, reduced dropout rate, increased sense of attachment and responsibility to the community, increased sense of school connectedness, strengthened social and public-speaking skills, increased capacity for self-direction, positive effects on educational aspirations and credit accumulation. 11 of the 20 initiatives measured the impact on families, these benefits include: improved communication with schools and teachers, improved stability and/or other outcomes related to basic housing, food, transportation, and employment needs, increased ability to work more hours, miss work less or to move from part-time to full-time work, increased confidence for parents in their role as their child's teacher, greater attendance at school meetings, increased knowledge of child development, strong sense of responsibility for children's schooling, decreased family violence, increased civic participation, improvement in adult literacy. Fourteen of the twenty evaluations studied the impact on the "whole-school" environment, these varied, but include: principal and staff affirmation of on-site services as an important resources, increased parent participation in children's learning, growth in nonpartisan support for public education and increased resources through increased community partnerships, teacher recognition of parent participation as an asset, increased classroom emphasis on creative, project-based learning connected to the community and innovations in teaching and curriculum, school environments are more cheerful and orderly, there is increased perception of safety, services well-integrated into the daily operation of schools, teachers spend more time on class preparing and working with students, improvement in teacher attendance. The impact on communities varied by programs, but include: increased community knowledge and improve perception of initiative, increased community use of school building, more family awareness of community access to facilities previously unknown or unaffordable, improved security and safety in surrounding area, strengthened community pride and identity, engagement of citizens and students in school and community service.

⁶ See Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. "Hartford Community Schools." Web. 2013.

<http://www.hfpg.org/HowWeHelp/TargetedGrantmaking/HartfordCommunitySchools.aspx>

⁷ See "Hartford Community Schools: Final Evaluation Summary." OMG Center for Collaborative Learning. 2012 Sept. Report presented to the Hartford Board of Education in December 2012. The report indicates qualitative evidence of greater participation of children in the programming and services, as well as anecdotal evidence regarding improved culture, climate, and perception of school environment. However, the report also notes that quantitative and broader evidence and methods that are more rigorous are still lacking. Therefore, it is difficult to determine the impact of the services and programs for children and families with the current information.

⁸ See Rothstein, Jacobsen, and Wilder. *Grading Education: Getting Accountability Right*. Economic Policy Institute; Washington, D.C. Teachers College Press; New York, NY: 2008. In Chapter 8, Rothstein recommends using a broader array of indicators and evidence to evaluate schools.

⁹ Raised Senate Bill No. 1002, "An Act Concerning Community Schools." LCO No. 3747, January Session 2013. <http://www.cga.ct.gov/2013/TOB/S/2013SB-01002-R00-SB.htm>. Section 4.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* See Section 4 and 5.

¹¹ See Cotto, Jr., Robert. "Addition through Subtraction: Are Rising Test Scores in Connecticut School Districts Related to the Exclusion of Students with Disabilities?" Connecticut Voices for Children. New Haven, CT. 2012 Jan. Web.

¹² *Ibid.* See Section 8

¹³ *Ibid.* See Section 7.

^{xiv} See Elmore, Richard. *School Reform From the Inside Out: Policy, Practice, and Performance*. Harvard Education Press; Cambridge, MA. 2004. Elmore discusses the capacity of districts to respond to new accountability measures and policies and the problems for districts and schools that lack capacity to implement legislated reforms. In Connecticut, other new initiatives include a state-mandated teacher evaluation system, potential implementation of curriculum and testing associated with "common core", conditional funding requirements, and new incentives associated with the state's interim test-based accountability system.



**TESTIMONY OF APRIL GOFF BROWN, DIRECTOR OF COMPREHENSIVE YOUTH
SERVICES DEPARTMENT, CATHOLIC CHARITIES**
HB 1002 AN ACT CONCERNING COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
EDUCATION COMMITTEE, MARCH 4, 2013

Co-Chairs Stillman and Fleischmann, Vice-Chairs Bye and McCrory, Ranking Members Boucher and Ackert, and distinguished members of the Education Committee, my name is April Goff Brown. I am the Director of the Comprehensive Youth Services Department at Catholic Charities and I am here to testify in **favor of Raised Bill 1002, An Act Concerning Community Schools.**

Catholic Charities has been a lead agency partner in the Hartford community school model since 2008 at the Thirman L. Milner School. The Hartford model is aligned with national best practice promoted by the Coalition for Community Schools and the Children's Aid Society – National Center for Community Schools. While we are very supportive of the agenda of expanding community schools across Connecticut, we have identified the following **concerns within Section 3 of the legislation.**

The creation of separate "local community school governance boards" is redundant. The Community School Director sits as voting member on the School Governance Council in order to fully integrate and align the partnership efforts with the work of the school.

"Each local community school governance board shall appoint a full time community school coordinator". The lead agency model used in Hartford places the hiring of the staff under the auspices of the lead agency partner. The school governance council has been engaged in the hiring process for the Community School Director. This director coordinates partnerships and services that wrap around the education program at the school. The community school director's work is shaped by participating on the School Governance Council, data teams, staff meetings, and meetings with the principal. This model brings youth development expertise and a range of in-kind agency social service supports to the students and parents.

"The Director of the Family Resource Center at the School may serve as the community school coordinator." Work of both positions cannot be done by one person. The Director of the Family Resource Center can be a strong partner in the engagement of families into the educational process, a key component of a community school.

The bill also does not have any reference to a lead agency model. The lead agency model in Hartford leverages community resources in support of the school in a well-aligned and integrated fashion. We would recommend that the legislation ask for a plan for the community school operation and that each district be permitted to use the most appropriate model of community school for their district.

With those suggestions in mind, Catholic Charities is excited about the opportunities inherent in this proposed bill and stands ready to support the bill by sharing our expertise and resources to expand the strategy across the state.

Connecticut After School Network

Testimony to the Education Committee
In Support of R.B. 1002 AAC Community Schools
March 4, 2013

Submitted by Michelle Doucette Cunningham
Executive Director, Connecticut After School Network

Good afternoon, Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Education Committee. My name is Michelle Doucette Cunningham, and I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut After School Network, a statewide alliance representing the thousands of children, parents and staff who participate in after school and summer programs all across the state.

I am here today to speak in support of establishing full-service community schools in each of the Alliance districts. As part of my job, I have had the privilege to tour model community schools in other parts of the country as well as some of those in Connecticut to see first-hand the way these schools are helping students and parents succeed while at the same time building stronger communities.

A growing body of research documents the many positive results of implementing this model:

- Students show significant gains in academic achievement and in essential areas of nonacademic development.
- Families show increased family stability, communication with teachers, school involvement, and a greater sense of responsibility for their children's learning.
- Schools enjoy stronger parent-teacher relationships, increased teacher satisfaction, a more positive school environment, and greater community support.
- The community benefits through more efficient use of school buildings and, as a result, neighborhoods enjoy increased security, heightened community pride, and better rapport among students and residents.'

I have seen these results with my own eyes, and am thrilled that the General Assembly is considering expanding this model in Connecticut with RB 1002. Connecticut would not be starting this effort from scratch -- community schools are already being implemented successfully in both Hartford and New Haven. By sharing their lessons learned, these communities can help lead the way for the other Alliance districts.

Also, after school programs are already providing some of the services that constitute full-service community schools in hundreds of programs at schools and community-based organizations across the state. In addition to keeping children safe and supervised during hours when their parents are working, after school and summer programs provide young people with academic support, remedial education, and targeted supports aimed at improving social, emotional, physical, and moral development. Such programs also provide meals and nutrition education, and are frequently involved in parent engagement efforts.

But after school and summer programs alone are not enough to make a full-service community school. A full-time Community School Coordinator is needed, as well as additional physical and mental health supports, connections to early childhood education, access to social services for families, and services for students who are not on track to graduate.

The next decade holds both great promise and enormous challenge in terms of education reform and systemic change to support student success in its broadest sense. We believe that Connecticut is up to this challenge.

Community schools keep young people safe, help working families, and help students succeed in school and in life. The benefits are clear and well-documented — thank you for raising this important bill, and I welcome the opportunity to support this effort.

Thank you for allowing me to speak with you this afternoon.

¹ Blank, M., Melaville, A., & Sha, B. (2003). Making the difference: Research and practice in community schools. Washington, DC: Coalition for Community Schools, Institute for Educational Leadership from www.comunityschools.org.



March 4, 2013

TESTIMONY ON SB 1002, AAC COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Good day, Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Education Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 1002, An Act Concerning Community Schools. My name is Susan Weisselberg, and I am the Chief of Wraparound Services for New Haven Public Schools.

In New Haven, as in many cities and towns in Connecticut, we struggle to provide adequate assessments and services for children with social, emotional, behavioral and physical health needs. As Chief of Wraparound Services for New Haven Public Schools, I work with many providers and others to utilize a framework that will improve our service delivery in a fashion consistent with school change and needs in the schools, families and community. And, much of what we are doing is consistent with a community schools model.

Background

We rebuilt nearly all our schools, led the way in healthy school foods and a district-wide wellness plan and, in 2009, reached an historic agreement with our teachers and administrators that took school change to another level.

Our vision for transformation in our school change initiative is coherent, collaborative, and persistent reform to ensure that:

- Students are learning through meaningful and coherent experiences in individual classrooms, among different classrooms, and in the rest of their lives
- Schools are centers for learning, where teams of adults take collective and empowered responsibility for students, working separately and together to move students from where ever they start to the highest performance levels, collaborating without fault
- The district and schools are supporting, developing, adapting, and innovating for persistent change

Our goals include college success, an increase in the graduation rate and reduction in the dropout rate, eliminating the achievement gap between New Haven students and the State average, and strengthening each school's effectiveness. And, we are making progress in our goals. Our graduation rate has jumped nearly 20% in several years. Our dropout rate has dropped. And the learning environment in our schools, as reported by parents, teachers, and students that we are told is the biggest survey in the city next to the US census, has consistently improved over the last several years.

Our strategies to achieve these goals include a portfolio of schools (so that each school will be organized and supported on its own unique path to success), talent (so that adults in the system will be managed as professionals to encourage collaboration, empowerment, and responsibility for outcomes – and this will enable us to attract, develop, and retain the highest caliber staff), and community and parents (so that the work of the school system will be as aligned as possible with the parents, community organizations and agencies who work on behalf of our students – and together, building community investment for the promise of college). We

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aggressively seek outside grants to assist us with school change, as evidenced by the Teacher Incentive Fund grant we were awarded in the fall by the U.S. Department of Education, with \$53 million over five years to further the development of our teachers, and a recent planning grant for innovative Professional Development from the Gates Foundation that we share with Bridgeport.

We have nearly 21,000 students in our schools, with a structure of 29 pre-K-8, K-8 and several elementary schools, two middle schools, two comprehensive high schools, and nine other high schools, as well as several transitional schools. We also have the largest pre-K program in the state. More than 80% of our student population is minority, and more than 80% qualifies for free and reduced lunch. Five percent of our students change schools after October 1st each year – some moving within New Haven, and many arriving from other school systems, other states, and other countries.

What does all this mean? It means we can and must do more to educate our students– and we can do it with our many partners. New Haven’s philanthropic, not-for-profit, governmental and business communities have been working together with us for school change utilizing all the strategies outlined above, and all are ready to do more. Continued state support for key reform components, like school turnaround and transformation and educator talent, is important, and so too is extending real support for the full range of needs faced by students raised in poverty

Wraparound Services, Boost! and Community Schools

Several years ago, United Way of Greater New Haven, New Haven Public Schools and the City of New Haven began an initiative known as Boost!, which is a customized version of community schools. Boost! is in 11 public schools, with at least five more added each year. It focuses on wraparound services, which are the non-academic supports that students need to succeed academically. We break them into four domains, which can often overlap:

- Social, emotional and behavioral
- Physical health and wellness
- Student engagement and enrichment
- Parent and community engagement

Students and families engage in similar services outside of the school system, and coordination and coherence of support have a much greater likelihood of success with a wraparound framework. In addition, resources for wraparound services are short, so coordination and alignment between internal and external providers can maximize resources. Finally, Boost! is building knowledge and systems to help to prioritize wraparound services in the context of academic and other school system priorities

A key foundation to Boost! is that participating schools list and analyze all their resources and “assets”, and then analyze their gaps in the four wraparound domains. They then work with Boost! resources in reallocating or reframing their work within the domains, in a deliberative and cohesive fashion, sometimes with additional resources that are provided through a grant from First Niagara Bank and additional fundraising by United Way.

New Haven Public Schools has social workers, psychologists and guidance counselors who work with our students on social, emotional and behavioral issues. We spend over \$10 million on their services, and we still are not able to have all three full time in each school. We also have approximately 15 school-based health centers

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(SBHCs), which could, with additional resources, serve more students' physical and mental health needs, and could perhaps serve students in a neighborhood and not just one school. We are proud of what we are doing, but we know we need to do more. Our Boost! schools ask for more interventions and help for students with social, emotional and behavioral issues, and we try to provide that assistance. We brought in the Foundation of Arts and Trauma for a program called ALIVE in 9 of the 11 Boost! schools, and we are seeing behavioral improvements, thanks to that program and our many other efforts.

New Haven's Boost! Program and SB 1002

My Boost! Partner, Laoise King of the United Way of Greater New Haven, and I would like to highlight the differences between our model and the model in the bill. We believe that both are equally valid and important and we respectfully request that, in the bill, you allow an alternative community school model based upon what we are doing systemically in New Haven. We would be happy to work with you and to provide draft language.

Our analysis of the bill and where we would seek changes:

Sec. 1. In the definition, under "full service community school," we suggest that language be added to reflect our model in the definition. Also, we suggest that wraparound services not be limited to non-school hours. We are bringing some services in during the school day, and they are helping. Our work at the schools is through a single point of contact, and many of the definitions are pertinent to what we and our partners are doing in the schools.

Sec. 2. We would suggest that this section reference our alternative model. In addition, we like our family resource centers and are expanding their work and capacity. However, we have five family resource centers and 29 K-8, elementary and middle schools. We request that, in the alternative model, it be permissive rather than mandatory for the BOE to give priority to elementary schools with family resource centers.

Secs. 3 and 4. New Haven Public Schools allow for choices in enrolling in our schools, whether they are interdistrict magnets, intradistrict magnets, or neighborhood schools; we have various preferences established and then it is on a space available basis. We conduct an inventory and a version of a school operations audit. We believe that the inventory and audit are critical to the success of a systemic, deliberative approach to a wide range of services necessary for a community school. However, the local community school governance board can result in a system of competition for resources rather than coordination of them among schools. We have an advisory committee for Boost! also meet regularly with the Boost! school coordinators and the Service Corps volunteers. We suggest an alternative in Sec. 3 that allows for a districtwide community school governance advisory board, with representation from the community schools – we believe this has the potential to bring in and coordinate more resources. Many of the schools in alliance districts have needs for these services beyond the three schools identified in Sec. 2, and the districtwide board allows for more dissemination of services.

Some of the items in the community operations audit in sec. 4(d) appear to be subjective and a challenge to collect. Is it the community/city in which the school is located or is it the neighborhood within which a school is located? If there is choice, and less than half the students at a school live in the neighborhood, how does that interplay with the notion of community here? What does access to technology mean? Access for the students, the family, or both? Is it access in the school, at home, in a library, in an after school program, in a faith-based institution, on a smart phone?

The full-time coordinator position is one model. Our model is for a relatively high level staff person at the school to spend about 50% of his/her time coordinating the Boost! services and efforts, aided by a Service Corps member from AmeriCorps, Public Allies, or Episcopal Services. And, our school Boost! coordinator works with other school staff in discussing status and issues, at a School Planning and Management Team (SPMT) meeting or a Student Staff Support Team (SSST) meeting. We believe that this model integrates well with the school. In addition, to implement the model contemplated in the bill, a full-time coordinator at 16 Boost! schools working full time on community schools would be costly in these difficult budget times. We do not want to limit our efforts to three schools – we want to expand them, as stated previously. We are in three high schools and eight elementary/K-8 schools now.

Sec. 5. The community resource assessment of potential resources is logical and necessary. In conducting a similar assessment in New Haven, we find that information from the schools and the community is difficult to gather quickly and cohesively. We have utilized information from grantors, such as United Way of Greater New Haven and The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, from community-based coalitions, from the City of New Haven, and from many other sources. The larger, more institutional providers, such as Boys & Girls Club or Clifford Beers Clinic, are easy to include. The smaller providers change all the time, depending upon staffing and funding, and so accurate information is a challenge to capture

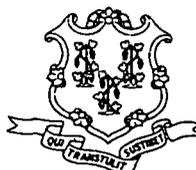
Sec. 6. The full service community school plan is an excellent goal. It truly will require an entire village to meet it. In putting that degree of work into one school's plan – and looking at how we define community – it still makes sense to look at this more broadly. We do not have that many community services in Dixwell/Newhallville and we utilize Boost! to bring in more. So, again, the definition of community is important and allowing for a broader range is important. The list at this stage will require an entire city and not just a community/neighborhood to be accurate and comprehensive. Otherwise the services are siloed. And putting the plan together will be a challenge that needs broad based, widespread assistance

Sec. 7. Making funding available is critical to the success of the model. If this legislation passes and minimal funding is provided, it will be extremely difficult to make the community school program a success - the level of work required to implement this needs significant time, funding and collaboration. And, the reporting information without the concomitant funding will be burdensome for schools and districts

We admire your efforts and intentions on behalf of students, their families and the community. Having embarked on this effort, albeit with a parallel but alternative model, we appreciate the challenges – and we applaud the results. We look forward to working with you so that the legislation can also incorporate our model.

Thank you

SENATOR DONALD E. WILLIAMS, JR.
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE



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Senator Donald E. Williams, Jr.
Senate President Pro Tempore

On

Senate Bill 1002: An Act Concerning Community Schools

Committee on Education

March 4, 2013

Good Morning.

Rep. Fleischmann, Sen. Stillman, members of the Education Committee.

Thank you for allowing me to testify today on Senate Bill 1002, An Act Concerning Community Schools.

Let me start by saying that I am a strong believer in the role of *public* education in America and in the State of Connecticut. Our public schools, our neighborhood schools, are a crucial part of our country's future. They open the doors of opportunity for our children.

At the end of the 2012 legislative session, after months of extensive deliberation on an education reform package, I knew that our job was not done. It became clear to me that we needed better public options for schools that take into consideration the assets and challenges of our schools, our neighborhoods and our families. Senator Stillman and I met with various stakeholders last year to discuss these issues. We wanted to find a better way to address obstacles to success by finding solutions within our communities. This bill is the result of the efforts of those who are joining me here today, and I thank them for their good work.

We have already put in place some of the resources necessary for successful community schools. Last year we created 1000 new slots in early childhood education, provided resources for new school based health clinics and family resource centers, and created new job training and hiring incentives for employers. There is, however, more to do.

SB 1002 provides a framework for improving our public schools by recognizing that no child and no school exists in a vacuum. Community schools draw upon partnerships within the surrounding community – they provide a collaborative and grassroots model rather than a top down approach, and offer a positive alternative to stripping away local control and privatizing our public education system.

This legislation allows local school districts to designate community schools in their districts, instructs them to conduct an audit of the current school resources, identify community resources that serve local students and their families, and develop a plan to coordinate these existing programs in a comprehensive and consistent manner.

Community schools emphasize values beyond testing and evaluations; they recognize that children are best prepared to learn when they have had quality early childhood education and come to school ready to learn, when they are not hungry and have access to health care, when their parents are involved in their children's education and have access to a Parent's Academy to assist with continuing education and employment.

Efforts nationwide to develop community schools have delivered results. In Cincinnati, Washington, D.C, Syracuse, Washington State, Maryland and California, researchers have found that community schools have contributed to higher attendance rates, higher rates of parent involvement, more job training for parents, lower rates of discipline problems, higher self-esteem for students, and increased academic achievement. All of these efforts have led to lower dropout rates, higher graduation rates and better economic opportunities for students and their families.

Dr. Helen Ladd, a Duke University Professor, co-chair of the Broader, Bolder Approach to Education campaign and a leading scholar on the connection between poverty and student achievement has said, "let's agree that we know a lot about how to address the ways in which poverty undermines student learning. Whether we choose to face up to that reality is ultimately a moral question."

Dr. Ladd also said, "schools can't do it alone. Accountability is a pillar of our education system, but schools need the support of the community – both before children arrive at school and during their school years – for all children to achieve high standards."

This bill aims to improve our schools in the context of the communities where our students live. It is not blind to the needs of children who lack the advantages of those who attend school in our wealthiest neighborhoods. This common-sense approach of understanding the challenges our children face, and securing the connection between community and our schools, provides the best chance of not only reducing the achievement gap, but of narrowing the opportunity gap. Thank you for your attention to this important matter, and I urge your support.



Testimony of Shital C. Shah
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Connecticut General Assembly - Education Committee
March 4, 2013

SB 1002: AN ACT CONCERNING COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Introduction

Good morning, my name is Shital Shah and I am here on behalf of the American Federation of Teachers in Washington, the national affiliate of AFT-Connecticut. We represent 1.5 million members in more than 3,000 local affiliates nationwide. I am an Assistant Director at the AFT. For the past several years I have worked on policy and practice of the community school strategy.

AFT believes that Connecticut, thanks in part to your work on education reform last year, is becoming a leader in creating a public education system that will make a difference in the lives of children. We believe the next step for closing the achievement gap is to find new ways to supplement children's regular coursework by directly addressing those factors, too often related to poverty, that are currently beyond the control of teachers and schools yet have a direct effect on student outcomes. The community school strategy can be a vehicle for addressing these issues.

Issue

In 2011 the poverty rate for persons under age 18 in Connecticut had risen to 14.9 percent (from 11.1 percent before the Great Recession). That means there were 35,000 more children living in poverty in Connecticut in 2011 than in 2007. Too many students come to school with needs that impede their ability to thrive academically.

We simply cannot ignore the stunning impact of income inequality and high child poverty, particularly as those trends appear to be growing. To argue that factors such as poverty, neighborhood conditions, family circumstances and other non-school factors, such as healthcare, social services and parental involvement, do not influence student achievement is wrong, and it blatantly ignores those realities in children's lives that affect their education. Of course poor children can learn and the state should take steps, as you did last year, to improve curriculum and teacher quality. But poor children also deserve and need all of the supports and opportunities and children of wealthy families have available to give them the best chances we can. These supports are even more crucial at a time like the present, when a struggling economy puts even greater pressures on families.

We know Connecticut's achievement gaps on the National Assessment of Educational Progress are among the largest in the nation. We also know those gaps exist before children ever arrive in school. They are one of the more profound manifestations of the impact of poverty on our families. We know that poor children are more likely to come to school not knowing how to count to 20 or know their ABCs. Growing economic inequality contributes in a multitude of ways to a widening gulf between the educational outcomes of rich and poor children. In the early 1970s, the gap between what parents in the top and bottom quintiles spent on enrichment activities such as music lessons, travel and summer camps was approximately \$2,700 per year (in 2008 dollars). By 2005-2006, the difference had increased to \$7,500. Between birth and age 6, children from high-income families spend an average of 1,300 more hours than children from low-income families in "novel" places — other than at home or school, or in the care of another parent or a day care facility.

Solution – The Community Schools Strategy

We propose transforming some of the schools serving our most vulnerable students, into community schools. Community schools are not a new concept. They have their roots in the earliest, richest traditions of public education. Community schools are not a program, but rather a strategy that leverages, organizes, and coordinates a community's resources to support students' and families' needs. By having programs, such as English language instruction, employment counseling, citizenship programs and GED programs, and social services in schools, parents are encouraged to get more involved in their children's education, and help to stabilize families so they can better support their children's learning. A variety of federal, state and local funding streams could be drawn upon for these services.

Across the country, many such partnerships are already using public and private assets more effectively and achieving measurable results through shared accountability. Without question, Connecticut schools need qualified teachers and strong principals. And like all public institutions, they must be accountable for improving their performance. But research shows that family and community ties are essential in order for schools to educate our children.^{1,2}

This bill is an essential first step. It enables schools to build the bridge between them and the community so together they address the barriers and challenges our students and families face on a daily basis.

The Five Essential Principles of Community Schools

1. Community schools have a strong academic curriculum. The school and community work together to ensure that students have a strong and rigorous curriculum that will further student success. The goal of academic success should advance all strategic partnership planning.
2. Community schools are a set of coordinated and purposeful partnerships with the school district that integrate services for students, their families and the community with the common goal of ensuring student success and building strong communities. Many schools offer afterschool tutoring or a series of unconnected programs. Their programs are too often unrelated, disconnected from any academic mission and necessary rigorous curriculum, and lack the support built through partnerships that engender sustainability. A full-service community school provides integrated programs and experiences that enrich learning as well as meet the needs of students and the community.
3. Community school partners may include a variety of providers and funders. They may be community-based, regional or national organizations and may have nonprofit, for-profit or faith-based status, but should provide equal access to all children.
4. Community schools provide more than one type of service to students and the community. These may include: academic services like tutoring, community-based learning and other enrichment activities; medical services like primary, vision, dental and nutritional services; mental health services like counseling and psychiatrists; and a variety of social services.
5. Community schools are based on a comprehensive and strategic plan agreed to in writing (e.g., contracts, memoranda of agreement and memoranda of understanding) between the partner organization(s), including the providers and funders, and the school. Oversight of the school site(s) requires written agreements to avoid problems of governance and operation of community schools. Written agreements also provide planning and a process for creating community school models that can be taken to scale with buy-in by all stakeholders.

Solution Driven Unionism

Across the country, AFT is working to support community schools as part of our philosophy that the union has to work with community to find real solutions. There are several **examples of Community Schools that we have learned from.**

¹ Bryk, Anthony S., Penny Bender Sebring, Elaine Allensworth, Stuart Luppescu, and John Q. Easton. *Organizing Schools for Improvement: Lessons from Chicago*. (2010). Chicago, Illinois: Consortium on Chicago School Research.

² Henderson, Anne T. and Karan L. Mapp. (2002). *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement*. National Center for Family & Community Connections with Schools. Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.

In particular,

- Cincinnati's Community Learning Center strategy has expanded over the past 13 years. They are a model and an inspiration of what can happen here in Connecticut. Over this time, they have created a network of resources from partners, representing youth development, mental health, academics, etc. Cincinnati became the first urban district in Ohio to receive an "effective" rating, the highest performing urban district in Ohio (2009-10) and they have raised high school graduation rates have from 51% in 2000 to 83% in 2009.
- Another state where we are working with elected leaders and community is NY where, Gov. Cuomo has proposed a \$15 million program to help targeted schools transform themselves into community schools that would build partnerships with counties, nonprofits and the private sector. The goal is to integrate services and supports needed for student and family success.

Community schools reflect what research and common sense confirm: All young people learn most fully when they are connected in positive ways to their communities; supported by caring relationships and appropriate health and social services in and out of school; and when time for learning is extended and rich in "teachable" moments that build social, emotional, physical and academic competence.

Family and community involvement in school-based and school-linked learning and development significantly expands the resources and supports available to children and their families— particularly the most vulnerable. And it creates the conditions for learning that enable children to do their best work. This participation builds trust and a sense of shared responsibility and investment in our schools and the well being of our children. In turn, the widespread adoption of these conditions leads to measurable improvements in the lives of children and families, schools, districts, and communities. More explicit actions to encourage and sustain the community school strategy make sense for several reasons.

Community schools work. An increasing number of community schools are producing impressive results. For example, improved reading and math scores, increased attendance, and increased graduation rates, among others.³ As the experience of Evansville, IN, Tulsa, OK, Multnomah, OR, and Cincinnati, OH (see Attachment A) individual student improvement can add up to whole school and district-wide change when a community schools strategy is broadly implemented. This cross-section of community school initiatives includes improvements in:

- Math and reading achievement scores
- Attendance and behavior
- Graduation and college entry
- Instructional leadership and supervisory practices
- Trust among students, parents and teachers
- District enrollment
- School ratings within districts
- District ratings within states

Second, a community school strategy pays off in dollars and cents. A recent study⁴ by the Coalition for Community Schools shows that community schools increase and sustain capacity through diversified financial support. Estimated conservatively, they leverage \$3 from private and other sources for every \$1 of district funding provided. When serving as the CEO of Chicago Public Schools, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan estimated a return of \$5-7 from the community schools initiative in Chicago.

³ Jacobson, R. and Pearson, S. *Community Schools Research Brief*. (2009). Washington, DC: Coalition for Community Schools, Institute for Educational Leadership.

⁴ Blank, M, Jacobson, R, Melaville, A, and Pearson, S. *Financing Community Schools: Leveraging Resources to Support Student Success*. (2010). Washington, DC: Coalition for Community Schools, Institute for Educational Leadership.

Third, there is a strong and growing core of community schools nation-wide and great interest in many other communities in implementing the strategy. From tiny suburban Tukwila, Washington to sprawling Chicago, Illinois; from Tulsa, Oklahoma to the Lehigh Valley of Pennsylvania; and from rural communities to New York City, school and community leaders have seen that the community school strategy pays off and are working to scale up their community school efforts.

The challenge is to align existing services and opportunities that are now present in schools into a coherent strategy to get results. Many schools have programs and partners – after school, health, social service, adult education; few have the coherent approach that community schools offer. Ad hoc strategies that are not deeply embedded in the school and community are not sufficient in our view.

Steps in Moving Forward

As a first step toward a community school strategy, I urge you to pass the proposed **CT Bill 1002: AN ACT CONCERNING COMMUNITY SCHOOLS**. Passing this legislation will send a message throughout the state that everyone – every person, every family, our businesses, arts and cultural institutions, higher education institutions, community-based organizations, churches mosques and synagogues, and the agencies of our city government - has a role to play.

If we organize all of the resources in the school districts and communities across the state to implement the community school strategy, our teachers and principals will have the respect, support and encouragement they need as well as being held accountable; our parents will become more engaged in the education of their children, and most importantly our students will succeed – they will have academic, social and emotional support they need and they will no longer be isolated from the opportunities and the social networks that are common for their high income peers.

In closing, there is no better time than now. More and more families are struggling financially and the number of homeless children in schools is increasing. We must have all of the key stakeholders at the table and move forward with this vision of giving every child a chance to succeed using the strategy of community schools throughout Connecticut. The American Federation of Teachers is ready to help in any way necessary. I thank you for your time.



Because Every Child Deserves Every Chance

Community Schools **RESEARCH BRIEF**

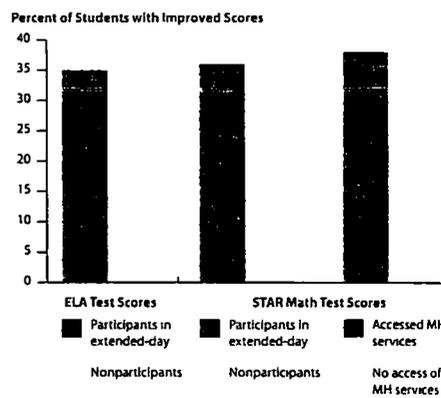
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WHAT ARE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS? WHERE ARE THEY?

In the last decade, community school initiatives have spread to localities in 49 states and the District of Columbia. The concept of community school is growing in part because it represents a vehicle for aligning the assets of students, families, teachers, and the community around a common goal—improving the success of our young people. Community schools purposefully integrate academic, health, and social services; youth and community development; and community engagement—drawing in school partners with resources to improve student and adult learning, strengthen families, and promote healthy communities.

DO COMMUNITY SCHOOLS WORK? WHAT DO WE KNOW?

A growing body of research suggests that fidelity to the community school strategy yields compounding benefits for students, families, and community. Community school students show significant gains in academic achievement and in essential areas of nonacademic development. Families of community school students show increased family stability, communication with teachers, school involvement, and a greater sense of responsibility for their children's learning. Community schools enjoy stronger parent-teacher relationships, increased teacher satisfaction, a more positive school environment, and greater community support. The community school model promotes more efficient use of school buildings and, as a result, neighborhoods enjoy increased security, heightened community pride, and better rapport among students and residents.¹ Evaluations demonstrate positive outcomes in a variety of areas.



Results of San Mateo County Community Schools study comparing 2006-07 test scores between students who participated in community school programs and nonparticipants

Improved Academic Performance—Reading and Math

Improvement in student academic performance is significant among community schools. An independent review of the national community school initiative, Communities in Schools, has reported that students in their schools excelled significantly in math and reading scores over students in other schools.²

The 150 schools in the Chicago Community School Initiative (CSI) have delivered standardized test results from 2001 to 2007 that show a steady closing of the achievement gap with other CPS schools. Out-of-school time, a key feature of the initiative, is linked to increased reading and math scores.³

In New York City, where the Children's Aid Society (CAS) has shepherded their leading community school initiative, students participating in CAS after-school programs from 2004 to 2007 scored significantly higher on their math tests than students in other city schools. In the period from 2006 to 2007, 42.1 percent of students who spent more than half their time in a CAS community school met the Level 3 standard (i.e., proficient) on the state math test. From 1993 to 1995, the number of third-grade students at a CAS community school improved by 25 percentage points in reading proficiency—from 10.4 percent to 35.4 percent—and 33 percentage points in math proficiency—from 23.3 percent to 56 percent—by the fifth grade. From 2004 to 2005, middle-school youth were significantly more likely to achieve proficiency on standardized test scores if they participated regularly in community school after-school programs. Students who participated for two years were even more likely to achieve proficiency. During the 2004–05 school year, seventh- and eighth-grade students who participated in community school after-school programs performed significantly better than non-participants on reading and math tests.⁴

A study of San Mateo County Community Schools found that their most seasoned community schools had students who regularly reached Academic Performance Index standards and achieved advanced scores on the state's English Language Arts (ELA) assessment (STAR). Compared with the previous year, student participation in extended-day activities, student and/or parent participation in mental health services, and parent participation in school programs and activities were associated with higher STAR test scores in 2006–07. Specifically, over one-third (35 percent) of youth who participated in extended-day activities improved their scores on the ELA test, while only 26 percent of non-participants improved. Over 36 percent of participants improved their scores

on the STAR math test, while only 23 percent of non-participants improved. Thirty-eight percent of students who accessed mental health services and/or whose families accessed mental health services improved their scores on the STAR math test, while just 26 percent improved if neither accessed services

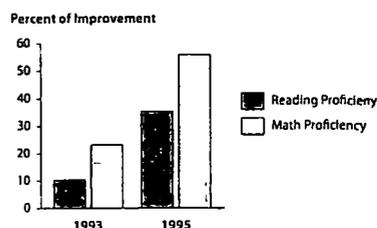
Dropout Rates Reduced—Attendance Improved

Community schools have a significant impact on reducing the dropout rate.

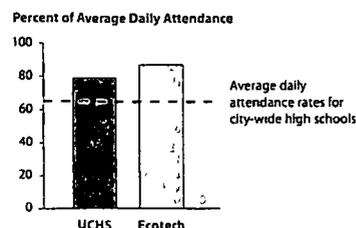
- ▶ Compared to dropout prevention programs with scientifically based evidence and listed in the U.S. Department of Education's What Works Clearinghouse, Communities in Schools is one of a small number of programs to prove it keeps students in school and is the only one in the country to prove that it increases graduation rates, graduating students on time with a regular diploma
- ▶ In Tukwila, Washington, Community Schools Collaboration's on-time graduation rate has increased annually since 2001; the rate of absentee and drop-outs for middle and high school students also has dropped.⁵

Higher attendance in community schools contributes to improved achievement. Children in community schools want to come to school and as a result they learn more

- ▶ In 2003–2004, findings for the Los Angeles's BEST After School Enrichment Program showed that higher levels of participation led to better subsequent school attendance, which in turn related to higher academic achievement.⁶
- ▶ In New York City, the Children's Aid Society students who participated in after-school programs for three or four years had better school attendance than students who participated for less time or not time at all (statistically significant).
- ▶ Nationwide, Communities in Schools found net increases in elementary, middle, and high school attendance for community schools over their matched comparison group.⁷



Early reports from the Children's Aid Society (CAS) community school initiative showed that third-graders improved in both reading and math proficiency by fifth grade



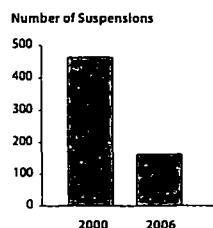
The Netter Center for Community Partnership's two CCP partner schools—University City High Schools (UCHS) and Echotech—increased average daily attendance rates compared to average citywide high school daily attendance rates

- ▶ In Iowa, the Eisenhower Full-Service Community School model demonstrated a significant reduction in absences for participants compared to non-participants.
- ▶ In the Cincinnati Public Schools' Community Learning Centers (CLCs), eight of nine community school sites reached their benchmark of 93 percent of students who attend daily.
- ▶ The Netter Center for Community Partnerships (CCP) at the University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia) reported that CCP partner schools University City High School (UCHS) and Ecotech had average daily attendance rates of 79 percent and 87 percent respectively compared to the citywide high school average daily attendance of 65 percent.
- ▶ In Arkansas, the Schools of the 21st Century model saw a 2.2 percent decrease in absenteeism rates.

Improved Behavior and Youth Development

There are beneficial shifts in the actions, attitudes, interests, motivations, and relationships of children and youth who attend a community school.

- ▶ Chicago CSI students have consistently demonstrated significantly lower numbers of serious disciplinary incidents compared to schools with similar demographics.⁸
- ▶ Shaw Middle School, which partnered with the University of Pennsylvania, saw suspensions decrease from 464 to 163 from 2000 to 2006.
- ▶ A study of the Children's Aid Community Schools found significant increases in self-esteem and career/other aspirations for all surveyed students and decreased reports of problems with communication across all three study years.
- ▶ Results demonstrate that the quality of youth-development approaches embedded in the New York City Beacons centers helped youth learn leadership skills; youth reported that they were less likely to intentionally hurt someone physically, damage other people's property, steal money, or get into a fight.⁹



Shaw Middle School partnered with the University of Pennsylvania and saw the number of student suspensions decrease from 464 in 2000 to only 163 in 2006.

Greater Parent Involvement

When families are supported in their parenting role, involvement in their children's learning increases and student performance is strengthened. Consistent parental involvement—at home and school, at every grade level, and throughout the year—is important for students' sustained academic success.¹⁰

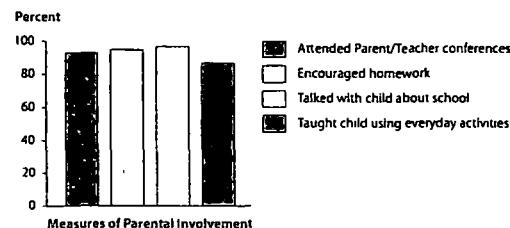
Parents of community school students are more engaged in their children's learning and are more involved in their school. In the San Mateo County Community School study, parent skills and capacities saw statistically significant improvements. Results show that 93 percent of parents attended parent/teacher conferences and a high percentage of parents encouraged their child to complete their homework (95 percent "more frequently" than "occasionally"), talked to their child about school (97 percent "more frequently" than "occasionally"), and used everyday activities to teach their child (87 percent "more frequently" than "occasionally").

Parents who receive services from the community school that their children attend are more likely to be engaged in their children's education. For example, in Carlin Springs Elementary School in Arlington, Virginia, 95 percent of the adults taking ESL classes attended parent-teacher conferences.

In two other community schools—Sayre High School in Philadelphia and Independence School District in Independence, Missouri—90 percent of Family Fitness Night participants reported that they are eating healthier and exercising more. Family School liaisons conducted 17,170 home visits from 2004 to 2007.

Benefits to the Community

Community schools promote better use of school buildings and neighborhoods enjoy increased security, heightened community pride, and better rapport among students and residents. Benefits to families—such as increased physical, economic, and emotional stability—contribute to the stability of their communities. So do more and better relationships among community agencies, businesses, and civic organizations, accompanied by a greater awareness of the services they offer.¹¹



San Mateo County Community School results show that 93 percent of parents attended parent/teacher conferences, 95 percent of parents frequently encouraged their child to complete homework, 97 percent of parents frequently talked with their child about school, and 87 percent of parents frequently used everyday activities to teach their child.

Results from the Coalition's community schools national award for excellence in 2006 and 2007 revealed that in the community school initiative of Bedford Township, Michigan, over 1,400 adults participated in more than 250 adult evening-enrichment classes. Also, over 14,000 meals per year were prepared and served at the Senior Center, over 40 adults received their GED diploma, and health vans provided transportation to and from non-emergency medical appointments 365 days per year.

Community schools promote healthy relationships between youth and adults and with youth peers in their community. In SUN Community Schools in Multnomah County, Oregon, 93 percent of students reported having at least one adult they can turn to for help. SUN Community Schools collaborate with 350 business and community partners. In the 2005–06 school year, 2,163 community and business volunteers contributed 33,000 volunteer hours to SUN Community Schools. In that same school year, 16,315 children and youth and 3,142 adults were served through SUN classes and activities. In Lincoln Community Learning Centers in Lincoln, Nebraska, the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce passed a resolution recognizing the importance of the CLC initiative to economic development.¹²

Next Steps—An Evaluation Toolkit

Evidence is mounting in support of the community school strategy as being one of the best ways to improve outcomes for children, families, schools, and communities. Over 20 community school initiatives are conducting formative and summative evaluations to monitor their progress. In an effort to build the field, both in quantity and quality, the Coalition for Community Schools is partnering with the John Gardner Center at Stanford in 2008–09 to develop a toolkit for individual community school practitioners and community school initiatives for evaluating and modifying their practice as they continue to develop more and more effective community schools.

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ENDNOTES

- 1 Blank, M., Melaville, A., & Shah, B. (2003). *Making the difference: Research and practice in community schools*. Washington, DC: Coalition for Community Schools, Institute for Educational Leadership.
- 2 A study of Communities in Schools, a national community school model found net increases of +6.0% in grade 8 math and +5.1% in grade 8 reading scores for high-implementing community schools over their matched comparison group. Net increases in math scores for all grades over their comparison groups (+2.5% urban, +3.3% rural). Net increases in math for schools predominantly serving traditionally-low performing populations.
- 3 For example, gains were recorded on the state achievement test in 2005–06 school year. "In 2001, the average CSI school had 12% fewer students meeting or exceeding expectations in reading while in 2007 CSI schools averaged only 6.9% fewer students, representing a reduction of 43% not meeting reading expectations." "In 2001, the average CSI school had half as many students meeting or exceeding math expectations as non-CSI schools (14% versus 28%), while in 2007 the difference was only 5.1 percentage points (64.2% versus 69.3%)."
- 4 Summary of the *Children's Aid Society community schools: Results to date*, Referenced from *21st Century Community Learning Centers at six New York City middle schools: Year one findings*, prepared by K. Krenichyn, H. Clark, N. Schaefer-McDaniel, & L. Benitez of Actknowledge, September 2005. See also *Summary of Fordham University research findings 1992–99*, prepared by Actknowledge.
- 5 Results from the Community Schools National Award Winners for Excellence, 2006 & 2007, Coalition for Community Schools.
- 6 Blank, M., Melaville, A., & Shah, B. (2003). *Making the difference: Research and practice in community schools*. Washington, DC: Coalition for Community Schools, Institute for Educational Leadership.
- 7 Communities in Schools found net increases of +0.2% in elementary, +0.1% in middle, and +0.3% in high school for high-implementing community schools over their matched comparison group.
- 8 The average number of serious disciplinary incidents is consistently lower by 5 to 10 incidents annually as reported from 2002 to 2006 Chicago Public Schools, Community Schools Initiative, Office of Extended Learning Opportunities, 2008.
- 9 Blank, M., Melaville, A., & Shah, B. (2003). *Making the difference: Research and practice in community schools*. Washington, DC: Coalition for Community Schools, Institute for Educational Leadership.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Results from the Community Schools National Award Winners for Excellence, 2006 & 2007, Coalition for Community Schools.



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Testimony of Werner Oyanadel before the Education Committee of the CGA in support of Raised S.B. No. 1002 "An Act Concerning Community Schools." Monday, March 4, 2013 at 11:00 A.M. in Room 2C of the LOB

Good morning State Senator Stillman, State Representative Fleischmann, and all the members of the Education Committee. My name is Werner Oyanadel, LPRAC Acting Executive Director. I am here today to speak in support of Raised S.B. No. 1002 "An Act Concerning Community Schools."

S.B. No 1002, if adopted by the Connecticut General Assembly (CGA), would establish a full service community school, which basically means under this proposal a public elementary or secondary school that participates in a coordinated, results-focused, community-based effort. This will include both public and private entities that provide comprehensive educational, developmental, family, health and wrap-around services during non-school hours for students, families and community members.

The objective of these services is to improve academic achievement, build school and community engagement and improve the skills, capacity and wellbeing of the surrounding community and its residents.

Specifically, these wrap around services may include the following:

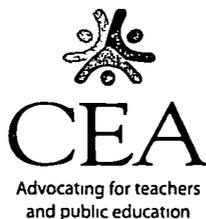
- High-quality early learning programs and services;
- Remedial education aligned with academic support and other enrichment activities that will provide students with a comprehensive academic program;
- Family engagement, including parental involvement, parent leadership, family literacy, and parent education programs;
- Mentoring and other youth development programs;
- Community service and service learning opportunities;
- Programs that provide assistance to students who have been chronically absent, truant, suspended, or expelled;
- Job training and career counseling services;
- Nutrition services, primary and mental health services, dental care, and physical activities;
- Activities that improve access to and use of social service programs and programs that promote family financial stability; and
- Adult education, including ESL instruction.

LPRAC is a strong supporter of the guiding philosophy of a full-time community school, one which is based in the belief that students will be most successful when family, school, government, and community are working in collaboration. Community schools are achievable solutions. Schools and/or parents can't do it alone. Today's youth need comprehensive, coordinated support services through school partnerships that will assist Latino parents and students overcome the many barriers that prevent our youth from achieving at the level that we know they can.

We all know by now that Connecticut is becoming increasingly diverse, and we also know that achievement for low-income students, students of color, and English Language Learners is low and stalling. Connecticut began last year making significant steps towards reforming our schools and closing the achievement gap. While great progress was achieved, everyone in the policy arena can agree that there is more work to be done. This is why LPRAC commends State Senator Donald E. Williams for inviting us to work with him during the legislative interim on strategies for closing the racial and ethnic achievement gap – gaps that are the largest-in-the-nation by race/ethnicity, by income, and to students who are just learning to speak English.

This is why LPRAC encourages members of the Education Committee to support S.B. No 1002 in the establishment of a full service community school. All children deserve the benefit of an education. By combining these comprehensive services into the educational system, students will have access to services that will help them succeed and become productive members of society and the State of Connecticut.

Thank you,



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Testimony

*Mark Waxenberg, Executive Director
Connecticut Education Association
Before the
Education Committee*

SB 1002 An Act Concerning Community Schools

March 4, 2013

Good afternoon Representative Fleischmann, Senator Stillman and members of the Education Committee. My name is Mark Waxenberg, and I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut Education Association. I am here to testify in support of Senate Bill 1002, An Act Concerning Community Schools.

As we look at the needs of our students educationally, socially, and emotionally, we cannot divorce those needs from those of the family of that student and the community that student returns to on a daily basis. The 21st Century has clearly defined the gaps that exist between segments of our society and the needs that the poorer among us have. We must recognize that schools as they were once defined in our society must change not only to meet the needs of the students who attend those schools, but also to meet the needs of the community that surrounds those schools. For too long schools have been looked upon as buildings that open at 8 a.m. and close at 4 p.m. with a sole purpose of educating students who attend during that time.

To examine the needs of the community, one of which is the education of the youth of that community we need to transition into a model that has that building open from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.. Schools today need to be lighthouses of hope for all members of the community, young and old. They need to offer services that will fully address the needs of the young and the old within that community. Schools cannot be viewed just as a place where children go to learn; it must be viewed as a place where the community goes to learn--from education to English to job skills and much, much, more.

The bill before you is not a mandate, it is a model - a model that if implemented correctly and with vision can move everyone closer to full participation in the American dream. We do not need to keep hearing the statistics of what students and adults can't do, we need to start focusing on what they can do and embrace that and nurture that within a thriving Community School model. We cannot just "pluck" the best and the brightest out of a community, send them to a charter or magnet school and think we are making progress. That attitude will only further the gap between the haves and the have nots. We need to have a model that will serve all students and address the needs of the whole community if we are to see progress.

The model before you is comprehensive and well thought out. It has been proven effective in various communities across our country and deserves to be implemented here in Connecticut. There should be no additional cost associated with creating this model because it falls within the guidelines of Alliance Schools and Network Schools which are already funded and proposed to be funded in this budget.

If we are truly going to see advances in our society-educationally and socio economically, we need to have a vision from birth to death on how we can meet the needs of our citizens between the alpha and the omega. We need to stop giving lip service to programs that we know work, and we need to take risks on programs that we believe will work. We need to start embracing models that show promise for all within a community and stop focusing on the few programs that divide our community.

We need to pass Senate Bill 1002, An Act Concerning Community Schools.

Thank You



Testimony of
Melodie Peters, President
AFT Connecticut, AFL-CIO

Education Committee
 March 5, 2013

Good afternoon Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischman and members of the Education Committee. My name is Melodie Peters and I am the President of AFT Connecticut, a diverse state federation union of nearly 29,000 public and private sector employees including state employees, nurses, other health care workers, teacher, and other school personnel. I am here to testify briefly on HB 6503, SB 997, SB 1000 and SB 1002.

HB 6503 An Act Concerning Public School Pool Safety

We are supporting the recommendations in the bill, but express concern about the possible shifting of the PE students so that you end up over populating the other PE classes. Testimony has been submitted by Kristen Byrd, one of our PE Teachers.

SB 997 An Act Establishing an Education Preparation Advisory Council

We agree with the concept of a committee that will develop a system of feedback regarding the preparation of future teachers. The data regarding teacher retention, educator preparedness, the effectiveness of recruitment efforts, especially the ability of high academically performing students and feedback from school districts regarding the readiness and effectiveness of such program graduate is a commendable choice for the committee.

We have concerns regarding using teacher evaluation and student achievement data without appropriate safe guards and without any consideration of the placement these students find themselves in.

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Testimony of Melodie Peters
March 5, 2013
Page 2

SB 1000 An Act Concerning the Establishment of an Academically Gifted Advancement Program

Generally we support but have concerns in Section 1b2 and question why this language is needed. We are unaware of any student that is required to enroll in grade 12 as long as they meet the course requirements.

Also we disagree that rewarding individuals by providing scholarships for graduating early is not necessary. These students are most likely recipients of scholarships and grants. What it does not do is recognize students that are not identified as gifted and talented but graduate early.

SB 1002 An Act Concerning Community Schools

AFT-CT strongly supports this bill because we do believe it does take a village, and if primary needs of family and children are addressed, the more receptive the children will be.

It creates definitions of community partners, what community engagement in education means as well as and the establishment and governance of community schools with the goal of creating these partners to provide needed services to students and families at these schools.

Thank you for your hard work and this opportunity to testify.

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**CONNECTICUT
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in the State of Connecticut. And I'm happy to say, Madam Speaker, that next to me in the Chambers here are a recipient of that award, Raffaella Coler with her husband, Jonathan. Not only did she get the award today, but also she is the Chairman of the Board of Education in Rocky Hill, and she has been a fine individual for the State of Connecticut and has received an award today from the Emergency Medical Association for her dedication and her outstanding efforts throughout the State of Connecticut. And I ask the Chambers to give them a huge round of applause. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Thank you for your service.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar Number 450?

THE CLERK:

On page 21 of today's Calendar, Favorable Report of the Joint Standing Committee on Education, Calendar 450, Substitute Senate Bill 1002, AN ACT CONCERNING COMMUNITY SCHOOLS.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

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

Representative Fleischmann, you have the floor, sir.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

So as its title suggests, the bill before us would allow local or regional boards of ed to establish community schools and set forth a series of guidelines that they would complete in order to have a community school. I want to make clear that everything in this bill is permissive, not required, and really is meant to make clear to any who is seeking to use this school model, what precisely it means, and also to clarify that it shall be included as one of the models available in the Commissioner's Network.

Madam Speaker, the Clerk is in possession of an amendment, LCO Number 5999. I ask that the Clerk please call and I be given permission to summarize.

jmf/gbr
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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May 20, 2013

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Will the Clerk please call LCO 5999, which will be designated House Amendment Schedule "A". I'm sorry, which will be designated as Senate Amendment Schedule "A".

THE CLERK:

Senate Amendment "A", LCO 5999, introduced by Senator Stillman and Representative Fleischmann.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

The Representative seeks leave of the Chamber to summarize the amendment, is there objection to summarization? Is there objection?

Hearing none, Representative Fleischmann, you may proceed with summarization, sir.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

This is a pretty minor amendment, it clarifies a definition in the opening of the bill and clarifies near the close of the bill what precise processes shall be followed if -- if a district choose to adopt the community school model. I move adoption.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

The question before the Chamber is adoption of Senate Amendment Schedule "A". Will you remark on the amendment?

Representative Ackert of the 8th.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and a few questions on the amendment through the -- through you?

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Will you frame your question, sir.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

On line 2 of the amendment, there's a deletion of during hours in which the school is not in session, that was in the original legislation. What was the reasoning for eliminating that sentence?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, I believe that attorneys concluded that those words were not needed. That, in fact, wrap-around services occur sometimes during school hours and sometimes after school hours.

So the phrase to which my good colleague referred was unnecessarily narrow.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Ackert, you still have the floor, sir.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

And that was -- I appreciate the answer. I think -- I think part of the -- maybe the original intent was thinking that it would interrupt with classroom time knowing that many of these schools are used for multiple reasons. And after school hours, you know, they could have night classes for students or extracurricular activities, so understand the change for that. But the term isn't -- the intent is obviously not to -- would not impose a negative effect on the educational process?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, that is correct.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Ackert, you still have the floor,
sir.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

And then on line 6 of the amendment, a local or regional board of education may designate an existing school. So at this time, we actually have -- matter of fact, we had some singers in here from a Waterbury school that we termed a community school. So if that school as it stands now has no intent of following this legislation, they could continue to act as they -- as they do today?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, yes.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Ackert, you still have the floor,
sir.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

And thank you to the good Chair.

Now if the board of education or regional board of education decides to do that, that's where the

enactment would be not from -- from the SDE, State Department of Education, correct?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, yes, it is the local or regional board of education that may choose to give the community school designation to a local school.

Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Ackert.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

And thank you to the good Chair.

On line 7, such community shall coordinate, so community school shall coordinate with community partners to provide services. The shall, who is that that's going to collaborate this effort?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, as I read it, this reference is to the community surrounding the school

that has been designated as a community school. So it's -- it's really the responsibility of the local or regional board of education to ensure that the community school in fact coordinates with its local community.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Ackert.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

And I caught a portion of that and it's -- due to a little bit of the noise back here, but so -- and I apologize. The second half of that answer, so they'll designate an individual or somebody from human services maybe in their office, but it would be designated from the board of education?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker. The bill is silent on who from the community school is in charge of the collaboration, so I believe that is really left to local -- local control.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Ackert, you still have the floor,
sir.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

Thank you, and I heard him well there.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, on that one.

So it would seem to be that this collaboration would -- would be a very comprehensive job, not something that could be taken on by existing resources. Somebody that, and this is key, because it is a comprehensive bill in terms of its requirements, if so designated to choose a school to be a community school. So I imagine that from testimony, actually -- they actually said in testimony that one person is probably not enough to handle this job and it might take a couple. And those are from the schools that are actually existing using and having active community schools in the State of Connecticut now.

Now the -- on line 12 of the -- after one, it says and operations and instructional audits will be conducted. And it looks like -- is this a -- is this an audit that's in place now or this obviously would be something new and it would have to be developed?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker. So the type of audit that my good colleague has referred to is already conducted by the State Department of Education when they're looking at a school for inclusion in the Commissioner's Network. And I believe that the type of audit that's described here is -- is well known in Connecticut, it would just have to be implemented to create the community school in the bill.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Ackert, you still have the floor, sir.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

And thank the good gentleman for his answers. So we actually have community schools in action now. I believe New Haven, when they testified, had 11, City of Hartford has seven. The audit system is already in place and being enacted and now we're putting in legislation to -- to put it on our books. And it

seems to be a process that's working very well, so I still struggle with this piece of this legislation.

The line -- on line 22, board of education shall develop a community school plan for each school designated as a community school and continues on that very comprehensive when evolving such community school plans, such boards shall use the results of the community resource assessment to address specific needs. And I guess that that collaborator would be the one that -- put in the collaboration of it -- overseeing this -- or group of individuals will report to the State in this case or the legal board of education or possibly community leaders, a mayor, or first selectman, and provide that audit to those -- for that school to act upon?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker. I believe the intention is that the audit and assessment that is done is done to inform the structuring of the community school. So I would expect that a local or regional board of education would get the information.

I would expect those who run the school would get the information. That information would not need to flow to the State until later in the process.

Also just to clarify one other concern that seemed to be raised in the comments that preceded the question. So Hartford and New Haven do have a number of community schools. There are many, many districts in Connecticut that currently don't have the power to do what Hartford and New Haven are doing because they created their community school under a pilot program and this bill would allow other districts to follow their lead.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Ackert, you still have the floor, sir.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

Okay. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

And that raises question. It was a good comment and I understand that the term power -- and if I could ask the good Chairman to -- to explain the term they didn't have the power to do what Hartford and New Haven did. Is it that the leadership didn't grant them the power in the community, the school

department, I mean the local board of education did not give them the power?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker. I'm referring to the sorts of powers that we as a Connecticut General Assembly delegate through our statutory framework. There is a pilot program presently that I believe covers some major cities in Connecticut, but not most districts, that says community schools are one of the models they can use to turn around schools. So that's a model that's available to Hartford, it's available to New Haven, it's not available to most other districts. Following passage of this bill, it would be.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Ackert.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

And thanks to the good Chairman for his answer to that. I greatly appreciate that.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

You still have the floor, sir.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

Thank you. Yes, I was just reading through my scribbling notes, and I apologize for my poor penmanship. And at this time, I'll heed the floor to somebody else on this. And I thank the good Chairman, through you, Madam Speaker, on the explanation of the amendment as presented.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Noujaim of the 74th.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Good afternoon, ma'am.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Good afternoon, sir.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you.

Through you, Madam Speaker, I would like -- obviously I am in support of this legislation. You saw here last week the wonderful students who came from the Children's Community School in Waterbury, and they sang for all of us, and I'm sure everyone in this Chamber was very, very pleased. As a matter of fact, the following day they received a front page article

in the *Waterbury Republic-American*, I see Representative Fritz sitting down looking beautiful in this picture.

But, Madam Speaker, in Waterbury, we have succeeded a great deal. We really -- we really have succeeded with the community -- the Children's Community School, and it's been there for 45 years. The key to the Children's Community School in Waterbury is the participation of the community. As a matter of fact, this -- the Children's Community School has a tuition of only \$330 for students, and some money come to it from the State of Connecticut. But a great deal of its budget, about \$900,000 of each annual budget comes strictly from community -- from the community, from volunteers who pour a great deal of money into supporting the school and supporting the children.

And the children who attend the Children's Community School are basically underserved children, so they are -- they are children whose financial needs are not in a very good shape. So the community and the foundations in Waterbury and along the City of Waterbury and the greater Waterbury area are in support of this school and that's why it survives.

And the thing about it is I am sure that other community schools that exist in the State of Connecticut also receive the same type of support.

My question, through you, Madam Speaker, to Representative Fleischmann is it seems to me that this system is working and working very well in the State of Connecticut. I am obviously in knowledge of the one in Waterbury because I spent the past 20 years being with those kids and supporting them in everything we can, but I am not aware of other schools in other cities. But from what I understand is that we have them also in New Haven and -- and Hartford and obviously they are working very well. So, through you, Madam Speaker, what does this legislation do to enhance the community schools in the State of Connecticut?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker. I would just to observe that as I understand it, we are currently discussing Senate Amendment "A", LCO 5999, and so I'm not sure how to answer my good colleague's question.

It seemed to me to go to the bill as a whole. Senate Amendment "A" improves and clarifies the bill.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank -- thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

You still have the floor, sir.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

And I am on the amendment as a matter of fact.

On line 5 of the amendment it says on and after July 1, 2013, a local or regional board of education may designate an existing school or establish a new school to be a community school. So the amendment itself does address this issue that Representative Fleischmann has spoken about just a few seconds ago.

Through you, Madam Speaker, so this is the line that I would like to inquire about.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker. As I understand it, Waterbury is one of a handful of districts that are currently able to designate schools as community

schools and then set up the collaborations pursuant to that designation. Under this bill, it's original file copy and Senate Amendment "A", a whole host of other boards, local and regional, that don't currently have that ability could make a designation similar to the one that Waterbury has made for the good school that my colleague has referenced.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Noujaim.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

And, through you, Madam Speaker, to Representative Fleischmann, so if I am to understand this amendment, it is simply an enabling amendment that will enable any district in any town in the State of Connecticut to designate a community school or start a community school?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, yes.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Noujaim, you still have the floor,
sir.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

And, through you, Madam Speaker, to -- one final question to Representative Fleischmann, I do not see in the amendment and also on the bill subsequently insofar as any financial assistance from the State of Connecticut to the said school to be determined. So, through you, Madam Speaker, this is simply enabling and that is it?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, yes.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Noujaim.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

And obviously I am in support of community schools and if there are some towns in the State of Connecticut that now they do not have the ability to establish a community school, I think this is a real

good thing. And I think it will serve the students who are underserved, and they are the leaders of our - - of our community of the future and when we all retire and get old. So I stand in support of it and I encourage towns to work together with their partners to establish foundations and have people who have the financial abilities to support community schools so that we can support those students. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Thank you, sir.

Will you remark on the amendment before us? Will you remark further?

If not, let me try your minds. All those in favor, please signify by saying Aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

All those opposed, Nay.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Nay.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

The Ayes have it and the amendment is adopted.

Will you remark further on the bill as amended?

Will you remark further on the bill as amended?

Representative Ackert of the 8th.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

A few questions to the proponent of the bill as amended, please.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Please frame your question, sir.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

Just looking at the fiscal note, through you, the amendment does not change the fiscal note, is that correct?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker, yes. I just want to double check, but I'm pretty sure that is correct. The amendment clarified the audit and assessment process, but has no fiscal impact on the underlying bill which means that the original fiscal note associated with the file copies still pertains.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Ackert.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

And the fiscal note that is in the bill on OFA's assessment is significant. So I guess the concern would be -- many of the -- I think that many of these towns and communities have all the services that this bill addresses. It puts it under, what it looks like to me, an umbrella of collaboration so that if there was somebody who wanted adult education which is in the bill, family services. I know and I've -- obviously smaller communities that I serve, whether it's the youth services bureau, family services, we don't actually have a lot to do with adult education in small communities. But if those are already in existence, if it's to my understanding that this is going to kind of put it under a collaboration process, why would there be such a significant fiscal note?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker. Well, first I want to point my good colleague to the explanation of the fiscal note. The opening begins, the bill allows local or regional school districts to establish community schools. To the extent that a district chooses to establish a community school, the district would incur a cost. So if a district does not choose to create a community school, there is no cost. The only cost is one that is taken on (inaudible) by the local education authority.

Now in terms of what those costs would be, those costs vary. Our Office of Fiscal Analysis went and looked at the varying kinds of costs that it found when it studied what's been done in other states and in ours at different levels of education. But as Representative Noujaim pointed out, if you're going to have major collaboration with significant community partners that surround the school, it's potentially costly because you're bringing in all sorts of services to the school at all sorts of hours that wouldn't necessarily be available in a standard school.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Ackert, you still have the floor, sir.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

And thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you to the good Chair.

And it was, and I -- and I do understand that this is a may and not a shall. And I -- and I can't thank the Chairman enough for his making -- making sure that is true. Sometimes though I get concerned that these -- these are very laudable intentions, but when I do see, you know, significant costs and as we know through many of our larger cities at this time and obviously in our state, we struggle with the cost of -- of running a regular government. And at this time I'm not sure this is the right move. Obviously it rolls out and you can decide, I guess when your town has money or your city has money to go forward with this.

It's just that we're opening it but we also put how we want you to kind of oversee it, what is going to be included. And that at times brings up some concern of mine. But as the good Representative from Waterbury can attest to and did attest to that the value of the community schools. And I still struggle

with the fact that we have to do this in this way, that it does need this piece of legislation for these schools to -- to go forward and to have this collaboration. So I will end my discussion on this. At this time I probably will not be supporting this legislation, but I will listen to further dialogue if there is any.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you to the good Chairman for his very thoughtful answers.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Thank you, sir.

Representative Lavielle of the 143rd.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Good afternoon, nice to see you. I have a few questions for clarification to the proponent of the bill if I may, to the good Chair of the Education Committee. I'm interested to know, I think the Chair and Representative Ackert clarified a few things already in terms of why there's a need for a new bill, because the current community schools in Hartford and New Haven are operating under a pilot program. I wonder if the Chair could tell us, was there a bill, a

statute change, at some point that provided for those schools to exist?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker. Yes, I believe that we -- this Legislature did empower those districts to pilot the community schools. I don't have in front of me the precise date on which the General Assembly so acted.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Lavielle, you still have the floor, madam.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

And the reason for my question, I am interested to know how long ago those schools were allowed to come into existence and how long they've been operating and, therefore, how much of a view we can have in terms of their success or other performance.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker. As I indicated, I don't have in front of me the date upon which we initially empowered certain districts to set up community schools. I think one of the purposes of this bill is to make sure that there's more uniformity in the community school model. The community school that Representative Noujaim described in Waterbury may be quite different from some of the ones in New Haven and Hartford. And under this measure, community schools going forward, if -- if they're chosen as a local model, will involve certain elements and reporting so that we can actually collect data and compare these schools to each other and to other schools in a more systemic way.

Through you, Madam Chair.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Lavielle.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I thank the good Chair for his answer.

One of the concerns that I -- that I discussed in Committee and -- and still have to an extent, and

again this was just discussed a bit in the -- in the debate, is in terms of the management and coordination of the great diversity of services that would be provided through a community school and that is currently provided actually in the ones that exist. Because in addition to education, I note in the bill and the amendment there's, for example, mental health, medical dental services, job training, nutrition, legal services. And I understand the reasoning for -- for what we colloquially call wrap-around services. But I would -- and Representatives Ackert and Fleischmann talked a bit about who might be -- how much coordination would be necessary, but I wonder if Representative Fleischmann could speak a little bit further to the qualifications of the person or people who would be managing and coordinating the delivery of these services and the partnerships with the various agencies.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker. The bill is very clear on the type of collaborations that are meant to

be encouraged and in place for community schools. It is silent on precisely who within a school system shall be responsible because we believe that's a matter for local control. So the qualifications and so forth of the people who are leading the community school engagement process we leave to local control.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Lavielle, you still have the floor, madam.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

And I have a further precise question on lines 62 through 64 of the underlying bill. I can look at the lines, I know what they make reference to, but it's 62 through 64, and it talks about the report that the commissioner of education shall submit to the General Assembly. And in those lines it refers to in the contents of that report, it would include any information on state and federal barriers to implementation and effective coordination of services at the community school. And I wonder if we could -- if the -- if Representative Fleischmann could tell us a bit more about what is implied by state and federal

barriers, what those might be since we have a statute that would allow these schools.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Madam Speaker. The reason for the report that's described in this subsection (f) is that we're not necessarily aware as we stand here today of what barriers and challenges those seeking to create, you know, top notch community schools might run into. So, for instance, we think that there -- it should be doable to have strong collaboration with the local community health clinic. But there are rules surrounding privacy of student records, there are rules surrounding privacy of individual medical records. It's possible that those federal rules could make collaboration more difficult than we foresee. So this is essentially meant to provide us with information we don't have currently about anything that is making it more difficult than it ought to be for there to be the sorts of collaborations we want to see at community schools.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Lavielle.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Does that -- I'm a bit perplexed, does that mean that we may be going into our allowing, because I know this is a may instead of a shall and I appreciate that, does that mean that we are allowing local school districts to enter into arrangements that might actually not be permitted to go to such an extent at the federal or state level?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

Through you, Madam Speaker, no. Federal law preempts state law, state law preempts local ordinance, so it would be illegal and impossible for a local district to enter into any sort of agreement that ran contrary to federal or state statute.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Lavielle.

REP. LAVIELLE (143rd):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I thank the Representative for his answers to all that. I'll just make a comment. The -- I think that the intention and certainly the permissive nature of this bill, the enabling nature, are positive things. I do, however, continue to have some concerns about the breadth of service that would be offered or perhaps it would be more accurate to say managed by one organization whose vocation has traditionally been and -- and is still education, the fundamentals of which clearly in some parts of the state our schools still have difficulty in delivering which we see through the achievement gap and so on and so forth. I would like to see a good bit more data coming from the community schools that exist, and some -- some further confirmation of success rates which -- which are qualified in the bill in terms of various things like graduation rates and performance and so on and so forth. But it's of concern to me that the people who are administering our local schools are very qualified in the education area, as they should be, and hopefully they will become more and more qualified. But there are a lot of things here such as legal services and health services and so on where they have

not been trained. And to find people who could actually coordinate and offer all of these different things for administration and evaluate them and look seriously at what they are allowing the school to contribute to the community and to the performance of the students is perhaps not in the core competencies of those who are administering our education system. So while there were certain things about the intent of the bill that I think are -- are very positive, I won't be supporting the bill today. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Thank you, madam.

Representative Camillo of the 151st.

REP. CAMILLO (151st):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Good afternoon to you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Good afternoon to you, sir.

REP. CAMILLO (151st):

Just a quick question to the proponent, the good Chairman of the Education Committee, I understand with as many varied sources of funding, you know, private foundations, private businesses, local, state, federal

funding, if a community were to set up one of these schools and something happened say and it failed and there was still some debt incurred on it, who would pick up the debt on that?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, the entire obligation of making the decision to create a community school, ensuring that it's properly funded, ensuring that if the funding isn't sufficient that it's wound down, all of that responsibility lies at the local level. It's unlike -- it seems to me unlikely that there would be an indebtedness situation because usually programs don't get started until the funding is in place. But if there were to be debt accrued, that would be a local obligation as is the decision to create such a school in the first place.

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Representative Camillo, you still have the floor, sir.

REP. CAMILLO (151st):

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

And I thank the good gentleman for his answer. I'm just a little concerned about that. I like the concept and I thank him for his explanation of the bill. It just worries me because we've seen sometimes where a municipality or a local community hasn't been able to fund something and then they've turned around and the state had to come and -- and kick in some funding. That -- that was the only question I'm at. But I thank the gentleman for his answers, and thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Thank you, sir.

Representative Kokoruda of the 101st.

REP. KOKORUDA (101st):

Good afternoon, Madam Chairman. Good to see you up there.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Good afternoon, madam.

REP. KOKORUDA (101st):

This bill I voted against in Committee and, you know, after our historic education reform bill last year, you know, we have alliance districts, network schools, and all these different options. And -- and

I just found we have wrap-around programs and we have afterschool programs, and it just seemed to be almost too much. But as I read through the bill in a little more detail, there's a couple of things I really do like about it. I like the idea, as the Chairman of Education pointed out, that this does require community schools that exist today and future to develop a plan. It also has a mandate for reporting which I think is better than what exists today.

And I'm going to support this bill today because I do feel after looking at the bill in more detail that this is just another turnaround option under the Commissioner's Network. And I think that's a fair statement. It just seems we've got so many things out there, but if this model is something a community wants, they should be able to pick it. And it will be funded, I would assume, under the Commissioner's Network options, you know, as all these other options are funded. So with that, Madam Chairman, I will support this -- Madam Speaker, I will support this today. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Thank you, madam.

Will you remark further on the bill as amended?

Will you remark further on the bill as amended?

If not, will staff and guests please come to the well of the House, will the members please take your seats, the machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives if voting by roll.

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

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

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

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Will the Clerk please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

Bill Number -- Senate Bill 1002, as amended by Senate "A" in concurrence.

Total number voting	136
Necessary for passage	69
Those voting Yea	102
Those voting Nay	34

Those absent and not voting 14

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

The bill passes in concurrence with the Senate.

Representative McGee, for what reason do you
rise, sir?

REP. MCGEE (5th):

Madam Speaker, I just wish to be recognized in
the affirmative for the last vote, for the record.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

The transcript will reflect the affirmative --
I'm sorry, Representative McGee in the affirmative.
Thank you.

Are there any announcements or introductions?

Representative Cook.

REP. COOK (65th):

Good afternoon, Madam. How are you today?

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

Good afternoon.

For what reason do you rise, madam.

REP. COOK (65th):

I rise for purchase of an announcement.

DEPUTY SPEAKER MILLER:

You may proceed, madam.

REP. COOK (65th):

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THE CHAIR:

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Thank you, Senator.

Are there further remarks? Any further remarks?

Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Thank you, Mr. President.

If there isn't an objection, I'd like to ask that it be added to the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Is there objection to placing this item on Consent?
Is there objection?

Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

On Page 24, Calendar 300, Substitute for Senate Bill Number 1002, AN ACT CONCERNING COMMUNITY SCHOOLS, Favorable Report of the Committee on Education.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Thank you, Mr. President.

I move the joint committee's Favorable Report and passage of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

Before the Chamber is a question of acceptance and passage. Do you care to remark further?

SENATOR STILLMAN:

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Yes; thank you, sir.

This bill allows local or regional boards of education to establish community schools in their, in their districts. And that's just a broad statement, but I do have an amendment to clarify a section of the bill. I'd like to ask the Clerk to call LCO Number 5999 and that I be allowed to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

Would the Clerk please call LCO 5999 and designate it Senate Amendment Schedule "A."

THE CLERK:

LCO Number 5999, Senate "A," offered by Senator Stillman and Representative Fleischmann.

THE CHAIR:

If the lady would move adoption of the amendment.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Yes; thank you, sir. I do move adoption.

THE CHAIR:

Permission to summarize has been requested. Without objection, you may proceed, Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Thank you, sir.

What this amendment does is it clarifies the procedure that a board of education needs to conduct, in terms of its audits, so that they can be assured that the school that they are considering, the model of a community school that they are considering is one that is appropriate.

The LCO attorneys thought it needed a little clarification; and, again, I move its adoption.

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Will you remark further on Senate "A?" Will you
remark further on the amendment?

If not, Chair will try your minds. The item before
the Chamber is Senate Amendment Schedule "A." All in
favor, please indicate by saying Aye.

SENATORS:

Aye.

THE CHAIR:

All those opposed, say Nay.

The Ayes have it. Senate "A" is adopted.

Will you remark further on the bill as amended?

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Yes, if I may.

(President in the Chair.)

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, ma'am.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Thank you, Madam President. Thank you, very much.

The -- the idea of community schools, which do exist
here in this state and in other parts of the country,
is an idea that I believe is very important, as we
look at our network schools and adding the -- and the
improvements that we would like to see for, through
our network schools that have been identified by the
Commissioner.

We already allow, under existing law, a variety of
choices or models of schools that network schools and

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the boards of education in the respective communities can adopt. And I believe that this is a -- a good choice to add community schools to the -- the list of models.

The bill spells out the steps a board must complete in order to establish a community school, including the audits, which we just addressed in -- in the amendment. The bill requires boards that establish these schools to also report to the Department of Education on the school's progress, on an annual basis. And as they look at -- as -- as the districts look at possibly establishing a community school, we hope that those audits will give them some clarity in terms of the choices that they can make in providing services that are far more comprehensive to our students and their families.

A community school is a public school; it is not, does not necessarily have to be a brand-new school, in terms of new-school construction. It's usually, it's usually established as an alternative to an existing school that they believe will provide a better educational opportunity for our children, their families. They have an opportunity to add wrap-around services, which we have addressed in our education reform package of bills that we adopted last year.

And I believe that because community schools can take advantage of community resources, that this a -- a very good opportunity for communities to establish schools that bring the -- just as it states -- the entire community into play, into a school. Sometimes they stay open after school to provide service, to provide not just services but learning environment at the end of the day or into the evening.

It can, a community school can provide adult education opportunities and encourages parental involvement. And I believe it is an appropriate addition to our list of -- of model schools that can be available to the network schools.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

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Thank you.

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Will you remark?

Senator Meyer.

SENATOR MEYER:

Thank you, Madam President.

Speaking in support of Senator Stillman's community school bill, I have visited a half-a-dozen community schools in New York and want to tell you what a service they can provide. Indeed, they are almost like a boarding school within a city. The multitude of services are provided; they reach the whole child, like -- like most schools don't do. They're often very open; they're open often in the, in the evenings, on the weekends. They have adult education for parents that often lead to a GED degree. So this is a major movement for a segment of our student population and their families, and I urge its approval.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Senator LeBeau and then Senator Boucher.

SENATOR LeBEAU:

Thank you, Madam President.

Also speaking in favor of the bill, as a former-founder of an alternative high school program, a very successful one in East Hartford, Connecticut, and knowledgeable about community schools, the community schools are a very -- they're -- they're actually not a new -- new idea. They're an old idea that started in Flint, Michigan in the, in the sixties and seventies, but they are an effective idea. They work because, as has been said by Senator Stillman and Senator Meyer, they involve the community. They bring the community in but they also reach out to the community, so they're bringing, there's an interaction with the community and there's also particularly an

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interaction with the parents that is much more in depth than in most public schools.

And, frankly, the key word for the success of community schools is "family," that there is a sense of family within the school, that people feel like that their school becomes their extended family, that they care about the school and people care about each other in a very profound and -- and moving way that makes an effect on the child who knows that he or she is loved, cared for, concerned about, and wants to perform to -- before his peers and for his family and all those around him. And they cheer each other on; they help each other out. And that is the key to the success of community schools.

I think this is a -- a very, very good addition to our options available, and I commend the Education Committee and -- and Senator Stillman for bringing this out today.

Thank you, very much, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I reluctantly rise to oppose this particular bill and not necessarily for the -- the model that it is professing to be and certainly in the models that are out there.

We currently have a number of models that could fit this very same definition, that do some of the very same things. But what gives me pause, in that we do want to have as much as possible a variety of models that will address many of the various barriers to getting an equal and good education for all of our children in Connecticut, however, in the OFA report, it clearly states that this model would have a significant cost to a school district and that the

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four, Commissioner's network schools identified in 2013 revised budget implements wrap-around services, which are very characteristics of community schools that really speak to the significant costs that are there of models that we're currently entertaining.

And it does give a pause to the philosophical debate around how far our state government should embark and go before it becomes the actual home of a student and how much of it should rightfully belong in a private home with the parents of those students.

When we talk about the various things that one of these community schools would provide, it lists nearly 15 different services: Primary medical or dental care; mental health treatment and services; academic enrichment activities; programs designed to improve student attendance at schools; youth development programs; early childhood education; parental involvement programs; child care services; programs that provide assistance to students who are truant, who have been suspended or expelled; youth and adult job training and career counseling services; nutrition education; adult education; remedial education enrichment activities; legal services; or any other appropriate services or programs. And, individually, these are all wonderful things to be able to provide, as well as breakfast, lunch, and dinner, in fact, becoming the home. And that's what gives one pause, is where is the line going to be drawn between school and the home, and exactly where should some of these activities really rightfully reside. That's the only pause on this particular bill and -- and problems I might have with this.

I think that we currently have many models; in fact, any charter could designate any one of these activities or all of them together in a charter that they would come before the Department of Education to get approved. And so to designate this as a separate category seems to me to be redundant of what we have already ongoing here at the state. It is certainly better than some of the original proposals that actually required some of these in place of certain charter schools that we currently are modelling our under-pilot situations.

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So it certainly is better than where this bill started, because it is more voluntary, and it's up to the local communities to embark in this direction. But, again, I think that for some of us in thinking about this is how far does really government go, and should we be providing legal services that are currently available to those that need it, should they not have the resources of their own to provide it.

So I -- I think in that regard, it's just a little bit of concern about the overreach of where we might be going with this particular model.

Thank you, very much, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Will you remark?

Senator Stillman, a second time.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Yes; thank you, Madam President.

I would just like to react to Senator Boucher's concerns, which are -- are valid and I certainly appreciate them. She's a -- a wonderful member of our Education Committee, and I appreciate all her -- her work, as the Ranking Member on Education.

But I think the key here in this bill is the fact that the communities, through the boards of education, have to do an audit, and part of that audit is to determine which of the services -- and she has mentioned many of them -- but which of those services are appropriate for the school. Certainly if you're going to do a community school in an elementary school, you might not have youth and adult job training, if they don't think it's necessary. There could be different -- or there might not be adult education or legal services provided. I mean, these are just some of the things that boards of education can -- can look at and determine what's, what is appropriate, where are the

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needs within the district for that particular school that a community school can address.

And I think many of those services we -- we already know in some existing community schools are provided sometimes pro bono, if it's legal services, or they're just bringing an already existing town service into the building, the school building so the children and their families, where they may feel more comfortable, can receive those services.

So I -- I do think that the fact that they can pick and choose as to what's appropriate for a community school in their town or district also will be reflective of the fact that they do receive extra dollars as a network school. I mean, that's the whole point is that the state is giving them the resources so that the -- the children can have the opportunities that sometimes their districts cannot afford. So I understand the concern for costs. If -- if a school was going to set up a family resource center, as part of their community school they were going to bring it in, that would be included in those network costs.

So, I, again, I -- I appreciate Senator Boucher's comments, but I do believe that this is a great opportunity to improve education outcomes in the state. And as we continue to look at the achievement gap and the need for more early childhood education, I think a -- a -- an opportunity of developing a community school in a town is an option that should be on the table.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Senator McLachlan.

SENATOR McLACHLAN:

Thank you, Madam President; welcome back.

I stand for a purpose of question to the proponent of the bill.

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THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR McLACHLAN:

Thank you, Madam President.

Senator, the -- the bill before us seems to be voluntary, and my concern is that if it is voluntary and the community doesn't have the resources to implement this, they're going to be under a great deal of pressure from their local residents to fund this. So my question is: What state funds will pay for the cost of the implementation of a community school?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Thank you, Madam President.

The fact that they have to be a network school, to begin be; they have to be designated as such within -- by the Commissioner of the Department of Education, and that this is one of the choices that that network law could provide, if the bill passes.

Already, we already have compact schools. We have schools that -- that are choices, schools that look at reorganizing the way they instruct the children, and we also have social development models. So this is just another opportunity.

The dollars to do this would be provided through the network funding from the state.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator McLachlan.

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SENATOR McLACHLAN:

Thank you, Madam President.

So just for further clarification, through you, state government is going to fund a hundred percent of the cost of the community school?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Thank you, Madam President.

The state would be sending, as a network school, there are dollars that go to that district, those dollars would be incorporated into this, this network school. Alliance districts receive extra state dollars.

Now, if a school wanted to expand on it and they had the budget to do that, they could go above and beyond. But there will be dollars that go along with this, because as a network school designation, you get additional state money.

THE CHAIR:

Senator --

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Through you --

THE CHAIR:

-- McLachlan.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

-- Madam President.

SENATOR McLACHLAN:

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Thank you, Madam President.

Thank you, Senator.

My concerns are, frankly, that this is a wish-we-could, and I think there's a lot of wish-we-could in state government. The problem with our Legislature is we have all these wish-we-could, but we just do it anyways when there's no money. And I'm --I'm not disputing the fact that this has a lot of good ideas in it. I -- I can see where, you know, providing assistance to children in great need is a good idea.

My concern is that this is going to put pressure on local chief elected officials to fund a program that they don't have the money for and that state government is not going to fully fund, and that's really my concern.

And when we look at comments from the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities that said the bill would create yet another new, unfunded mandate and the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education oppose the bill because it places a significant additional burden on local municipalities, I think that for those reasons, in this budget environment, with this, with the very tight burdens that local municipalities are facing right now and obviously what state government is facing, I would urge rejection of this bill for now. And if the economy changes, let us revisit it.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Will you remark? Will you remark?

Senator Harp.

SENATOR HARP:

Thank you, very much, Madam President.

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I rise to support this bill. And I know that I've heard in the debate that this may cost; I just want to share the experience that New Haven has had, actually, our United Way and other foundations in our community have come together to fund what is called the Boost! Program, in New Haven. And it's operating, in many respects, like a community school in eight schools in our town. And it's been able to use those resources to provide information to parents to help them improve their parenting. It has utilized some of the state resources to do a parent university and has been able to provide wrap-around services for a lot of the children in those eight schools.

One of the most outstanding programs that they've been able to institute is a childhood trauma program. And, as you know, last year there were 37 deaths; many of them were children in our community. So many of the children in our schools have had friends who've either been shot or killed, and this trauma program that is part of the overall Boost! program goes into the schools and addresses the trauma of the kids' right there and then.

And I'm going to tell you, one of our schools that they piloted this program in had over 700 children referred to the principal's office, one year. After three years of having this trauma program, only 28 children were referred to the principal's office. And why did that work? Because when a teacher recognizes some of the signs of trauma, the child immediately goes to someone in the school who intervenes and gives the child the ability to talk through their issues. The child can then, after 15, 20 minutes of intervention go back into the classroom, is focused, and can begin to learn.

Had we not had that program, that Boost! that, as I said before, was supported by our United Way, this same child would have been a child that would have been referred to the office and likely suspended. So it is a wonderful program. It creates a wonderful learning environment, and it engages the parents and the community in the life of the school.

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So I absolutely am thrilled that we are moving this concept forward and it can become a part of network schools, and I urge your adoption.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark? Will you remark?

Senator Williams.

SENATOR WILLIAMS:

Thank you, Madam President.

Just very briefly, I want to thank Senator Stillman and the work of the committee on this bill, also to address Senator McLachlan's good point and concern about some of the testimony at the public hearing concerning potential costs.

And, actually, the file copy that they were responding to at the, at the public hearing has changed. And, Senator McLachlan, I just wanted to -- to assure that in that copy of the bill, there were mandates, a mandated number of community schools that had to be implemented, which I think could have resulted in costs, particularly if those had not been covered by the funds that the Governor has set aside for the turn-around schools in the Commissioner's network schools.

That language mandating a certain number of schools has been removed. So now what we have here is a bill that creates a template, a defined community school model that can be used by those cities or towns that are working with the Department of Education, under the Governor's model for turn-around schools and Commissioner's networks. And so there is no mandate. The towns choose this particular alternative; there's no mandate that they expend money that they cannot afford. It -- it is simply and appropriately now another tool in the toolbox in terms of turn-around models when schools are accessing or when communities are accessing those turn-around and community network dollars and resources.

And for those reasons, I strongly support the bill.

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Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, very much.

Will you remark further? Will you remark further?

If not, Mr. Clerk, will you call for a roll call vote, and 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 has been ordered in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

If all members have voted -- no. I'm sorry, Senator Fasano. Oh, that really got me confused. Okay. If all members have voted, if all members voted, the machine will be locked.

Mr. Clerk, will you please call the tally.

THE CLERK:

Senate Bill 1002 as amended by Senate "A."

Total Number Voting	34
Those voting Yea	26
Those voting Nay	8
Absent and not voting	2

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. The bill passes.

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

On Page 18, Calendar 235, Substitute for Senate Bill Number 188, AN ACT CONCERNING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, NEW BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT