

Good Afternoon. My name is Linda Winters and I serve as the school business administrator of the Wallingford Public Schools. Additionally, I am Past-President of the Connecticut Association of School Business Officials (CASBO). I am joined today by CASBO's President, Maureen Picard. On behalf of the members of CASBO, we come before you today to request that you amend Senate Bill #1281 or other appropriate bill, to include the recommended language to expand the Connecticut Teachers Retirement System Pension to certified school business administrators. On February 9<sup>th</sup>, as a committee, you approved the concept of including school business administrators in CTRS. By including this amendment, you would be putting your concept into action.

The Connecticut Association of School Business Officials, and the members who comprise it, are dedicated to linking the goals of Boards of Education to the effective management of resources to accomplish quality education. As school business administrators we are vital partners in school leadership.

Certified school business administrators are required to continue their professional education. The majority of administrators hold a Master's Degree as required for the "Professional" level of certification. Similar to other administrators, these are professionals dedicated to the betterment of schools and the education system in the State of Connecticut. Unlike teachers however, certificated school business administrators are not eligible for membership in the CTRS.

As mandated, SDE adopted regulations requiring a person to hold an SBA certificate (Endorsement 085) if the person were employed by a local board of education in a position that is responsible for six (6) or more of the eleven (11) administrative functions delineated by the regulations. However, an exemption exists if a person is employed in a similar administrative position that performs less than the six of the eleven administrative functions and possesses an Intermediate Administration or Supervision Certificate (Endorsement 092). In this case, the person is eligible for membership in CTRS.

There are approximately 100 SBAs employed in the public schools of Connecticut who are not eligible for membership in CTRS by virtue of their certification status. It is the only certificated position excluded from CTRS membership. Because of this unique situation, a current CTRS member, such as a teacher, who accepts an SBA position, is no longer eligible for continuing CTRS membership. Conversely, a person performing under an SBA endorsement may become eligible for CTRS membership if he/she subsequently performs less than six (6) of the administrative functions and holds Intermediate Administration or Supervision Certificate (Endorsement 092- (IA Certificate))

SBAs are more likely to be employed in small to mid-size school districts where the position is responsible for the majority of administrative functions. Larger school districts with more staff are likely to allocate these duties to various staff for which Intermediate Administration or Supervision Certificate (Endorsement 092) is appropriate and required (Assistant Superintendent for Business, Human Resources Director etc.)

School districts would benefit from having SBAs participate in CTRS because they would no longer be responsible for the payment of Social Security (SS) payroll taxes (6.2% of compensation) for newly-hired SBAs and would not have any obligation for making any CTRS contributions to the plan

School districts will benefit by being able to attract and recruit qualified candidates from other school districts since the benefits under CTRS are portable from district to district.

The current law is inherently unfair to small to mid-sized school districts that will typically utilize an SBA position rather than an IA position. Districts that employ SBAs generally will have a more difficult time attracting qualified candidates than districts that have positions which are eligible for CTRS.

The current law, barring SBAs from participation in CTRS, is a deterrent to current members considering a promotional career path change to a position of SBA since they will no longer be eligible for CTRS membership.

Pension portability is also another factor. Accepting a new position in another school district may lead to the loss of CTRS membership if the new position requires an SBA certificate rather than an IA Certificate.

Many school districts that employ SBAs and have a pension plan do not provide pension benefits comparable to CTRS and there is generally no portability of pension benefits from district to district.

Inclusion of SBAs as members of CTRS for those individuals currently serving as SBAs would be voluntary in nature and for which a lifetime election to participate or not participate would be made. Service credit in CTRS would be prospective only with no provision for buying pre-CTRS membership.

The efficient and effective management of district resources is critical; especially with regard to No Child Left Behind requirements. School districts would benefit by allowing them to recruit the "best and brightest" from a larger pool of experienced candidates. Participation in CTRS by school business administrators would enhance the administrators' employment options by making their pensions portable. School Business Administrators' inclusion in CTRS would benefit employees and school districts alike. On behalf of my colleagues, I respectfully request that you approve legislation to include certified school business administrators in CTRS to bring the concept to fruition.

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