



Public Hearing Testimony Speaker:
Mark Magee

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7354

Summary of Key Legislation before the Education Committee

HB7345: AN ACT CONCERNING GREAT SCHOOLS FOR ALL

<http://www.cga.ct.gov/2007/TOB/H/2007HB-07345-R00-HB.htm>

- Increases the number of free, high-quality preschool slots for low-income families from 7,000 to 11,100. Requires the Department of Education to integrate the data collected on students in preschool programs into the K-12 system for tracking student progress.
- Provides the State Department of Education with \$7.5 million over two years to run a competitive grant program to facilitate the creation of Pilot Schools in high-needs districts, which are defined as public schools approved by the local or regional board of education that have autonomy over budget, staffing, governance, curriculum, and the school calendar.
- Provides the State Department of Education with \$7.5 million over two years to run a competitive grant program to facilitate the creation of small high schools and smaller learning environments within existing high schools in high-needs districts.
- Provides the State Department of Education with \$7.5 million over two years to run a competitive grant program to facilitate the creation of programs for recruiting teacher and principal all stars in high-needs districts through the use of alternative pathways to certification.
- Provides the State Department of Education with \$6.5 million over two years to run a competitive grant program to facilitate the implementation of district-wide improvement plans grounded in comprehensive reform models, research-based best practices, and formative assessments.
- Requires the State Department of Education to create and implement a public data system for tracking individual student progress that makes use of unique student identifiers by November 30, 2007 and requires that state colleges and universities extend student tracking through grade 16 by October 1, 2008.
- Requires the State Department of Education to implement a public rating system for all public schools based on annual grades of A, B, C, D and F for student achievement gains and annual scores of 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 for qualitative assessments of educational practices, school culture and the preconditions to learning.
- Provides schools in high-needs districts with a score of A-1 on this annual review a bonus of \$500 per student to promote best practices within their district and pioneer new approaches to raising student achievement.
- Places schools with a less than a C-3 for two consecutive years on probation and allows these schools to request a consultant from the State Department of Education, assistance in developing a school improvement plan, a review of curricula, and professional development assistance.
- Allows the State Board of Education to seek corrective actions for underperforming school districts, including 1) requiring operational audits, 2) consulting with local bargaining units to direct the transfer of teachers, 3) requiring additional training of teachers, principals and staff,

- 4) requiring the implementation of proven curriculum, and 5) providing funds to allow students in failing districts to attend public school in a neighboring district.
- If schools do not improve, provides the Commissioner of Education with authority to intervene in schools and districts to raise performance by 1) reconstituting schools into charter schools, pilot schools, or other district management, 2) replacing school leadership, including boards of education, superintendents, principals and teachers, 3) redirecting funding so that students can attend schools in another district, and 4) taking over a school or district with approval from the Governor and the General Assembly.

HB7360: AN ACT CONCERNING TRANSITION FROM PRESCHOOL TO SCHOOL

<http://www.cga.ct.gov/2007/TOB/H/2007HB-07360-R00-HB.htm>

- Requires the Department of Education to establish a series of formative assessments to monitor progress for students in grades kindergarten to three. These assessments are to include an end-of-year testing for students in grades kindergarten through two.
- Requires the Department of Education to report on the progress of the development of these assessments to the joint standing committee on education.

HB7353: AN ACT CONCERNING AN ALTERNATE ROUTE TO CERTIFICATION PROGRAM FOR ADMINISTRATORS

<http://www.cga.ct.gov/2007/TOB/H/2007HB-07353-R00-HB.htm>

- Requires the Department of Higher Education, in conjunction with the Department of Education, to develop a pilot program establishing an alternate route to certification for school administrators.
- The program is required to incorporate mentored apprenticeships in its curriculum.
- Provides \$628,000 over two years to fund the program.

HB7352: AN ACT CONCERNING A LEADERSHIP ACADEMY FOR SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS AND PRINCIPALS

<http://www.cga.ct.gov/2007/TOB/H/2007HB-07352-R00-HB.htm>

- Mandates that the Department of Education create a leadership academy for school superintendents and principals and house the leadership academy within the existing State Education Resource Center.

HB7359: AN ACT CONCERNING A GRANT PROGRAM TO COMBAT TRUANCY

<http://www.cga.ct.gov/2007/TOB/H/2007HB-07359-R00-HB.htm>

- Requires that the Department of Education consult with the youth futures committee to establish a demonstration project known as Youth Engaged in Schools.
- Youth Engaged in Schools is require to distribute competitive grants to up to five local or

- regional boards of education whose district drop-out rate exceeds the state average.
- These grants will fund the creation of a comprehensive school- and community-based truancy prevention initiative, designed to:
 - Address the needs of frequently truant students.
 - Implement research-based positive discipline policies and practices.
 - Decrease school drop-out rates, decrease negative disciplinary practices.
 - Increase the personal, social, and academic aptitude of frequently truant students.

HB7344: AN ACT CONCERNING RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF TEACHERS

<http://www.cga.ct.gov/2007/TOB/H/2007HB-07344-R00-HB.htm>

- Instructs the Department of Education to establish in priority school districts a pilot program assisting high-performing paraprofessionals in becoming certified teaching professionals. This assistance will include but not be limited to financial assistance related to necessary training.
- Requires the Department of Higher Education to establish a fellows program for recent minority graduates. The fellows program would allow such graduates to enter teaching after a four-week intensive summer session focusing on classroom management and methodology. Each fellow will receive a stipend of \$2,500, and must pass a teacher competency examination or qualify for a waiver. Following the summer session, each fellow would teach in a priority school district that agrees to provide the fellow with a master teacher. Master teachers would be compensated for their participation with a \$5,000 stipend. Finally, fellows would supplement their training throughout the school year with weekly seminars.
- Requires the Departments of Higher Education and Education to establish a program for minority college seniors who are majoring in subject shortage areas but are not enrolled in any teacher preparation program. Such seniors would receive three credits for working as cadet teachers in a public school. With the recommendation of school officials, these seniors may enter into the fellows program upon graduation.
- Creates a competitive grant program within the Department of Education promoting “future teachers clubs” within middle and high schools in priority school districts. Such clubs must take affirmative steps to recruit minority members, and funding preference will be given to those clubs who conduct multi-district activities.

HB7347: AN ACT CONCERNING MINOR CHANGES TO THE EDUCATION STATUTES.

<http://www.cga.ct.gov/2007/TOB/H/2007HB-07347-R00-HB.htm>

- Requires that people providing instruction or pupil services in charter schools possess a certificate issued by the State Board of Education.
- Adjusts the definition of “mastery percentage” and “mastery test data of record.”

SB1354: AN ACT CONCERNING THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND THE APPOINTMENT OF THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION.

<http://www.cga.ct.gov/2007/TOB/S/2007SB-01354-R00-SB.htm>

- Requires that the chairperson of the State Board of Education hold a degree in the field of education from a regionally accredited institution of higher education.
- Removes the power to appoint the Commissioner of Education from the State Board of Education and creates a selection process whereby the Governor nominates a candidate for Commissioner subject to legislative confirmation.

SB1408: AN ACT CONCERNING CHARTER SCHOOLS

<http://www.cga.ct.gov/2007/TOB/S/2007SB-01408-R00-SB.htm>

- Raises the per pupil payment for charter schools to the state-wide average, accounting for both money saved through district support for special education students and the additional cost to charter schools of having to provide for facilities, beginning in the 2007-08 school year.
- Provides funds for 660 new seats for charter schools in the 2007-08 school year and 590 seats for charter schools in the 2008-09 school year.
- Promotes a more transparent process by which the State Board of Education solicits and selects proposals for new charters by setting a deadline of July 15th of each year for a Request for Proposals (RFP) and a deadline of December 15th of each year for the final selections.
- Requires the State Department of Education to develop guidelines for an enhanced charter school accountability system in consultation with charter schools by April 1, 2008. This accountability system will be based on progress reports with annual grades of A, B, C, D or F for student achievement gains and quality reviews with annual scores of 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 for qualitative assessments of educational practices and surveys of all parents, teachers, students and staff.
- Applies this new accountability system to charter schools in the 2008-09 school year without grades and starting in the 2009-10 school year with letter and number grades. Requires the Department of Education to make the results of these progress reports and quality reviews public and requires charter schools to distribute them to parents and guardians.
- Provides schools with a score of A-1 on this annual review a bonus of \$500 per student, places schools that receive less than a C-3 for two consecutive years on probation, and closes schools that receive less than a C-3 for three consecutive years.
- Creates a new fast-track process for high-performing Charter Management Organizations (CMOs) both in Connecticut and around the country to receive authorization for the creation of up to five charter schools over up to five years. To qualify, these organizations must have charter schools that score either an A-1 on the new Connecticut rating system or an equivalent score in another state. Preference is given to operators with a track record for raising the test scores of African American and Hispanic students, economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and English language learners.

SB1410: AN ACT CONCERNING HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM AND GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS REFORM

<http://www.cga.ct.gov/2007/TOB/S/2007SB-01410-R00-SB.htm>

- Requires that each graduating senior attain, at minimum, the level of proficiency established by the CAPT test. Allows school boards to designate an equivalent demonstration of proficiency in consultation with the Department of Education.
- Establishes the following distribution requirements for the 20 credits necessary for graduating classes from 2004 to 2010: 4 English credits, 3 mathematics credits, 3 social studies credits, 0.5 American government and civics credits, 2 science credits, 1 fine arts or vocational education credit, and 1 physical education credit.
- Establishes the following distribution requirements for the 23 credits necessary for graduating classes in 2011 and thereafter: 4 English credits; 4 mathematics credits, 2 world language credits, except in the case that a student is deaf or hearing impaired; 1 technology and computer literacy credit; 3 science credits, 4 physical education credits; 1 wellness credit; 1.5 elective credits, and 3.5 in social studies.

SB1405: AN ACT CONCERNING INTERVENTION MODEL FOR SCHOOLS IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT AND CONCERNING URBAN EDUCATION

<http://www.cga.ct.gov/2007/TOB/S/2007SB-01405-R00-SB.htm>

- Requires that local or regional school boards reconstitute every elementary or middle school that has failed to make adequate yearly progress for two consecutive years in math, reading, or both into several smaller academies with a maximum of 175 students each.
- The resulting academies are required to conform to the following new state mandates:
 - Must have both a different theme than other academies and the same curriculum.
 - Must have a teacher as team leader that will act as a curriculum specialist rather than a teacher supervisor.
 - Must have a ninety-minute math block and a two hour literacy block every day.
 - Must have intense faculty collaboration and weekly teacher meetings to plan lessons.
 - Must have individual weekly meetings between teachers, the team leader and the school principal to look at student work and data, evaluate instruction and make adjustments and changes in instruction.
 - Must have regular formative assessments administered to each student on either a biweekly and semi-monthly basis and district-wide formative assessments every six weeks.
 - Must have an individualized progress plan for every student.
 - Must hold meetings with teachers, parents, and school principals for every student that has fallen behind.
- Establishes a program to be administered by a consortium of higher education organizations that will distribute grants to institutions of higher education and affiliated entities and nonprofit organizations, with the goal of linking children in priority and transitional school districts to volunteer tutors and mentors.
- Establishes an educational service delivery center at the University of Connecticut's Neag

School of Education with the goal of fostering collaboration, conducting analysis of best practices, and developing ideas for dissemination.

- Establishes a teacher mentorship grant program to be run by the Department of Education.
- Establishes CommPACT schools, which are funded by a local or regional school board, operate autonomously from the school board, and are organized by a governing body comprised of community leaders, parents, students, teachers, and administrators.
- Provides each CommPACT school up to \$300 per student in state funds and allows each CommPACT school to seek additional funding from private sources.