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SEVERAL
1413, 7359, 7348
1405, 7346Reginald Mayo, Ph.D
SuperintendentMarch 12, 2007

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE ON
S.B. 1413, AN ACT CONCERNING IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS, H.B.
7359, AN ACT CONCERNING A GRANT PROGRAM TO SUPPORT
TRUANCY, S.B. 1405, AN ACT CONCERNING INTERVENTION
MODEL FOR SCHOOLS IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT AND
CONCERNING URBAN EDUCATION, H.B. 7348, AN ACT
CONCERNING AFTER SCHOOL AND OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME
GRANTS, AND HB 7346, AN ACT CONCERNING GREEN SCHOOL
BUILDINGS**

Senator Gaffey, Rep. Fleischmann, Members of the Education Committee, I am New Haven Superintendent of Schools Dr. Reginald Mayo and I am here to speak on several bills before you.

Senate Bill No. 1413, An Act Concerning In-School Suspensions, demonstrates a clear preference for in-school suspensions, while allowing some suspensions out of school if warranted. We agree with the direction but need your help.

We are working to keep students in school by proactively addressing their needs, and developing an expanded, full-service in-school suspension program. Some students who are a danger to themselves and others must be sent home when suspended, but many more should stay in school and, with the help of trained workers and various support services, change their learning and their attitudes.

Currently, there are eleven in-school suspension workers in our schools, mostly high schools but a few K-8s; they are part-time at some schools. The programs are understaffed and do not have resources to address the range of issues facing these at-risk youth.

We need additional resources to create model in-school suspension programs that will cut our out-of-school suspension and expulsion rate in half by the end of the 07-08 school year. Also, as we have converted many of our elementary and our middle schools to K-8 schools, we need to expand the number of schools that have this program.

We propose an expansion to 36 in-school suspension workers, to cover all high schools, middle schools and K-8 schools. This expansion alone would cost over \$1 million to be done right. We also propose additional psychological occupational exposures for understanding potential jobs and careers. There is the potential for community service activities. We also would link to the Yale

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Child Study Center and increase the social work support from there. We believe these efforts will go hand-in-hand with our expanded efforts on reducing truancy.

Our efforts to reduce expulsions and reach students have many facets. *We would like to develop a pilot program with legislative support, called 2nd Chance, for students expelled from our public schools for extremely serious offenses. Overall, we would ask for \$500,000 for the program – far less than the cost of incarceration faced by some of these students.*

The program will serve expelled students from a minimum of 9 weeks to a maximum of a year. Students must obtain certain recommendations to enter, and sign a contract. The program requires space that is separate from any existing school and has four major components: rigorous academics; therapeutic support for behavior change; social skill development and application; and services for suspended and at-risk students, additional reading and math intervention services, classroom libraries for in-school suspension activities, and talent identification/employment development. The program also requires several teachers, and a variety of such support workers as psychologists and social workers.

With enough professional staff in place, expanding in-school suspension would help the school district identify students with learning difficulties, engage parents where needed and refer students to community services.

We want to reach these students and make a difference in their lives. Certainly the outreach contemplated by the City, the Board of Education, and the many social services agencies, should make a difference. The support network needs to be in place. That is why expanding the in-school suspension program, working hand-in-hand with expelled students, and linking various truancy efforts should help, as supported in **House Bill No. 7359, An Act Concerning a Grant Program to Combat Truancy.**

As noted above, we are working on a variety of strategies to reach our youth, and in-school suspension interventions and truancy outreach are intertwined. Already our truancy initiative has expanded collaboration among the schools, the police, and DCF. We have new teams of truancy officers paired with police officers who are making evening visits to children's homes. We are linking children with what they need to reconnect to schools, including support services. We meet regularly to review attendance, have mentoring teams for the students and have developed accountability methods to bring students and their families back to the schools.

Clearly, these activities for these students are not the only way to reach or assist all students. We would like to add more literacy and math coaches, increase the number of paraprofessionals, increase professional development, and increase the many ways to reach students, including art, music and science projects, enrichment programs, after school programs, and summer programs.

We need to keep our youth engaged, to their benefit and ours. We know you have faced these issues as elected officials and we look forward to working with you on their resolutions.

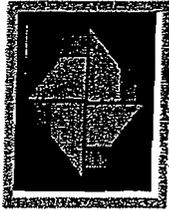
With all these issues, and the many challenges inherent in urban school districts serving all students, we also support **Senate Bill No. 1405, An Act Concerning Intervention Model for Schools in Need of Improvement and Concerning Urban Education.** We work with area universities on programs to help our students and this bill takes that involvement to the next level, providing a statewide resource and perspective. We welcome the opportunity to work with the University of Connecticut. We also are excited about the potential of CommPACT schools

and would like to explore the opportunity to establish some in New Haven, working with the unions, teachers, and community to develop them.

We support **H.B. No. 7348, An Act Concerning After School and Out-of-School Time Grants**, changing the grant cycle from one year to two. It does allow for greater planning but does need to have some flexibility in year two of the grant as other circumstances can change in planning for the implementation of the grants. We support the additional funding. These programs make a great difference to our students.

We support **H.B. No. 7346, An Act Concerning Green School Buildings**. Our new schools in New Haven are energy efficient, high performance buildings with many “sustainable” features in terms of materials used and building plans. We are proud of our work and would welcome its recognition with an increase in our reimbursement.

Finally, you have several bills before you on accountability and studying the regionalization of education to reduce racial, ethnic and economic isolation. We encourage efforts to improve student performance, understanding and achievement, and work to do that in all our schools, including our interdistrict magnet schools. We also encourage the recognition of growth in various low-performing schools. We support the suggestions for climate improvements, professional development and parental involvement. We urge you, as we have in prior testimony, to look at the growth in some of our low-performing schools, as we have, and help us foster that growth, with more instructional coaches for literacy and math, more tutors and more paraprofessional, so that we can reach each student and help the student attain top potential.



2nd Chance

A capacity building program for youth and young adults sponsored by:

The City and School Board of New Haven, Connecticut

2nd Chance is a program intended to change the direction of the lives of students who have been expelled from the New Haven Public Schools for extremely serious offenses as outlined in Board Rule.

Admission to 2nd Chance is by recommendation of at least 3 community leaders and educators who believe that the student or young adult can benefit from this program which will be individualized for each admitted student.

Participation in the 2nd Chance Program is for a minimum of 9 weeks or a maximum of one year. A contract will be signed by the student agreeing to the conditions of participation and standards for exit.

The 2nd Chance Program has 4 major components:

- ① **RIGOROUS ACADEMICS:** A student or young adult's 2nd chance is built on a foundation of Rigorous academic skills and success in reading, math, writing, and study skills.
- ② **THERAPUTIC SUPPORT FOR BEHAVIOR CHANGE:** To be successful in life, the 2nd chance program will assist the student and young adult to confront and change those behaviors which were the primary cause of their expulsion from school. Each participant must agree to participate in the prescribed activities identified by the program's therapeutic intervention team.
- ③ **SOCIAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT & APPLICATION:** A 2nd student or young adult has to learn to apply the social controls and behaviors (identified by the therapeutic intervention team) which will strengthen their capacity to succeed in both life and work.
- ④ **TALENT IDENTIFICATION/EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT**
A major outcome of the 2nd chance program is the restoration of hope. However, hope is built upon success. Without salable employment skills and opportunities to succeed the 2nd Chance participant has no motivation to complete the hard work of self renewal.

PROGRAM NEEDS: (1) A building or facility to house the program (which is not a New Haven Public School);

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| 2. | 1 Clinical Psychologist | 8. | 1 Behaviorist |
| 3. | 1 School Psychologist | 9. | 1 Talent / Employment Developer |
| 4. | 1 Clinical Socialworker | 10. | 2-4 Academic teachers |
| 5. | 1 Case Manager | | knowledgeable about |
| 6. | 1 Family Outreach Specialist | | differentiated instruction and |
| 7. | 1 Nurse Practitioner | | computer assisted instruction |