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*TESTIMONY OF
ATTORNEY GENERAL RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
BEFORE THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
MARCH 10, 2008*

I appreciate the opportunity to support House Bill 5870, An Act Concerning Minor Changes to the Education Statutes with an amendment to require each board of education to adopt a school grade change policy by January 1, 2009.

Last year, my office investigated a citizen complaint regarding arbitrary school grade changes in North Branford. My findings included a number of grade changes made by administrators without teacher approval and without policies or standards. The investigation also clearly showed that the school administration had no policy regarding the circumstances under which a student's grade could be changed by the administration.

Adoption of clearly articulated policies and procedures concerning limited and documented grade changes would facilitate uniformity and equal treatment among all students in this vitally important area. Specifically, the North Branford investigation report recommended:

- School systems should develop clear, consistent written policies that govern any grading changes and the grade review process;
- Such grading policies should be developed and implemented with input from administrators, teachers, students, parents, and the community, and distributed to them;
- Grading policies should be applied with consistent, fair and transparent procedures;
- School administrators should avoid usurping teachers' judgments, unilaterally changing teacher grade determinations, or otherwise undermining teacher authority and discretion to determine grades.

Several states have already implemented such procedures, including California, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Nevada, Texas and West Virginia.

I have attached a proposed amendment to House Bill 5870 for the committee's consideration.

**OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
2008 GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION
EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

TITLE: An Act Concerning the Development of Educational Student Grading Policies

SUMMARY: This proposal would require each board of education, by January 1, 2009, to develop policies for how a teacher or administrator may change a grade received by a student after such grade was posted. The state Department of Education may promulgate a model policy on changing of student grades.

TEXT:

Sec. 1. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2008*) (a) On or before September 1, 2009, the board of education for each local and regional school district shall develop and implement a policy for changing a grade issued by a teacher to a student at the end of the school year or marking period. Such policy shall: (1) specify the circumstances under which such grade may be subsequently changed by a teacher or administrator which shall be limited to clerical mistake, fraud, bad faith, incompetency or such other extraordinary reason; (2) prohibit any change in grade by an administrator unless the administrator notifies the teacher who issued the grade and provides the teacher with an opportunity to explain the grade; (3) ensure that any such changes, and the reason for such changes, are documented and submitted in writing to the superintendent and the board of education. In developing such policy, the board of education shall seek and receive input from teachers, administrators, students, parents and the community.

(b) The State Board of Education may develop and distribute to all local and regional boards of education a model policy to assist the boards of education in implementing the provisions of this section.