

**STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Education Committee  
March 9, 2009

**TESTIMONY OF  
ALLAN B. TAYLOR, CHAIR, STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
MARK K. MCQUILLAN, COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION  
GEORGE COLEMAN, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION**

**ON**

**BILL 6370**

**AN ACT CONCERNING A MIDDLE COLLEGE SYSTEM**

In Bill 6370 the Governor has proposed the establishment of a middle college system, overseen by a board of trustees that will assume the responsibilities of the State Board of Education concerning the state's technical high school system and the responsibilities of the Board of Trustees for the Community-Technical Colleges. The state has been working for a number of years to provide secondary school students with smoother transitions from high school to post-secondary education, and there are a number of existing programs that have been very successful in providing high school students with opportunities to take community-technical college courses.

However, the middle college system proposed by the Governor goes beyond those efforts. Not only would such a system be a much larger initiative than has been undertaken before, it would also make a very necessary connection between education and the needs of the workforce. This system will

provide new opportunities for students to have internships in work environments and it will be possible for students to better focus their educational experiences on the development of skills to meet workforce needs.

Additionally, the proposed middle college system is precisely the type of activity envisioned by The Connecticut Commission for the Advancement of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills and Careers, which the Governor recently established by executive order. This commission will develop strategies and make recommendations to ensure that Connecticut's workforce possesses the skills necessary to succeed and prosper in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace. One of the many reasons for this commission is that the state's approach to P-20 education – early childhood, elementary and secondary schools, colleges and graduate schools – must be better integrated with 21<sup>st</sup> century skill requirements for employment in Connecticut. The middle college system proposed in Bill 6370 would be an important step in integrating P-20 education with workforce imperatives.

This bill is to implement the Governor's budget recommendations. We urge your support.