Friis, John

From: John Dillon [j.dillon@snet.net]
Sent: Friday, March 13, 2009 5:49 PM
To: Friis, John
Subject: On proposed certification of teachers

Dear Members of the Education Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the Education Commissioner's proposal to mandate that all part-time instructors in Connecticut be certified. While I believe that good intentions behind the proposal, it is an extremely ill-advised move whose inintended effect will be to decimate ACES ECA in New Haven. In the case of this school -- and this school appears to be the target -- it is the equivalent of an exploding cigar. In the name of having certified teachers, ACES/ECA stands to have no teachers at all.

We have one daughter who attends ECA/ACES and hope to have a second going there starting in the fall. We know the quality of the teaching crew there
-- in my daughter's case, especially the writing teachers. We know that they have a solid bedrock of practical experience, training, expertise, and education, including any number of postgraduate degrees they have accumulated. They are preparing the next generation of great artists not only at ECA but at other academic institutions (yes, even Yale).

We know also that they live in the real world: They have jobs, mouths to feed, and rents and mortgages to pay. Most are fully embedded in their professional careers, and this proposal would essentially be asking them to give up those careers for the sake of getting certified. They teach roughly a dozen hours a week at ACES/ECA, working their love for teaching their craft into their otherwise busy schedules. They receive no benefits. Their salaries buy a few groceries, but nothing gilded.

Since they're not in it for the money, they're in it for another reason:
Because they love what they're doing, they're good at it, and they're in a position to set aside a few hours a week. Why would they want to essentially reboot their careers to get certification, only to come back to a part-time job that has no chance of rewarding that sacrifice? I know I wouldn't; before you cast a yea or nay vote, ask yourself if you would.

These teachers define ACES/ECA. If forced to get certified, the school dies on the vine.

Regards,

John Dillon
New Haven, Conn.