

Members of the Education Committee,

My name is Mariane Banar Fountain. I am a choreographer and modern dancer. I am also a teacher at ACES Educational Center for the Arts (ECA) in New Haven. I have 21 years of teaching experience and hold a masters of Arts in Movement and Dance from Wesleyan University.

I want to express my support for House Bill #6666, specifically section 5 of that bill, which details the creation of an adjunct instructor certificate to be issued to highly qualified individuals with specialized training, expertise and experience in the arts.

Allow me to pose a question in the field of business. We all know Bill Gates of Microsoft doesn't have a college degree. If your child attended a Connecticut magnet high school for business, and Mr. Gates were willing to teach a few hours a week, would you demand that he first become a certified teacher?

Back to the arts, ECA was founded on the idea of bringing together highly motivated students and professional artists. This educational model has produced outstanding results for more than 35 years. Students interact with and learn from teachers who are currently performing, directing, designing, exhibiting, choreographing, composing, publishing and conducting, and who are passionate about sharing their knowledge and experience. Students work side by side with us as we explore technique, and harness our creativity to make a difference in the world. Our students become more than "receivers of learning"; they become partners in the process of invention. As a result, they are able to communicate effectively with a wide variety of adult professionals. This dynamic mentoring relationship is the core of the vigorous education we provide.

The adjunct instructor certificate would make it possible for ECA students to continue to benefit from highly qualified artists, who, in unique ways, challenge their students to take an idea, and through ingenuity, problem solving, and collaboration, bring that idea to fruition. This skill set accompanies our students into any profession they enter.

I urge you to pass House Bill 6666.

Thank you,

Mariane Banar Fountain