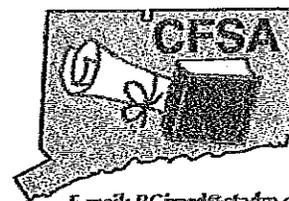




CONNECTICUT FEDERATION OF
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS
AFSA - AFL-CIO



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March 9, 2009

To: Senator Thomas Gaffey
Representative Andrew Fleischmann
Co-Chairman Education Committee
And
Members of the Education Committee

From: Roch J. Girard
President

RE: Testimony on the following Bills:

Raised Bill No. 944 AAC: A Plan for Academic and Personal Success for Every Middle and High School Student.

We understand the purpose of this bill is the phasing of the Connecticut Plan adopted by the SBE on October 2, 2008. The High School Reform Initiative is a good one and one that deserves our professional support. The bottom line in support of this initiative is the FUNDING issue associated with the bill. In these horrific economic times we don't see many communities rushing to implement these changes without the necessary funding. If the state could include the funding for this reform package as a "shovel ready project", to be included in the Federal Stimulus Package -maybe that would help the state in support of the SDE " Connecticut Plan".

Raised Bill No. 6566: AAC Participation in the State Teachers Retirement System.

We do not oppose this bill providing that the Charter Schools mentioned in this bill refers to the certified personnel teachers/administrators who are working in the PUBLIC Charter Schools ONLY. We do NOT support TRS contributions from the private Charter Schools in that they are a PRIVATE sector system, and not public schools' educators.

Raised Bill No. 6570: AAC Teacher Salary Deductions.

Our office has received numerous calls concerning the 403(b) issue. The ruling from the IRS came as a complete surprise to us and to many school boards. The problem is that with the new ruling- as we understand it- the Boards of Education alone are unilaterally selecting the Third Party Administrator (TPA) who are charging big fees to teachers/administrators. We believe that teachers/administrators should be able to negotiate WHO this third party administrator is going to be for their TSA's.

Raised Bill No. 6569: AAC Reporting of School Graduation Rates.

We believe that the locals should report graduation and dropout rates of students from their districts. Providing for an alternative school and providing for opportunities for students to attend regional alternative schools is a constructive idea, but who will pay the education and transportation costs? Will this become another unfunded mandate?

Developing a plan for students identified in Grade 8 who are at risk of dropping out and having someone monitoring the plan is again a cost factor to LEA's. Who's paying the bill?

Governor's Bill No. 6370: AAC A Middle College System.

We know the Governor supports the consolidation of various departments and commissions. We believe this wholesale quantum leap into a new concept merging regional Vocational-Technical High Schools with the Community-Technical Colleges thus creating a new 'Middle College System" needs to be analyzed, digested and thoroughly thought out. This new concept is an interesting one; however, to have this in place for July 1, 2009 is unrealistic to us. You need to look at the logistics of this merger; the curricular impact; transportation needs; faculty needs; the addition/change of textbooks; and something called FUNDING for the schools.

There are more unanswered questions than answers. This proposal needs to be properly vetted by all parties concerned, and not just thrown together to make it look like the state is saving money. This does not have to be in place by July 1, 2009. Long term, this concept may have merit and cost savings possibilities. Establishing a whole new school concept takes more that 4-5 months to prepare. We strongly ask that you put the brakes on this proposal while all affected parties examine this proposal and plan for it properly.

Thank you.