Testimony
Submitted to the
Education Committee

March 16, 2009

Raised Bill No. 6666 ***An Act Concerning Teacher Certification.***

Good afternoon Senator Gaffey, Representative Fleishmann, and members of the Education Committee.

My name is Alice Schilling, and I am the Principal of ACES ECA Area Cooperative Educational Services, Educational Center for the Arts. ECA is a part-time interdistrict magnet high school for the arts in New Haven.

This testimony submitted today is in support of Raised Bill No. 6666, An Act Concerning Teacher Certification (Section 5). I recognize and appreciate the work of the General Assembly—thank you for all of your hard work and efforts.

My professional experience includes involvement in arts education as a teacher/administrator for thirty-four years. Throughout my tenure in education, I have been involved with the BEST Program since its inception and taught in the Alternate Route to Certification Program for 5 years. This is an explanation of my background so you can understand my perspective. A life-long arts educator involved in traditional and alternate, but accepted paths to teacher certification. As Principal at ACES ECA, it has been clearly demonstrated to me that the part time arts instructors greatly contribute to the success of our students and the programs in which they teach. Therefore this Bill HB 6666, Section 5 is vitally important to ACES ECA.

ACES ECA has approximately 280 students who are mentored by 42 part time arts instructors Monday through Thursday from 1:00 to 4:00 pm. The instructors' hours vary, but no one works more than twelve class hours per week. Curricular content area includes: creative writing, dance, music, theatre and visual art. Therefore, our students

are mentored by writers, musicians, actors, painters, and many other working artists in specialty fields. These instructors provide students with the opportunity to experience authentic, performance-based learning. Each content area is led by certified department leaders, and all curricula are framed from the CT's teaching standards. ECA offers an honors level arts curriculum as well as Advanced Placement College courses.

In state and national competitions, ECA fairs well--one example of such achievements was in the 2009 CT Scholastic Writers Awards Competition, ECA writers received 20 gold key awards. In the last ten years, an average of 92.8% of ECA graduates have gone on to higher education at the college/university level. The staff is comprised of educated, experienced, accomplished and passionate artists.

I am keenly aware of the importance of certification. ACES ECA is a unique educational community that would be impossible to create without the integration of part-time, professional artists who do not have papers in hand to signify that they can and do contribute to the success of our students and development of the high standards and expectation of our program.

Thank you for listening to my testimony and at this time I would like to publicly thank the following legislators for meeting with ECA parents and staff last week: Senator Martin Looney and Representatives Paul Davis, Barbara Lambert, Richard Roy, and Toni Walker. A special thanks to Representative Davis for serving on the Education Committee and to Martin Looney for helping us to understand how to bring this issue here today and lastly to Cam Staples for putting Bill HB #6666, Section 5 in writing.

Respectfully submitted,

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