

Friis, John

From: Steve Zimmerman [szimmerman@nwr7.org]
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2009 8:29 PM
To: Friis, John
Subject: Testimony HB 6666

I am writing in reference to arts teacher certification and HB 6666.

I am writing in support of this bill, despite its complete cognitive dissonance with current teacher certification laws. Educators, politicians and higher education institutions, longing to show accountability in education, have for too long linked certification credentials to effective teaching. The ability to deliver high quality instruction of meaningful curriculum should be the single most important factor for hiring those adults chosen to work with young artists. Teacher certification and teacher effectiveness studies show little evidence of correlation or causation and I believe that not passing this law may largely contribute to the end of the arts-magnet schools in our state. I cannot say that I wholly support all of these schools' teachers or their models for recruiting and educating students, yet their overall service to students should not be taken for granted. As long as the artists are working on a part-time basis, the bill serves to aid administrators by allowing uniquely qualified artists to work with uniquely interested students. Additionally, it is possible that this law will contribute to a higher quantity of minority teachers in Connecticut schools which is surely needed.

The conflict that your committee must rectify is that if that if you believe that the certification laws inhibit our students from accessing the best arts teachers, then why not the best math, language, science teachers, etc. I have never believed that my undergraduate education coursework leading to music certification (049) or my recent administrator preparation work at UConn gave me uncommon abilities to deliver high quality education to state students. I did, however, spend a significant amount of time and money to do what the legislature deemed vital to hold state teacher certification. If this preparation is, in your opinion, no longer vital, then I suggest that upon passing this legislation, you quickly remove all similar teacher certification requirements for other disciplines and full time teachers.

As James G. Cibulka, President of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education recently stated, "We face a national challenge in transforming our education system to reflect 21st-century learning skills and global influences. Alternative providers, and entrepreneurial market forces more broadly, can contribute to this transformation, but no one should equate the scope of their role with the magnitude of the problem we face in transforming America's education system."

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Steve

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