



State of Connecticut

DIVISION OF PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES

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TESTIMONY OF CHRISTINE RAPILLO EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT PUBLIC DEFENDER OFFICE OF THE CHIEF PUBLIC DEFENDER

SELECT COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN
FEBRUARY 23, 2010

RAISED BILL NO. 156 AN ACT CONCERNING THE TRANSFER OF EDUCATIONAL CREDITS

The Office of the Chief Public Defender supports passage of **Raised Bill No. 156, An Act Concerning the Transfer of Educational Credits**. This bill would ensure that children committed to a facility run by the Department of Children and Families will receive full credit for school work done while attending Unified School District #2, which is the public school district that encompasses all DCF facilities. Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-220h requires school districts to grant credit for work done while a student is enrolled in Unified School District #1, which includes all Department of Corrections facilities. This must be expanded to give the same credit to children in returning home from a commitment to DCF.

Children returning to the community from a DCF placement have a difficult time reenrolling in school. They are often denied credit for course work done at High Meadows, the Connecticut Children's Place, Riverview Hospital or the Connecticut Juvenile Training School. These children are often able to advance grades while attending school in a facility and should be given credit for that work when they return to the local public school. The ability to attend and advance in school is one of the best indicators of future success for children returning to the community from placement. A child who makes progress while out of the home should be able to maintain those advances when they reenroll in their home school. Ensuring that they get credit for school work completed in a DCF facility provides the child with the best chance to continued success.

The Office of the Chief Public Defender urges passage of this bill and thanks the committee for raising this important issue.