



Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, Inc.

81 Wolcott Hill Road, Wethersfield, CT 06109-1242 · (860) 571-7446 · Fax (860) 571-7452 · www.cabe.org

**Testimony
Submitted to the
Education Committee**

March 1, 2010

**SB 277AN ACT CONCERNING THE INCLUSION OF STUDENTS ON LOCAL AND
REGIONAL BOARDS OF EDUCATION
SB 278 AN ACT CONCERNING TRUANCY
SB 279 AN ACT CONCERNING FOREIGN LANGUAGES TAUGHT IN THE PUBLIC
SCHOOLS
SB 280 AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION
HB 5315 AN ACT CONCERNING EDUCATION AND THE REDUCTION OF
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

The Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) opposes SB 277, An Act Concerning the Inclusion of Students on Local and Regional Boards of Education. Boards can already provide for student representatives, and many do. CABE would like the discretion as to whether they are elected or appointed to remain at the board level. There is currently, across the state, a mix of elected and appointed student members.

CABE is concerned about the requirement in SB 278, An Act Concerning Truancy, which would require the State Board Education to define excused and unexcused absences for purposes of the truancy statute. Currently excused and unexcused absences are addressed in local school district policy. These policies are developed at the local level with the opportunity for community input. We do not feel this is an area where a uniform statewide definition is appropriate and useful.

CABE opposes the adoption of SB 279, An Act Concerning Foreign Languages Taught in the Public Schools. Foreign language instruction is an important issue that should be part of the overall discussion of secondary school reform. In addition, foreign languages are a teacher shortage area, making it extremely difficult for districts to employ the staff to meet this requirement – to say nothing of the additional resources that would be required in some districts to meet this mandate.

CABE opposes the positions of SB 280, An Act Concerning School Transportation, which would prohibit a regional educational service center from providing transportation services to students in cases where boards of education request competitive bids. This is in direct contradiction to efforts under way at the local, regional and state level to deliver education programs and services

in a more cost effective manner. Any impediment which restricts the ability of a board of education to secure an appropriate service at the most competitive price should be opposed.

While Section 2 of this bill appears to be an effort to allow boards of education to reduce transportation costs by allowing a parent or guardian to submit a written waiver of school transportation services. It is not clear whether this provision would conflict with the requirements in Sections 10-186 and 10-220 to provide transportation as part of a free appropriate public education in Connecticut. It is also doubtful that there would be significant cost savings associated with such a waiver, since buses would still have to run over similar routes to pick up those students who did not waive transportation.

We understand that HB 5315, An Act Concerning Education and the Reduction of Domestic Violence, is part of a student initiative to address this important issue. We commend the approach taken in the bill before you which provide that these issues be addressed as a part of the in-service training program, rather than creating a separate mandate.

We appreciate your attention to these issues.