

March 1, 2011

Members of the Education Committee, Chairman Stillman and Chairman Fleischmann,

My name is Douglas Lyons and I am currently the Director of the Connecticut Association of Independent Schools. I have enjoyed a forty-year career in education, teaching at all levels of schooling: elementary, secondary, undergraduate and graduate. I served for a decade as a public school superintendent in New Jersey and for 12 years as an independent school Head in Connecticut. I have supported and supervised many highly effective teachers who entered the profession through many different routes.

I would like to address H.B. 6434, An Act Concerning Educators and Administrators.

I would respectfully ask the committee members to support the language in the bill that repeals the provision that eliminated teaching experience in non-public schools as a means of obtaining Professional Educator Certification.

The 97 schools in CAIS educate 30,000 students. Our schools are accredited using 15 broad Standards adopted by CAIS and NEASC (The New England Association of Schools and Colleges). The implementation of those standards has been observed by a team of reviewers appointed by the National Association of Independent Schools Commission on Accreditation. The Commission found the process to be thorough and thoughtful.

Our schools provide a rich and varied environment for college graduates seeking to enter the profession through teaching experience in an accredited non-public school.

Connecticut has a long and proud history of supporting quality non-public schools. These schools collaborate with public school colleagues, are good neighbors and contributors to the communities in which they reside and provide a choice, not only for parents and students but for aspiring teachers as well. Connecticut is wise to welcome these teachers.

CAIS also strongly supports the provision that would allow college students to student teach at private or religious schools. We accept the wisdom of the current state statutes that include having certified mentors and principals or an 092 certified staff member.

Respectfully,

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are needed to see this picture.

Douglas J. Lyons
Executive Director