

3/16/11

### TESTIMONY

The Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) which represents the superintendents of schools in CT and the members of their cabinets supports the enactment of H.B. 1160 into law. CAPSS takes this position because the development at the state level of a model teacher evaluation program as specified by the proposed bill would provide effective assistance for school districts as they take on the challenge of revising their evaluation programs so that a defensible way of integrating student learning with the evaluation of educators takes place.

In supporting this bill, however, CAPSS would like to call attention to two related issues.

1. There should be nothing in any bill that could be in any way be interpreted as making the topics of teacher and principal evaluation systems mandatory topics of bargaining. If this were to happen, we would have a number of instances in which the evaluation systems for holding educators accountable would be the results of decisions by neutral arbitrators who are accountable to nobody instead of being the results of decisions by those who are directly accountable to the public for the performance of school systems. Boards of education and superintendents need to be held accountable for the performance of school systems and, therefore, their ability to affect the performance of systems cannot be compromised.
2. There is nothing in this bill that would help school districts who have to reduce their teaching forces and who are compelled to lay off teachers on the basis of seniority instead of performance. This situation has always been very difficult to defend, it has become even more difficult to defend over the last two years and it will be virtually impossible to defend in the very near future. Over the past two school years, there have been approximately 2,700 teaching positions eliminated in CT. In just about every one of these situations, there have been a number of teachers whose performance has been exemplary laid off when teachers whose performance while not incompetent has been less than exemplary were retained. The most effective thing that any school system can do in terms of student learning is to put an exemplary teacher in front of every child. For the sake of the children, then, we cannot continue to lay off exemplary teachers because they have less seniority than teachers who are not exemplary.

The Education Committee can address this problem by putting into legislative language the following process. When there needs to be a reduction in the teaching force of a district:

