



**Shana Kennedy-Salchow**  
**Connecticut Council for Education Reform**  
**Education Committee Public Hearing Testimony on Raised Bill 1160**  
**3/16/11**

- I want to thank the members of the Education Committee for this opportunity to testify about Raised Bill 1160.
- My name is Shana Kennedy-Salchow, I represent the Connecticut Council for Education Reform—a new non-profit organization that is comprised of many of the members of Connecticut Commission on Educational Achievement. The Council will advocate for the recommendations of the Commission with a goal of narrowing the achievement gap and raising academic achievement for all Connecticut students.
- To start, the Commission supports SB 1160 and more specifically, sections 2 on which deal with teacher evaluation and tenure but believe the bill could be strengthened.
- To start, section 2 calls for Performance Evaluation Advisory Committee (PEAC) to develop a model evaluation system. We are encouraged by the inclusion of both training requirements on the new system and individual improvement plans for teachers- both are critical to the success of teachers. We think there should be quite a bit of flexibility for districts in designing evaluation systems but that some elements need to be required. More specifically, we would include language for these evaluation systems to put a preponderant weight on growth in student achievement where applicable (i.e., likely not in gym class).
- Section 3 describes the membership of the Performance Evaluation Advisory Committee (PEAC) which is very specific in naming a long list of stakeholders and an additional three persons to be selected by the Commissioner of Education. We believe education groups without a direct stake or members affected should be added to this group- they are advocating for children. We further believe we should be clearer on the qualifications of the three additional people to be selected by the Commissioner- they should be national experts in this field.



- We applaud the addition of the 7<sup>th</sup> reason for dismissal but need to ensure that the performance evaluation plan adopted puts a preponderant weight on growth in student achievement—we must ensure our teachers are effective and that we are helping them be as effective as they can.
- This bill does not address attaining tenure- it only addresses another way to take it away if necessary. In order to have the highest percent of effective teachers, we must be sure that we grant tenure only to teachers who are deemed effective. The idea of granting tenure after four years without taking this into account does not make sense.
- Lastly, there is no mention of the evaluation of school leaders—principals in this bill. If teachers are going to be held to new evaluation methods that take into account student growth and achievement, school leaders need to be held to the same.