

Testimony Submitted to the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

February 17, 2011

H.B. 6321 AN ACT CONCERNING A COLLEGE TRANSITION PILOT PROGRAM

Good afternoon Senator Bye and Senator Willis and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee.

My name is Andrew Tyskiewicz and I am Division Director for Community Education at the Capitol Region Education Council in Hartford. Accompanying me is my colleague Maryanne Pascone, Managing Director of our Transition to Employment program at CREC and an adjunct instructor at Capital Community College.

We are here to testify in support of House Bill 6321, an Act Concerning a College Transition Pilot Program and to speak to the need to expand college transition programs that utilize an Integrated Basic Skills and Vocational Training approach.

As a voting member of the former Adult Literacy Leadership Board, appointed by the legislature, I see the need to enhance CT's systems of worker preparation involving Adult Education Programs, run by Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and the Community College System. It has long been recognized that instruction is enhanced when knowledge is put into context and comes alive for the student. According to international Adult Education consultant, Dr. Thomas Sticht, there is a need to provide simultaneous adult basic skills instruction and vocational training.

We support H.B. 6321 and advocate for the development of a pilot program that links local Adult Education programs with Community Colleges modeled after the successful "I-BEST" in Washington State and replicated in several other Community Colleges nationwide. The traditional model of completing academic remediation first, then entering skills training works against students and few ever make it to vocational training and to employment following the remedial coursework.

President Obama's Council of Economic Advisors (2009) has called for greater investments in education and training that contextualize adult basic skills with vocational training and recommends the I-BEST (Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training) model.

In a recent report, "Mismatch in the Labor Market: Measuring the Supply of and Demand for Skilled Labor in New England," the need for workers who have "middle level skills" is great yet these workers are in short supply. These positions will require some postsecondary education such as a certificate or Associate Degree. Therefore, new improved ways of providing postsecondary education, such as "I-BEST" will be needed.

The Capitol Region Education Council is poised and experienced to provide assistance in the development of a pilot since it also serves as the statewide provider of professional development for adult educators through its Adult Training and Development Network.

Thank You

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