



Education That Works For a Lifetime

**To: The Honorable Beth Bye, Senate Chair
The Honorable Roberta Willis, House Chair
The Honorable Toni Boucher, Senate Ranking
The Honorable Timothy LeGeyt, House Ranking
Members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee**

From: Darlene Raggozine, Connecticut Charts-A-Course, Executive Director

Re: Higher Education and Employment Advancement Public Hearing

S.B. 927, AN ACT CONCERNING REQUIREMENTS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS.

S.B. 928, AN ACT CONCERNING TEACHER PREPARATION.

Date: February 17, 2011

The Connecticut Community Colleges support, with recommendations, *SB 927, An Act Concerning Requirements for Early Childhood Educators.*

The Connecticut Community Colleges support the *SB 927, An Act Concerning Requirements for Early Childhood Educators* as it will continue to promote access to quality programs for preschool children in our state by assuring a qualified and competent early childhood workforce.

The 12 Connecticut Community Colleges offer an Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education and this past fall there was a record enrollment of over 2,500 students enrolled in these classes. The number of graduates also increased in these programs by 9% between 2008 and 2010. Clearly, the Connecticut Community Colleges together with CT Charts-A- Course, are assisting publicly funded preschool programs to help meet the 2015 goal of 50/50 and the 2020 goal as cited in the bill.

CT Charts-A-Course is reporting the following data in this year's Results Based Accountability submission to the Appropriations Committee:

- 66% percent of the teachers that are working in publically funded programs have an associate's degree or higher, which is up from 60% in 2009;
- the Scholarship Assistance Program awarded 1,626 scholarships to individuals this year and this is nearly double from the previous year;
- the average scholarship amount per person for 2010 was approximately \$750;
- 87% of the scholarships went toward required coursework in a plan of study for degrees in early childhood education, which is up 41% over 2009; and
- the number of scholarships going to students enrolled in baccalaureate degrees has increased 46% over 2009.

The Connecticut Community Colleges support the following language in SB 927, *An Act Concerning Requirements for Early Childhood Educators*:

Section 1. Section 10-16p: (B) On and after July 1, 2015, "staff qualifications" means that for each) at least fifty per cent of those individuals with the primary responsibility for a group of children (I) hold certification pursuant to section 10-145b with an endorsement in early childhood education, ... and remaining individuals hold an associate degree

And subsequently, (C) after July 1, 2020, one hundred per cent of those individuals with the primary responsibility for a group of children hold a bachelor's degree in early childhood education, child study, childhood development or human growth and development from an institution of higher education accredited by the Board of Governors of Higher Education or regionally accredited.

The Connecticut Community Colleges also support the language that supports *local school readiness programs in satisfying the staff qualifications requirements by redirecting unexpended funds for scholarships ...*

We respectfully offer revisions to this language.

- Remove the reference to "low income family." This criterion for scholarship eligibility has been removed by the CT Charts-A-Course scholarship program; it provides consistency for staff in all programs regardless of the source of the scholarship funding. Also, a "low income" student is typically eligible for federal or state financial aid.
- Remove any reference to a cap on the scholarship amount. Individuals will self regulate their course work based upon their personal and professional situation.
- Remove the reference to type of degree that the student is pursuing. At present, the CT Charts-A-Course scholarship program is closed. The current language will exclude a student from receiving scholarship funds to complete an associate's degree.
- Change the language to include both public and private institutions of higher education.

Suggested language for this section is as follows:

The local school readiness programs shall use any such funds to provide assistance to staff members for the cost of higher education courses leading to degrees that would meet the staff qualifications in Section 1(2) (B) and (C) at institution of higher education accredited by the Board of Governors of Higher Education or regionally accredited institution of higher education.

Enclosed is the following data from the CCAC Registry to support this testimony regarding RB 927:

1. Publically Funded Teachers Data 2011 RBA Submission
2. Scholarship Distribution Data 2011 RBA Submission
3. ECE Program Enrollment and Graduation Data

The Connecticut Community Colleges support, with recommendations, *SB 928 an Act Concerning Teacher Preparation.*

The Community Colleges supports SB 928 and respectively suggest that the following inclusions:

- A task force that includes:
 - Representatives from all constituent units, particularly those who oversee the preparation of the teachers.
 - Representatives of private institutions that deliver teacher preparation programs.
 - Faculty who teach in these programs
 - Representation from local school districts
 - Graduates of teacher preparation programs

- The Department of Education who has cognizance over teacher certification regulations and alternative routes to teacher certification.

- The current standards across all institutions should be ascertained by an external assessment done by an outside consultant and expert in teacher preparation