

Howie Horvath  
Former Chair, West Haven Board of Education  
Testimony on Senate Bill 24

Dear Chairs Stillman and Fleischmann and members of the Education Committee,

My name is Howie Horvath and I'm a former Board of Education chair here in Connecticut. I currently work on public education issues and want to go on record as supporting the human capital and choice changes as proposed in SB24 because they address the most critical elements required to significantly improve all students' academic achievement while simultaneously working to reduce the pernicious and heretofore intractable gaps between the least and most affluent in CT. To ignore this opportunity to act would constitute a retreat to a status quo that clearly has not served the citizens of Connecticut as originally intended.

Dramatic changes to the way the state and our school districts hire, support, develop, evaluate, terminate and reward its principals and teachers are essential to righting a system that's been wildly out of balance for decades. Research findings from across the globe consistently remind us that improving the quality of teaching is the most effective way to significantly improve academic achievement. School leaders more directly engaged with an instructional staff appropriately equipped with more flexibility and a strong foundation of insight and support will clearly lead to victory.

I believe this new plan with all its recommendations represents our very best chance to effectively "right this ship" allowing Connecticut to successfully reap the rewards of what is shaping up to be an incredibly exciting age of global competition and opportunity unmatched by any previous. I strongly recommend the passage of this bill.