

***Remarks of Jennifer Shaknaitis
Language Arts Resource Teacher
Glastonbury Public Schools***

**For the Education Committee
On Senate Bill 24
Sections 28 and 29, *Professional Development and Evaluation***

February 21, 2012

My name is Jennifer Shaknaitis, and I'm a language arts resource teacher in Glastonbury.

First, I am in support of rigorous evaluation plans which hold teachers accountable for best practices that lead to increased student achievement. As a Language Arts Resource Teacher, my primary responsibility is coaching teachers and providing job-embedded professional development which leads to improved practice. I am concerned that the bill, as written, does not support fair and justified evaluation procedures. It appears to me the evaluation a teacher receives will lie in the hands of one individual, the administrator who is supervising the individual teacher.

In my experience there have been instances where my colleagues and I have provided professional development sessions for teachers, but very few, if any, administrators attended. If teachers are expected to grow professionally, shouldn't the same expectations for learning be held for those individuals who are evaluating the professional practice of teachers? If administrators are not willing to learn along with their staff, and they are not held accountable for effectively evaluating teaching practice; how can I trust that teacher evaluations will be fair and justified? Basing the status of teacher certification, tenure, and salary on the evaluation from one individual is a dangerous practice that should be reconsidered.

I would like to urge the committee to reconsider this bill. Please advocate for a tenure and certification plans that allows for teacher accountability, but also values advanced learning, allows for competitive salaries which compensate teachers for their dedication to student achievement, and maintains the high expectations that Connecticut has been known to hold for its teachers.