

Hi,

I am a voting resident of Stamford and a first grade teacher in Darien. While I am happy that the plights of education in the state are being recognized at the state level, the proposed solutions hurt teachers by blaming all the current problems on them and doesn't recognize all the things we do.

I was hurt and insulted that the governor said that teachers just get tenure by "showing up" I am currently a fourth year teacher and still do not have tenure. I hold a undergraduate degree in elementary and special education. I hold a masters degree in teaching. I also just received my CT reading specialist degree by taking 15 more credits on top of my masters. All this education has probably cost me over \$150,000. I have also had at least 3 formal observations a year in my district, I have completed the new TEAM program the state has developed to evaluate new teachers I also went through a training program for new teachers in my district. I hoped to be tenured in September. By no means has this accomplishment been handed to me because I just showed up !

I take my job seriously, have more education then some people who get paid three times what I do and put in less time. Teachers teach because they believe in kids and education. To blame problems in education solely on them is ignorant.

We need to look at the economy, funding and parent involvement.

Legislators need to know that teachers' view of school improvement provides the best perspective for lasting change. Specifically, lawmakers need to know that real change starts with the following:

Require school districts to develop evaluation plans collaboratively with teachers according to strong statutory state standards, and require evaluations to be conducted fairly and consistently.

Fix tenure and dismissal by requiring due process based on "just cause", which ensure that a neutral hearing officer can issue a fair, binding decision in a teacher termination hearing.

Connect teacher licensing to teacher training and the real needs in classrooms by including professionals in the development of certification standards.

Ensure fair and equitable distribution of state aid that does not strip public funds from local schools.

Engage parents by creating innovative and positive ways to increase involvement in schools and reinforce lessons with their children at home.

Reject proposals in SB 24 (the Governor's education bill) that would weaken collective

bargaining, establish renewable tenure, link teachers' licenses and tenure to supervisor evaluations, and unfairly shift new funding away from local public schools.

Thanks for listening. Please reject this bill and all the proposals that will hurt teachers and their rights.

Kim Neilsen