



CONNECTICUT FEDERATION OF  
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS  
AFSA - AFL-CIO



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March 5, 2012

To: Senator Andrea Stillman

Representative Andrew Fleischman

C0-Chairs: Education Committee

And

Members of the Education Committee

From: Roch J. Girard

President

RE: Legislative Testimony

**Raised Bill 5350 AAC Achieving Universal Literacy By Grade Three:**

We applaud the intentions of this bill. There is much research that verifies that children who are not up to speed in literacy by grade three are more likely than not, to be behind academically throughout their educational career. This bill is very prescriptive requiring significant personnel and fiscal needs. Granted there is some money allocated to address the needs of the bill, we doubt that it will be sufficient.

The requirement that a child, who does not achieve a satisfactory score on the reading component of a state-wide mastery examination, would require- with some exception – retention in Grade 3. Research also tells us that retention of students is also a negative experience for a child. We would rather see a more intensive approach at remediation efforts and alternative instructional strategies in grade K-2, and 3 respectively. The bill calls for plans that could include an extended day and or school year, as well as, participation in after school reading programs/activities; summer school instruction; Saturday sessions; and or transition classes. These remedies will be VERY costly for LEA's.

We agree that teacher who work in early childhood education through Grade 3 should have greater preparation in reading foundation. The new requirement of recertification every five years is questionable. Are doctors, lawyers and even carpenters recertified every five years? Teachers as practitioners should be respected. It is just another bureaucratic and unnecessary step. More professional development in Reading should suffice for all parties concerned.

Requiring 30 hours of teacher training for a reading endorsement and at least 6 semester hours for teacher going into early childhood through grade 3 or for an elementary endorsement makes sense.

NOTE: Online 262, it reads that a student may be promoted to grade 3, I think it should say grade 4?

### **Raised Bill No. 5351 AAC Vocational-Technical Schools.**

As we testified last week we support the changes proposed for the Technical H.S.

The support given to our Technical H.S. is well over due. It is our hope that the new Board of Education established to exclusively support our technology H.S should give credibility to the importance service they will provide to the state and the business community. We support the concept that every 5 years a capital improvement and equipment improvement plan

is required. This should keep our technical H.S. current in curriculum and technical skills need for their students to have job ready skills at graduation. For far too long our technical H.S have been the step child of the state, this new concept should end that neglect. Having business, and manufacturing and trade and community input will greatly enhance the school systems mission.

### **Raised Bill No. 5352: AAC Student- Centered Learning.**

This new “Pilot Program” to promote the personalization of learning in schools is commendable. The commissioner will select 10 school districts to participate in the pilot. We hope that districts who do apply will be representative of all geographical segments within our state. We do not know if \$ 50,000.00 covering a three year period for the implementation will be adequate. The use of “on-line courses” will be interesting to follow. To insure that the quality of the courses are equivalent to classroom courses/content that rigorous and aligned with curriculum guidelines is very important. Though learning on line is in its early stages, there appears to be much promise in its use, but further evaluation is needed.

### **Raised Bill No. 5354: AAC Athletic Directors and Incorporating Physical Activity in the School Day.**

This bill, while well intended, is yet another catch 22 for educators and school. Yes everyone wants our children to be active, healthy and productive, but there is only so much time in the school day. With budget cuts hammering away on many school districts forcing personnel cuts, whether they are for teachers, administrators, Paraprofessional, etc, to demand time – 20 minutes a day allocated for physical exercise is easier said than done. The student day is now so jammed chock full of activity WHERE is this 20 minutes coming from? Unless we extend the student day or school year how can we accomplish this requirement? We cannot continue to add on requirements, without taking something off the student

day! The part of this bill which has athletic directors hold appropriate certification is fine.

### **Raised Bill No.300; AAC Early Childhood Education**

CFSA fully supports this proposal. Again, we are concerned that the sustained FUNDING for this bill will be met, If not, it becomes another unfunded mandate!

### **Raised Bill No. 304. AAC The Inclusion of Labor History In The Public School Curriculum.**

Labor history is an integral part of the American experience. The impact of labor on the economic, social and political fabric of this country is a story that students need to know and understand. The curriculum should incorporate the history of organized labor. The curriculum should also discuss what the collective bargaining process is, including existing legal protections in the workplace,

Workers have rights in America, and to that end our students should know labor history and how labor transformed the American experience and created the great middle class which makes America the great country that it is. CFSA supports the inclusion of labor history in the prescribed course of study in the public school curriculum.

Thank you.