



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

REPRESENTATIVE MATTHEW LESSER
ONE HUNDREDTH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
ROOM 4014
HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591

HOME: 860-344-1230
CAPITOL: 860-240-8585
TOLL FREE: 800-842-8267
FAX: 860-240-0206
E-MAIL: Matthew.Lesser@cga.ct.gov

VICE CHAIRMAN
GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND
ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

MEMBER
EDUCATION COMMITTEE
ENERGY AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

March 6, 2012

Good morning Rep. Urban, Sen. Gerratana, Rep. Wood, Sen. Suzio, vice chairs Rep. Fawcett and Sen. Musto and members of the Committee,

I wish to testify in support of HB 5347.

As you know, I represent Middletown, specifically a portion which includes the Farm Hill Elementary School. Restraint and seclusion practices at Farm Hill have been the subject of much recent attention from parents, the community and the news media.

Our local school board and district have indicated that they are serious about ensuring that all students at Farm Hill are treated appropriately. As a local legislator, I continue to monitor their response, and the overall situation, very closely. Actions taken so far include leadership changes and implementation of a Farm Hill School support plan, which includes additional resources for the school. I am attaching a summary of the changes as part of my written testimony.

While the role of parents in sounding the alarm was invaluable in this instance, we need to ensure that we have adequate data to understand what is happening in our schools.

We need to learn more about restraint and seclusion practices, not just in this one Middletown school but around the state. The additional reporting requirements in HB 5347 will help us find out whether seclusions and restraints are in accordance with an individualized education program or an emergency. The bill explicitly requires that restraint and seclusion undertaken as a recommendation of an IEP is reported to the State Board of Education. The bill also requires the State Board of Education to issue an annual report to the General Assembly detailing those reports, which it currently has the option to do.

This additional information will help the General Assembly learn more about the prevalence and purpose of seclusion and restraint in our schools and better assess what policies are necessary to guide their use.

Thank you for proposing this bill and for giving me the opportunity to testify before you today.

Respectfully,
Matthew Lesser



Middletown Public Schools

Michael J. Frechette, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools

Memo

Date: January 10, 2012
To: Pat Girard, Principal, Farm Hill School
From: Michael J. Frechette, Ph.D.
Subject: Farm Hill Support Plan

Please find below the support plan that was collaboratively developed by Central Office and you for Farm Hill School.

Current Farm Hill Resources:

- 4 Special Education Teachers
- 7 Paraprofessionals
- 1 full-time Social Worker
- 1 full-time Speech and Language Teacher
- 1 full-time Elementary Instructional Support Teacher (EIST)
- ½ time School Psychologist
- 3 day a week Family Resource Center
- Executive Coach Dr. Paul DeIGabbo, Connecticut Association of Schools, to assist administration and staff one day per week.
- ACES Behaviorist Position: to work with students and staff on behavior strategies.

Additional Support:

- Student Management Coordinator: Certification in special education, administration, and experience as a building principal.
- Full-time Psychologist (additional .5 FTE) Present half-time psychologist is being increased to full-time. He currently holds an administrative degree, knows the staff and students, and will assist with administrative functions.
- ACES: Dr. Donn Sottolano, Director ACES Behavior Services Center, to meet with Grade Levels for collaborative conversations with regard to children at risk. Feedback to be provided to administration and staff. (Thursday, January 12, 2012)
- Development of Climate Committee - JoAnn Fryberg, State Department of Education and Elizabeth Nocera, to facilitate and establish action plan to address building needs.
- Parent Compact Revision – Parent Partnership Committee – Climate focus. Ms. Patricia Avallon, State Department of Education Consultant and Donna Marino, to work with parents, staff, and administration.

- ACES Behavioral Technician to work directly with children to address behavioral needs.
- Family Resource Center – extend support for students and families through grade 5.
- I-Care – Behavioral Support Program, extend training for Responsive Classroom Model, morning meetings, and logical consequences.
- St. Joseph College Intern: Graduate in the area of behaviorist, assist in developing and implementing behavior plans.
- Central Office Facilities Department meeting with City to discuss traffic flow and parking issues.

Action Steps:

<u>Action</u>	<u>Implementer</u>	<u>Focus</u>
Weekly Social Skill Lesson	Psychologist and Social Worker	Grade 5 and at risk students
In School Suspension	Building Sub/Student Management Coordinator	Immediate response to inappropriate language and Physical aggression
After School Detention	Staff/Student Management Coordinator/Administrator	School-wide needs
Talking and Learning Center	Cat Greaves – FRC Director	At risk students
In-House Mentoring Program	School Staff	At risk students
Positive Behavior Supports	School Staff	
Morning meetings, monthly student recognition, quarterly rally and recognition	School Staff	Affirm pro-social behavior

The Central Office staff remains committed and supportive to the Farm Hill community.

MJF:mkp

cc: Central Office Administration
Board of Education Members