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Testimony of
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To The
Education Committee

In February 2012, Governor Daniel P. Malloy announced the formation of the Red Tape Review and Removal Task Force to study ways that the State of Connecticut could remove bureaucratic barriers to academic excellence.

As a member of the Task Force representing ConnCASE, I am asking the esteemed members of the Education Committee to fully endorse the recommendations of the Task Force and endorse the following interim steps and recommendations.

1. MITIGATING RED TAPE IN NEW INITIATIVES

Task Force Recommendation 1

New initiatives that are proposed by the State of Connecticut and the Connecticut General Assembly must be analyzed for the impact of administrative burden on school districts and municipalities. This analysis should include participation from representative organizations to discuss the impact of administrative burden. The feedback and input received from such representative organizations will be considered before formulating and/or adopting any policy and before legislation will be implemented at the school and district level.

2. FLEXIBILITY FOR HIGH-PERFORMING DISTRICTS

Task Force Recommendation 2

School districts that exhibit overall success in student achievement should be rewarded with greater flexibility on certain state requirements and mandates. A differentiated system of state oversight for school districts, based upon measures of student achievement, will help the State recognize the disparate needs of schools and school districts.

District and school student achievement data and performance indicators should be the framework to determine the level of autonomy or flexibility districts or schools should receive. A committee comprised of participants from the State Department of Education and other representative organizations should be established to develop the achievement criteria and level of autonomy.

3. DATA REDUCTION AND DATA GOVERNANCE

Task Force Recommendation 3

The State Department of Education should continue efforts to reduce administrative burden on school districts by streamlining systems and forms for collecting and using educational data.

In addition, a coordinated data governance structure and process should be created to allow for a statewide approach to collecting and managing educational data to inform policy and practice. The goal of this data governance process would be to improve data quality and improve communication between the State Department of Education and school districts. The data governance structure would include representation from the State Department of Education, the Red Tape Task Force, and school districts.

4. AREAS OF FUTURE RESEARCH

Task Force Recommendation 4

During the course of the Task Force's work, additional tasks and areas of research requiring longer periods of study emerged. The Task Force recommends additional research into reducing red tape in key areas including, but not limited to, the following:

- Teacher and School Leader Talent Issues, which might also include an examination of barriers to reciprocity
- Unnecessary Classroom and School Level Administrative Burdens
- Methods to Streamline Individual Legislative Mandates, with a focus on accomplishing the same educational goals with reduced administrative burden. Areas of review might include Special Education and/or School Climate.
- Research into Best Practices of Other States
- Statewide Survey on Red Tape