

Testimony on Minor Revisions to the Education Statutes- Graduation Requirements

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On behalf of the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS), I am testifying in support of legislative changes that allow Boards of Education to replace Carnegie Units with mastery of standards as a prerequisite for graduation. Mastery of standards is an important strategy for school districts if all students are to graduate College and Career Ready. In drafting the legislative revision, CAPSS encourages the committee to revise the language in section 10 relating to subsection (f) of section 10-221a of the general statutes to read adopted or approved by the State Board of Education.

For the purposes of this testimony mastery-based, competency-based and proficiency –based have similar meaning.

States across the country are implementing similar revisions of statutes as the revision proposed to section 10-221a. New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine, Ohio, Kentucky, Oregon and Alaska are a few of the states implementing mastery of standards as a requirement for graduation and an alternative to the Carnegie Unit. The National Governor’s Association Issue Brief, that is attached, documents these efforts.

In addition, the United States Department of Education devotes a section of their web site to Competency Based Pathways. The section is entitled, “Schools, Districts, and States Transform Seat-based Requirements into Competency-based Pathways to College- and Career-Readiness.” A copy of the web site is attached as well.

The Nellie Mae Education Foundation recently published the report “Making Mastery Work: A Close-up view of Competency Education (November, 2012). They state, “The traditional system of moving students ahead to the next grade level after nine months seems less relevant each year. This is a reason for the growing appeal of competency-based learning or competency education.”

CAPSS strongly encourages the Legislature to give school districts the option of graduating students based on a demonstration of the mastery of a comprehensive list of competencies.

Thank you.