

TESTIMONY ON HB 6624

An Act to Unleash Innovation

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In Wallingford, we are committed to what we have entitled – The Wallingford 100 – 100% community support for 100% engaged students in an effort to reach a 100% graduation rate. In order to meet this goal, innovative strategies need to be employed to engage students and provide them with authentic learning experiences to ensure college and career readiness. In an effort to make this a reality for students, I would encourage the legislature to enact HB 6624.

The implementation of extended learning opportunities for high school students is one approach that we plan to employ in an effort to reach our goal. The idea of —anytime, anyplace learning is a promising concept that not only would provide authentic rigorous experiences for students, but also would engage students that may now be on the verge of dropping out.

Extended learning opportunities typically refer to the following opportunities for students:

- 1) Internship experiences for high school students. Students engage in authentic opportunities in which they can apply concepts and skills learned in a traditional setting. These experiences provide significant benefit to students later in their careers;
- 2) Technology experiences that open the classroom, school day, school week, and school year for students to access the instructional experiences on demand in any setting; and
- 3) Personalized learning opportunities that are developed based on student needs and strengths.

Teachers would be integral in the implementation of extended learning opportunities. They would provide the content and knowledge base on which students would then build their depth of understanding through problem-based career embedded experiences. Teachers, with professionals from the community, would facilitate these highly rigorous dynamic projects.

Extended learning opportunities are one the highest forms of performance assessment. Performance assessments – opportunities to demonstrate understanding of a concept or competency – provide a better understanding of what a student knows and is able to do. By employing mastery based criteria to assess such experiences, students would be awarded credit for learning that may occur in a variety of settings over time.

It is essential that HB 6624 be enacted so that the ability for a district to transition from diploma criteria based on Carnegie Units to criteria based on demonstration of mastery needs is established