



**Testimony: Jennifer Alexander, Acting CEO for ConnCAN**

Education Committee—Monday, March 4, 2013

My name is Jennifer Alexander and I am the Acting CEO for the Connecticut Coalition for Achievement Now (ConnCAN), a statewide advocacy organization focused on ensuring that every child in Connecticut has access to a high-quality public education.

I want to thank Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the committee for the opportunity to provide testimony on two pieces of legislation: Senate Bill 997, An Act Establishing an Educator Preparation Advisory Council; and Senate Bill (SB) 1000, An Act Concerning the Establishment of an Academically Gifted Advancement Program.

**SB 997 – An Act Establishing an Educator Preparation Advisory Council**

Every child in Connecticut deserves access to a high quality public education, regardless of wealth, race, or zip code. A key step toward ensuring effective teachers and principals for all children is to improve the state’s educator preparation programs.

Senate Bill 997 – An Act Establishing an Educator Preparation Advisory Council – establishes the Educator Preparation Advisory Council (EPAC), aimed at overseeing the development and implementation of much-needed standards for holding teacher preparation programs accountable for how well their graduates perform on the job.

We hope that EPAC will establish strong standards and meaningful accountability for preparation programs. These standards must include measures that directly focus on teacher effectiveness, such as the results of teacher evaluation and student achievement growth. We also strongly urge the state to make the results of the preparation programs transparent and publicly available, and to use this data to hold programs accountable.

Once the state’s new educator evaluation system has been fully implemented, the state should move towards linking measures of educator quality with certification.

The EPAC must also encourage the growth of non-traditional educator training programs that are thriving in other states. These could bring quality options and flexibility to the system and more closely match the needs of schools and students.

**SB 1000 – An Act Concerning the Establishment of an Academically Gifted Advancement Program**

Every child deserves the opportunity meet high standards and achieve at the highest levels, including those students who are academically gifted. By expediting the development of gifted students, and incentivizing their attendance at a Connecticut university, we can further ensure that our state’s brightest children can compete in a global market place, while working right here in Connecticut. High paying jobs and economic growth will only come to Connecticut if it has an education system that is second to none.

Senate Bill 1000 – An Act Concerning the Establishment of an Academically Gifted Advancement Program – seeks to do just that, by giving high achieving eleventh graders the chance to test out of their

final year of high school. Those who successfully pass this test would be granted a scholarship to a Connecticut university, as a reward for their success.

We hope that the Committee considers this proposal, with the broader goal of moving towards creating flexibility to meet the learning needs of all students.

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