

Joint Committee on Education

**March 4, 2013, Public Hearing on Raised Bill 1000:
AN ACT CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN
ACADEMICALLY GIFTED ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM**

Testimony by Katie Augustyn

Co-Chairs, Ranking Members, and Members of the Education Committee, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Raised Bill 1000, **AN ACT CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ACADEMICALLY GIFTED ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM**.

My name is Katie Augustyn and am the Past President of the Connecticut Association for the Gifted. I have been advocating for better services for gifted and high-ability children in Connecticut for many years and have not given up yet. Raised Bill 1000 is a welcome opportunity to shed some light on what is happening in our state, or rather what is not happening, for our most able learners. I am happy to support this legislation, while recognizing that much more needs to be done to ensure that our gifted and high-ability students even make it to high school without losing their love of learning and their motivation to do well in school.

I think we need a multi-pronged approach to accomplish this.

- 1) Required pre-service training in meeting the cognitive, academic and affective needs of gifted students for all teachers and administrators, which is being considered in another piece of legislation.
- 2) Required in-service training for current teachers and administrators in the same areas.
- 3) Enforcement of the current law to identify gifted and talented students, using the SDE's guidelines of multiple criteria.
- 4) State mandate for all districts to adopt an Acceleration Policy, based on the "Guidelines for an Academic Acceleration Policy" from the Institute for Research and Policy on Acceleration at the Belin-Blank Center in Iowa. It can be found at http://www.accelerationinstitute.org/resources/policy_guidelines/

While I will continue to advocate for these things, and I think we should start earlier in a child's school career, there are undoubtedly many students who would benefit from Raised Bill 1000. Is it for everyone? No. Will it benefit a significant group of students? Yes, including those in districts where the high school does not have high-level courses for them to take and they are maxed out. I also like the scholarship aspect, to benefit the students who wouldn't be able to attend college otherwise.

A great result that can come from legislation such as this bill, is the acknowledgement that all students do not need the same amount of time to master the elementary and secondary educational standards. Each child is different and should be allowed to proceed at the pace best for their learning needs. There are many things that need to be worked out to have that happen and I am hopeful that as a state, we have the will to do it.