



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Connecticut General Assembly – Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee
Testimony of Education Commissioner Stefan Pryor
February 14, 2013

Senator Bye, Representative Willis, Senator Boucher, Representative LeGeyst, and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on HB 5499, An Act Encouraging Students in Teacher Preparation Programs to Tutor Children from Poorly Performing School Districts, and HB 5911, An Act Concerning the Teaching of Gifted and Talented Children.

Both of these proposals raise an issue that is a core priority for the State Department of Education: teacher preparation. I thank you for taking the time to examine such an important and complex issue.

Our teacher preparation programs are the state's primary pipeline for new teacher talent here in Connecticut. It is essential that they are producing high-quality teachers who well-prepared to educate our students for college, career, and life – including students who attend low-performing schools and districts.

It is for that reason that the Department partnered with the state's institutions of higher education to form the Educator Preparation Advisory Council, or EPAC. Established on March 7, 2012 by the State Board of Education, the Council will develop a system for the approval, regulation, oversight, and accreditation of Connecticut educator preparation programs with the following goals:

- Improving the preparation of teachers and school leaders;
- Ensuring that educator preparation programs are well-aligned with the needs of Connecticut's schools and districts;
- Recommending reforms to the state's educator certification regulations so that state policies align with an outcome-based system of accreditation and oversight; and
- Establishing rigorous standards for acceptance into teacher and administrator preparation programs.

EPAC is due to submit its recommendations to the State Board of Education later this spring. Upon adoption of these recommendations, they will be submitted to the General Assembly pursuant to Special Act 12-3.

I will encourage to EPAC to include the important issues in HB 5499 and HB 5911 as they continue in their deliberations, and look forward to working with this committee as we move forward with strengthening our teacher preparation programs.