



Senator Bartolomeo

March 5, 2013

Representative Urban

Members of the Committee:

As the largest and oldest volunteer child advocacy association in the state, Connecticut Parent Teacher Student Association (CT PTSA) provides parents and families with a powerful voice to speak on behalf of every child and the best tools to help their children be safe, healthy, and successful in school and in life.

CT PTSA would like to commend the committee for considering this legislation.

There is widespread consensus that family engagement is a critical ingredient for, and one of the strongest predictors of, children's school success from cradle to career. Research suggests that family engagement promotes a range of benefits for students, including improved school readiness, higher student achievement, better social skills and behavior, and increased likelihood of high school graduation. Policymakers, practitioners, and researchers also recognize family engagement as a critical intervention strategy that maximizes return on other investments in education. Early childhood education programs that have demonstrated significant short- and long-term benefits for children all have intensive family involvement components. Furthermore, investing in family engagement can be cost effective. For example, schools would have to spend \$1,000 more per pupil to reap the same gains in student achievement that an involved parent brings.

Increasing parents' involvement in their children's education is viewed as a key component of most school reform efforts. The term "**parent involvement**" is mentioned in the federal legislation known as No Child Left Behind more than 300 times. Communicating with teachers and school administrators is also a crucial element of parent involvement.

The Connecticut legislature considers volunteering in school to be so important that they even encourage community members to become involved "develop agreements to encourage community residents to take an active role in improving the school and to become school volunteers." General Statutes of Connecticut, Chapter 163, Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-4g (enacted 1984 and amended 1997).

CT PTSA applauds our legislature for being forward thinking about the importance of parent involvement and stands firmly in support of Raised Bill 6501.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marne Usher".

Marne Usher, Vice President of Government Relations  
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