

**TESTIMONY OF CT ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS ON SB 1097**

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The CT Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) which represents the superintendents of CT's school districts and the members of the superintendents' cabinets is opposed to the enactment of SB 1097 because of very serious concerns about two provisions of the bill. One of those provisions in essence makes the evaluation system for teachers and principals a mandatory topic of bargaining with the bargaining agents for both groups and because another provision substitutes an ineffective implementation plan for the one that was developed by the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC).

Under present statute, the local board of education has final authority over the teacher and principal evaluation system as long as representatives of the bargaining unit involved are consulted prior to a decision being made. Section 1 (b) of the proposed bill, however, removes from the Board of Education this final authority regarding the system that will be used to evaluate teachers in every school system in the state. The authority would rest with the professional development and evaluation committee unless the committee and the Board could not agree. If that is the case, the district would be obligated to implement the state model plan.

Members of professional development and evaluation committee, however, have no responsibility for the results achieved by a school system. Only boards of education and the superintendents whom they hire have this responsibility. The bill, then, would give authority over a school system function that is directly related to the results achieved by a school system to a body that has no responsibility for those results.

The bill would also constitute a significant departure from over thirty years of history by making moot the 1986 Wethersfield case that holds that teacher evaluation systems are not a mandatory subject of bargaining.

Section 1(a) of the bill would require every district to implement the new evaluation system with every certified professional in the district in 2014-15. There would be no phase in and no resultant opportunity to learn from that experience before every district goes to full implementation. To avoid this kind of situation, the PEAC reached consensus on a process whereby 2013-14 would be a bridge year during which districts could choose among acceptable phase in options. During the bridge year, relevant administrative staff would be trained to implement the new system and a vital part of that training would be the phased in implementation that would occur.

The PEAC consensus, while it does not necessarily represent all of the phase in options that CAPSS would like to have seen offered, at least recognizes the fact that going to full implementation in every district in the state in any one year with no bridge year before that is a recipe for failure.

We urge you, therefore, not to support SB 1097 as it is presently written and instead, to refer to the PEAC the issues which the bill attempts to address. That body which was established by the Legislature and which is meeting the charge given to it by working for five years to get us to where we are at present has shown that it is best equipped to make recommendations regarding implementation schedules, phase in options and decision making processes.

PEAC members have shown that the various caretakers of our public school system can integrate the different perspectives and agendas that they represent with those of the other PEAC members to put in place a teacher and principal evaluation and support system that will greatly benefit the children who are served by the public schools of the state. The work that PEAC has done has been hard to do. But PEAC has done it and it would be in the best interest of the children served by the schools to allow PEAC to continue its work.

Enactment of SB 1097 as presently written would seriously compromise the ability of PEAC to continue making the kind of progress that it has made. It is not too dramatic to say that if this were to occur, it is the children who would lose.