

Testimony
Submitted to the
Education Committee
March 15, 2013

Good afternoon Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Education Committee.

My name is Alan Addley and I am the Superintendent of the Granby Public Schools. I also serve as the President of the Hartford Area Superintendents' Association. I wish to share two concerns regarding House Bill 1097, An Act Concerning Revisions to the Education Reform Act of 2012.

First, the proposed bill essentially makes the evaluation system for teachers and administrators a mandatory topic of bargaining with the unions. Under current State Statute, local boards of education have the final authority over the teacher and administrator evaluation system provided representatives of the bargaining units are consulted prior to a decision being made. However, Section 1 (b) of the proposed bill removes from the board of education this final decision-making authority regarding the evaluation system that will be used to evaluate teachers and administrators. The authority would be designated to the Professional Development and Evaluation Committees unless the committee and the board could not agree. In cases where consensus cannot be reached, the district would be obligated to implement the state model plan. Very respectfully, this shows a lack of sensitivity for the role, responsibilities, management, and evaluation rights of the superintendent and boards of education that are necessary to maintain in order to leverage change for Connecticut's students.

Those teachers and administrators who are members of the district Professional Development and Evaluation Committee are not responsible for the overall achievement of a school district. Only boards of education and the superintendents 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 district to a body that does not have the ultimate responsibility for those results. Requiring districts to use the state model in cases where consensus cannot be reached is not a viable solution as it would, for many districts, undermine the extensive work already completed by the Evaluation Committees. While requiring the collaborative development of an evaluation plan, the superintendent and board of education should maintain final approval and decision-making, even in cases where consensus is not reached.

Secondly, 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 opportunity to learn from the pilots and phase-in experiences before full implementation of the plan.

As you know, the PEAC reached consensus on a process whereby 2013-14 would be a bridge year where districts would have some choice and could phase-in the implementation of the plan. The proposed bill does not fully align to the work of the PEAC Committee.

Frankly, with the implementation of the Common Core Standards and Secondary School Reform, the PEAC phase-in plan also needs further modification. The state and the school districts simply do not have the necessary time, resources or capacity to simultaneously implement these high-level policies well; rather, keep PEAC's phased-in approach and refer the timeline and implementation process back to the PEAC Committee for further modification. Examples of how PEAC could further modify their phase-in plan would be to allow districts to focus on less of the core requirements.

Thank you for your consideration and for your work on behalf of the children of our state.