



University of Connecticut
Neag School of Education

Department of
Educational Leadership

SB 1097 AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO THE EDUCATION REFORM
ACT OF 2012

Testimony submitted to the Education Committee, March 15, 2013

Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Education Committee, my name is Morgaen Donaldson and I am an assistant professor at the Neag School of Education at the University of Connecticut. I am the primary investigator of the study of SEED's pilot implementation that was mandated by the legislature in June, 2012. My research focuses on policies and practices related to educator quality, including teacher evaluation, human capital development in schools and districts, and teachers unions. In addition to leading the study of SEED's pilot implementation, I have also conducted research on teacher evaluation in numerous settings, including New Haven.

I am here to testify in opposition to one aspect of SB 1097. I am opposed to the delay this proposal imposes on the timeline for implementation of Connecticut's new educator evaluation system.

I oppose delaying the timeline for implementation for the following reasons:

- The Connecticut State Department of Education has modified requirements for implementation of the evaluation system in 2013-14, offering a compromise that requires all districts to implement new systems consistent with the Core Requirements with at least one-third of certified personnel. The Department of Education made these alterations based on findings from the Neag School of Education study, CSDE's own analysis of pilot implementation, and feedback from members of PEAC and, in particular, the CEA and AFT-Connecticut. My co-investigators and I view this change as a sensible compromise that will allow teachers and district and school leaders to implement the policy on a smaller scale and learn through this process so that full-scale implementation in 2014-15 is successful.
- The Neag research team has provided interim feedback and findings to PEAC and will continue to do so throughout the pilot year of SEED implementation. Although our final report is not due until January, 2014, we are scheduled to report out on our findings after each phase of data collection during the 2012-13 schoolyear. On February 4, 2013 we presented findings based on our first round

An Equal Opportunity Employer

249 Glenbrook Road Unit 2093
Storrs, Connecticut 06269-2093

Telephone: (860) 486-4812
Facsimile: (860) 486-4028
Web: www.edlr.uconn.edu

An NCATE Accredited Institution

of data collection to PEAC. We anticipate reporting out on our second round of findings in April, 2013 and on our third round of findings in July, 2013. Thus, although our final report is not due until after the pilot is complete and SEED/Core Requirements are implemented statewide, findings based on our study are being communicated to stakeholders on a regular basis to inform 2013-14 implementation.

Beyond this specific issue, I want to underscore the particular importance of including teachers in the development and implementation of the new teacher evaluation system. Involving teachers and their unions in the development and implementation of teacher evaluation systems strengthens these systems. For example, Cincinnati's Teacher Evaluation System, the only teacher evaluation system in the county that has been proven to increase student achievement, germinated in a collective bargaining agreement and was cultivated through the joint deliberations and dedication of union and district leaders, teachers and leaders (Taylor & Tyler, 2011). My own research in New Haven demonstrates that the involvement of the New Haven Federation of Teachers and teachers, themselves, has been critical to the progress of TEVAL (Donaldson & Papay, 2012). Teachers and their unions have been present in the development and modification of SEED/the Core Requirements through representation on PEAC. I urge districts to continue to involve teachers centrally as they design and implement their district evaluation plans.

In short, I urge the Education Committee to oppose efforts to delay the implementation of new educator evaluation systems based on SEED/the Core Requirements and encourage stakeholders to provide opportunities for teachers to contribute substantively to the design and implementation of teacher evaluation systems.

References

Donaldson, M.L. & Papay, J.P. (2012). *Reforming Teacher Evaluation: One District's Story*. Washington, DC: Center for American Progress.

Taylor, E., & Tyler, J. (2011). The Effects of Evaluation on Performance. NBER Working Paper # 16877. <http://www.nber.org/papers/w16877>.