

TESTIMONY ON SB 1097
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Montville Public Schools

Good day. I would like to express my appreciation to members of the committee for providing me with the opportunity to present my testimony on SB 1097.

As Superintendent of Schools from Montville, Connecticut and as a member of the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents, I wish to submit the following testimony to voice my opposition of Sections 1 (b) of proposed legislation contained within raised bill HR1097 AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO THE EDUCATION REFORM ACT OF 2012.

Section 1 (b) removes from the Board of Education the final authority regarding the system that will be used to evaluate teachers in every school system in the state. In AAC Education Reform passed last year, requires only that members of the local educators' bargaining unit be consulted on the design and form of the teacher evaluation system selected to meet the core principles of the new educator evaluation plan. Currently, the Montville Public Schools Teacher and Administrator Evaluation Committees have worked hard to design a rigorous system that aligns with the Core Principles outlined in the document, "Connecticut's System for Educator Evaluation and Development (SEED). In addition, the Connecticut Standards for School Leaders-revised (CCL) and the Common Core of Teaching outline the specific practices and performance expectations for teachers and administrators.

Despite a focused, collaborative effort by our committee of teachers and administrators, I strongly believe that the final authority to approve the plan must remain with the Board of Education and Superintendent since they have ultimate responsibility for the quality of the district. This aligns with past practice for the approval process for all previous teacher evaluation plans in Montville. The Board must be assured that the plan reflects the core values of the Board of Education and the community it serves. Furthermore, this decision should be made in open session where stakeholders have the opportunity to share their opinions. It appears self-serving to allow a solitary group removed from public scrutiny to design a plan without some level of accountability to the Board of Education. The community would be ill-served if authority is usurped from the Board of Education. The Board of Education, in partnership with the Superintendent, works hard to procure resources (personnel, time, money, and professional development) to ensure that the district is engaged in continuous improvement. In fact, personnel expenditures account for about 80% of the typical school budget.

By removing the Board's decision making authority in the design of the educator evaluation plan, a critical accountability tool would be eliminated. I urge you, therefore, not to support SB 1097 as it is presently written and instead, to refer to the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC) the issues which the bill attempts to address. That body is best equipped to make recommendations regarding implementation schedules, phase in options and decision making processes.