

Testimony of Jonathan Swan

Chief Portfolio Officer for Hartford Public Schools

On Behalf of Hartford Superintendent Christina M. Kishimoto

Committee on Education  
Connecticut General Assembly

Wednesday, March 12, 2014

Co-Chairs Representative Fleischmann and Senator Stillman, Vice-Chairs Representative McCrory and Senator Bye, Ranking Members Representative Ackert and Senator Boucher.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on H.B. No. 5078, An Act Imposing a Moratorium on the Implementation of the Common Core State Standards. My name is Jonathan Swan, Chief Portfolio Officer for Hartford Public Schools, testifying on behalf of Hartford Superintendent Christina M. Kishimoto.

Although we at Hartford Public Schools recognize that the implementation of the Common Core State Standards in Connecticut schools has not gone smoothly or evenly, we respectfully oppose the passage of H.B. 5078 and any legislation that would suspend or terminate the implementation of the standards.

The new standards were developed by the National Governors Association and the American Council of Chief State School Officers in 2010 in response to progressively lower levels of achievement among American students when compared to students in other industrialized nations.

The standards create more rigorous expectations of what children should learn in order to be ready for college and career.

Connecticut is one of 44 states that adopted and began the process of converting to Common Core standards. Many districts, including Hartford, are well into that process. To impose a moratorium at this stage would be both chaotic and costly.

We in Hartford, for example, have already developed a Common Core implementation plan and we have revised our policies to align with Common Core.

We have asked our after school program providers to adjust their services – tutorial, recreational or enrichment – to support Common Core expectations.

We have solicited and been awarded grant funds in support of our Common Core rollout from organizations such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Nellie Mae Foundation.