



**Connecticut Association of
Boards of Education, Inc.**

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**Testimony
Submitted to the
Education Committee
March 3, 2014**

**HB 5043 AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GOVERNOR
CONCERNING EDUCATION**

**SB 26 AN ACT EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
HB 5355 AN ACT CONCERNING COLLABORATION BETWEEN BOARDS OF EDUCATION AND
SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS
SB 25 AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD**

Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischman, members of the Education Committee, the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education appreciates the opportunity to address the Governor's budget proposal.

HB 5043, An Act Implementing the Budget Recommendations of the Governor Concerning Education, continues to demonstrate the Governor's support for education, despite the state's fiscal constraints. CABE appreciates the support of the Governor and the Legislature to provide increases in education funding during the past 3 years, making Connecticut one of only a few states to do so. The economic challenges are faced at all levels of government, and felt most intensely at the local level during the current budget development and adoption season. Rising local costs, in addition to the increased expectations and related costs for implementation of Common Core State Standards, educator evaluation and support, and secondary school reform, will likely exceed the increases in the education cost sharing grant in all districts. For the Alliance Districts, the increase in ECS funding again comes with a requirement that the funds be expanded pursuant to a plan approved by the Commissioner. We urge you to insure that these districts have the flexibility to include support for existing initiatives in their plans.

The continuation of the cap on the special education excess cost grant, which was designed as the safety net for local school districts facing extraordinary individual student special education costs, creates fiscal uncertainty at the local level. Increasingly districts must reduce services to regular education students to fund the special education mandates. We urge you to make every effort to remove this cap. Delivery of these targeted services does decrease the offerings in the general education budget in a detrimental way. We are encouraged that the MORE Commission is studying special education.

CABE supports SB 26, An Act Expanding Opportunities for Early Childhood Education and SB 25, An Act Establishing the Office of Early Childhood. CABE applauds the creation of the Office of Early Childhood. It recognizes the partnership of community based and public school programs as well as more resources for educators. Additional resources for early childhood programs will allow many more young children to be better prepared as they enter kindergarten and greatly enhances their opportunities as lifelong learners. This programing will also help to decrease the achievement gap at its inception.

The provisions in HB 5355, An Act Concerning Collaboration between Boards of Education and School Resource Officers, concerning adoption of a policy or memorandum of understanding covering the role of school resources reflects the best practice that CABE recommends to school districts. The provision that requires additional data reporting concerning suspensions, expulsions and arrests places an additional burden on

districts, and it is unclear how the State Department of Education will be able to utilize this data. Therefore, CAFE opposes this provision of HB 5353.

We appreciate your attention to these issues.