



JUMOKE ACADEMY
CHARTER SCHOOLS

Joseph Dickerson Testimony: March 12, 2014
Education Committee hearing on bills 5331 and 5078

Hello Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong opposition to two bills: ***HB 5331- An Act Concerning Implementation of Revisions to the PEAC Guidelines***, and ***HB 5078- An Act Imposing a Moratorium on the Implementation of the Common Core Standards***.

My name is Joseph Dickerson and I'm testifying on behalf of the Northeast Charter School Network. I'm currently the executive director fellow for JumoKe Academy in Hartford.

I am deeply invested in the growth and success of our state's education system. But our system sadly fails too many of our children. We need to do more.

All kids should have the opportunity to receive a great education, no matter where they live. Unfortunately, many inner-city kids in our state don't have access to the great education they need.

Too many Black, Hispanic, and kids in poverty in Connecticut are not receiving the high-quality education they deserve. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, Connecticut has the largest achievement gap in the country. That's simply unacceptable.

We need to make sure our teachers are prepared to help *all* of our children excel in school, and graduate prepared for college and careers.

Research is clear that effective evaluation systems must include student achievement growth as one of several measures, like our Connecticut system does, to help identify our most effective educators, help those who are struggling to improve and allow us to move quickly to dismiss those that cannot improve even after support. Like the lasting impact great teachers have on our students, ineffective teachers can also have a lasting negative impact. HB 5331 limits the flexibility of districts to ensure strong evaluation systems are being implemented on the local level, and as such, I oppose it.

That's also why we cannot back down from Common Core State Standards, which raises expectations for our kids to make sure they don't fall behind. Every student in every public school in Connecticut should be held to the same, high standard. To delay the implementation

of the Common Core would mean that entire classrooms of children will continue to slip through the cracks. We cannot wait another minute to help these students, and so I oppose HB 5078.

The Common Core State Standards and educator evaluation program are both important programs designed to make sure that all of our students, like our neediest students in urban districts throughout Connecticut, have access to a great education.

Our schools are shaped by the educators and students that fill them. We need to do all we can to make sure our teachers are the best they can be, and our students – no matter what their background or family's income may be – are thriving in the classroom and being prepared for college and careers.

Thank you.