



CONNECTICUT STATE
COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES
BOARD OF REGENTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

**Testimony by Dr. Ted Yungclas, Principal
Academic Affairs Officer**
Board of Regents for Higher Education
Before the Higher Education and Employment
Advancement Committee
February 25, 2014

Senators Cassano and Boucher, Representatives Willis and LeGeyst, and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on **SB 18: An Act Concerning the English Language Learner Educator Incentive Program**. For the record, my name is Ted Yungclas, and I am the Principal Academic Affairs Officer for the Board of Regents for Higher Education, which governs our state's four state universities, 12 community colleges, and Charter Oak State College. Collectively, we are known as the Connecticut State Colleges & Universities.

The Board of Regents supports the redesign of the English Language Learner Educator Incentive Program to allow for grant opportunities and to eliminate the 20 person cap on students served. In 2012, the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) published "Knocking at the College Door," a report examining demographic trends in high school graduates in each of the 50 states. By the end of this decade, the number of white, non-Hispanic high school graduates in Connecticut will have declined by 24% from its 2008 high, while the number of Hispanic graduates will have increased by 43%. The number of Asian/Pacific Islander graduates will have increased by 69%. While many of these students will be perfectly fluent in English and speak it as a native language, some will not. Connecticut's increasing diversity suggests that more emphasis should be placed on preparing educators with skills vital to increasing language proficiency and educational attainment among these growing populations.

The English language learner population deserves increased support and attention as it moves through the K-12 system and into our higher education system, and extending opportunities for future educators to receive this important endorsement is one way to increase such services. Additional language support delivered English language learners during the course of their primary and secondary school career can only have a positive effect on the attainment of these students as they shift into post-secondary education, thus increasing the likelihood students attend a post-secondary school and reducing the placement of these students into developmental education programming that unfortunately slows student progress to degree, and results in lower completion rates.

Please contact Kyle Thomas, Legislative Program Manager at 860-692-2350, if you have any questions regarding this testimony.