



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee
Testimony of Commissioner Stefan Pryor
February 25, 2014

SB 18: An Act Concerning the English Language Learners Educator Incentive Program

Senator Cassano, Representative Willis, Senator Boucher, Representative Legeyt and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on SB 18: An Act Concerning the English Language Learners Educator Incentive Program.

As you know, supporting English Language Learners and Bilingual students is one of the many ways the Department must work to address the achievement gap in Connecticut. As an SDE representative stated at the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission's Public Hearing on this issue, one of the challenges is that bilingual certified teachers is an identified shortage area. It is difficult for districts to hire qualified bilingual teachers, particularly if they are a small district and the teacher anticipates that as the bilingual eligible numbers drop, the district will terminate the position.

The Department strongly supports this proposed legislation, will help to address the teacher shortage area.