

**Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee**

**March 4, 2014**

**Testimony of Dr. Nivea Torres, Connecticut Technical High School System Superintendent and  
Gail Coppage, Boards of Regents for Higher Education Director of Innovation & Outreach**

My name is Dr. Nivea Torres, Superintendent of the CT Technical High School System. Together, with my colleague Gail Coppage, the Director of Innovation & Outreach for the Board of Regents for Higher Education, the governing body of the state's twelve community colleges, four state universities and Charter Oak State College, the state's only fully-online public college, we are pleased to provide comment on **Raised Bill No. 5434: An Act Requiring a Technical High School and Community-Technical College Cooperative.**

The Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR) and the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities understand the importance of a stronger, streamlined collaborative partnership with the Technical High School System (THSS). A significant number of technical high school graduates not only remain in Connecticut but continue to one of our seventeen institutions of public higher education. It cannot be stressed enough that an easily understood, easily identifiable, unified and supported articulation across systems will better support our students both at the technical high schools and throughout our system of institutions but especially our community colleges.

With this goal in mind and the need to further articulate the relationship of the manufacturing programs at the technical high schools with the new advanced manufacturing center programs at four of our community colleges, the BOR and the THSS together created an Educational Success Compact. The Educational Success Compact was applauded and approved by the Technical High School System Board at its November 2013 meeting. A copy of the Compact is provided.

The purpose of the Educational Success Compact is to provide a series of expectations and immediate next steps which will serve as a blueprint for not only a system to system articulation but also proposed opportunities for efficiencies across systems, additional opportunities for programming and utilization of existing space for future educational and training through Community College programming.

A key component of the compact is also the commitment to expanding our partnership and creating the first 9-14 pathway in the state for technical high school students into a community college. The reopening of J.M. Wright Technical High School in the Fall of 2014 is a unique opportunity to create this model in coordination with Norwalk Community College. For the first time, students will have an opportunity to embark on a career pathway and program of study in a technical field that aligns with postsecondary institutions and leads to an associate degree or postsecondary certificate or employment. Our goal is to provide dual credit and dual enrollment for all 11th and 12th graders.

In addition to the Compact, the BOR and THSS understand the need for consistent and constant conversations regarding these very significant topics, and as such we have formalized a small working group to move forward with key strategic plans and objectives all in support of student success, opportunity and support. We want our Connecticut graduates to move into careers that further grow and enhance Connecticut's economy across a myriad of industry sectors.

Understanding the need to further support the concepts and opportunities brought forth through an Early College approach, both systems agree to participate in and support the work of the Early College Steering Committee

established by the ConnSCU and the Department of Education, connecting our efforts as part of this Compact with the broader work regarding college access and readiness.

While we appreciate the continued interest and support of this committee in recognizing the critical importance of our work, system to system, given the work underway we do not believe the proposed legislation is necessary. We look forward to sharing our work and renewed efforts as we continue with the efforts underway. Thank you for this opportunity to provide comment. I would be happy to answer any questions.