



Testimony

SB 942 – AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GOVERNOR CONCERNING EDUCATION

Senator Slossberg, Rep. Fleischmann and members of the Committee; my name is Alan Slobodien and I am the Director of Vernon Youth Services Bureau and a member of the CT Youth Services Association Advocacy Team. I am testifying in opposition to SB 942, sections 10-13 that seeks to move oversight and management of YSBs from the Department of Education to the Department of Children and Families. While the intent of this move is to “streamline” management functions, profound unintended consequences would, in fact, result to the partnership the legislature originally intended in 1978, when the cost-sharing grants of Youth Services Bureaus were defined in statute 10-19o. Effective July 1, 1995, management of the Youth Services Bureau system was moved from DCYS to DoE. Since that time, the CT Youth Services Association and Department of Education have been working stridently in partnership with a consistent focus on creating high quality programs, fine tuning YSB Administrative Core Unit functions, streamlining the granting process and since 2010 creating an RBA focused reporting system.

With regard to the RBA reporting system, YSB Directors, SDE staff and Charter Oak Group consultants have spent hundreds of work hours to develop an RBA data collection system that ties YSB program performance to headline indicators that include: school attendance, promotion to next grade and school behavior indicators. A sophisticated data collection system includes conducting student satisfaction surveys in 135 communities across the state and creating aggregate state level data to these school performance measures. The ability to maintain this system, that is continuously refined, depends upon the strong, positive working relationships that have been carefully crafted over years of collaborative partnership development. A move from SDE oversight to DCF could threaten these partnerships, collaborations that have resulted in concrete positive outcomes. Please consider that CYSA was one of the first statewide organizations to fully embrace the utilization of an RBA reporting system. The report card attached to this testimony is evidence of five years of discussion, planning, refining and training; discussion, planning, refining and training that continues to this day. The linkages between data collection and the RBA report card could potentially be lost with a move of YSB oversight from SDE to DCF.

It is important to note that neither CYSA nor its YSB membership is averse to rekindling relationships at DCF, however, 20 years of foundation-building at SDE has proven to result in a successful partnership.

Thank you for your time.