

Testifier: Jackie Heftman, President Stamford Board of Education

Education Committee Public Hearing February 25, 2015

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on the following bills:

SB 942 – Extending the cap on Adult Education will cost us **\$27,898** resulting in a reduction of ESL and citizenship courses. Extending the cap on Excess Cost will result in \$1,200,000 less money for us to offset substantial cost of special education services provided to our neediest student population.

Elimination of the Extended School Building Hours grant will cost us **\$294,433** to provide those services. Our Alliance Grant is fully encumbered and we would have to reduce current services in order to shift this program to the Grant. This program is a valuable support in our efforts to close the achievement gap.

The elimination of the Summer School component of the Priority School District will cost us **\$341,895**. It will become another unfunded mandate since we are required by law to provide this support.

I ask you to reject the expansion of grades at State Charter Schools. The **\$2,000,000** allocated by the Governor should not come at the expense of the 98% of Connecticut's children in the traditional public schools.

SB 943 – While the bill adds some much needed reforms, it falls short because it neglects to include transparency reforms. Charter School budgets should receive the same public scrutiny as the traditional public schools receive, i.e. full disclosure of income and expenditures and a public hearing.

HB 6837 and HB 6834 – While it appears that these two bills could be combined into one, they both lack an important component. There should be a provision for a Juvenile Review Board run by a town's Youth Services Bureau whose sole purpose should be to keep children out of the criminal justice system.

HB 6835 – This appears to be another unfunded mandate. Going from 30 to 60 months could double the cost of the program.

SB 962 – Another unfunded mandate.

Stamford's Board of Education budget already contains **\$29,000,000** in Federal and State unfunded and underfunded mandates. Please don't add anymore.

Thank you for your time and attention.