

Public Testimony Pertaining to Proposed Bill S.B. #942: An Act Implementing the Budget Recommendations of the Governor Concerning Education.

#1.

Section 20. Subsection (a) of section 10-223h of the general statutes.

The recommended change to this section increases the number of schools from any district within one school year from 2 to 8 that can be named a turnaround school permitting all that can be done to a school labeled as such, including the commissioner of education, “to assign the management, administration or governance of such school to an approved not-for-profit educational management organization, provided the commissioner shall not permit such assignment in a turnaround plan to more than three schools in a single school year. If the commissioner does not approve a turnaround plan under subdivision (2) of this subsection, the commissioner may approve one additional turnaround plan for a school selected to participate in the commissioner’s network of schools that assigns the management, administration or governance of such school to an approved not-for-profit educational management organization to be implemented in the school year”, a change to the school calendar length, and school day length without any limitations set that is developmentally appropriate for children, amongst other provisions that already exist within the statute.

I feel that this is a very large jump in number, that reads to be an attempt to turn a larger number of schools from within the same school district into charter schools, who thus far have not been adequately regulated as to their effectiveness over local public management, and in fact have shown to not serve the most challenging and expensive students to educate; our English language learners and our special needs students. Furthermore, the State Board of Education has allowed for current standing charter schools to renew their flexibility charters without meeting the guidelines of their expected outcomes. There is a disturbing lack of accountability with how these schools use the public money they receive and their ability to “counsel out” students at will during the school year who look as though will not help with their appearance of success via test scores, pull precious resources from the public schools, while not accepting the special populations of students aforementioned in the same proportion, or anywhere near the same proportion as their host city schools, leaving them to the public school system, with less resources to educate them.

I would ask the assembly to not permit this jump in number until said time as the legislature increases their oversight in terms of: serving in equal measure all student subgroups of the district, not being permitted to exit students during the school year without returning the funding that child came with, grants siblings the right to stay together within the same building, are required to use certified teachers just as the public schools are, audited for how they are suspending or expelling students out of proportion to the public schools without due process or a leveled discipline plan, gives a democratic voice to the parents of their school in decision making with an enforced grievance policy, and are mandated to be just as accountable with the funding they receive and how it is spent as the traditional community schools are.

I would ask the legislature to recognize the fact that we have had issues with these investors and “management organizations” and that we not increase their number or their funding until we address the issues we now sadly know exist with them, how they treat children, how they treat families, how they

treat teachers, how their boards are picked and how they collect and use the public money and property they are given access to.

#2.

Section 29. Subdivision (4) of section 1-74f..Reorganization Model

This recommendation changes the original statute from “*Each student in the school have an individual education plan that incorporates the student’s personal reading plan **if** the student is required to have a reading plan*” to “*Each student in the school to have individual education plan that incorporates the student’s personal reading plan*”. This proposed recommendation therefore eliminates the “if” segment and mandates ALL children in the school to have an IEP whether one is needed or not based on the child’s true needs. By labeling ALL children as Special Needs Students without warrant with an IEP allows for additional funding as such. It also allows for a host of interventions to be implemented upon a child that may not be needed. I would ask that the legislature require the “if” statement to remain intact. Further, that any change in statutes or inclusion of an IEP for any child always be in conjunction with and approved by a parent or guardian for any services or remediation that is suggested. We must preserve parental input and approval for services, to be watchful over the labels we attach to students and for what purpose, that they are truly needed and that which is instituted is in their best interest first. There must be an evidence based need to have an IEP. False labels can be detrimental just as a misdiagnosis is, as it allows for treatment for something that may not exist that can actually cause harm. In order to safeguard against this potential case, I would suggest that the legislature act to keep the ‘if’ in the statute.

Thank you.

Submitted By:

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