



*serving the interests of  
Connecticut school administrators  
for over 35 years*

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Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischman, Senator Boucher, Representative Lavielle and distinguished members of the Education Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this public hearing and provide testimony to you on behalf of The Connecticut Association of School Administrators (CASA) as a member of their Board and my colleagues in the field of administration as a recently retired Principal. I am here to testify regarding Raised Bill 1095 AN ACT CONCERNING STUDENTS ASSESSMENTS.

We do understand and respect the work done in Connecticut to reform education for the benefit of our students. We appreciate your efforts to hear from all stakeholders so that Connecticut will be a model for educational leadership through both accountability and student achievement.

As a former Principal, I have witnessed and experienced the challenges and changes over the last three years in education locally, statewide and nationally which has significantly impacted the work of administrators as they have moved from spending the lion share of their time on guiding, supporting and improving teachers professionally to a majority of time now spent on making sure there are sufficient computers, bandwidth, access points, keyboarding opportunities, test preparation and time for 7.5 to 8 actual hours in grades 3 through 8 to take an SBAC test. Consider that the SAT takes 3 ½ hours and the LSAT takes 3 ¼ hours and to sit for the NY State Bar Exam takes 6 ½ hours.

For me personally, my moment of greatest concern and a defining moment for me was to watch my students in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade attempt to read a test on a split screen with the question on one side and the answers on the other as they had to scroll up and down all the while using their not-yet developed fine motor skills to complete this test. Students were visibly frustrated and concerned for how they would do.

Ultimately, this test did not even measure the learning of the children for that year. My teachers could only encourage or direct the students to the tutorial if they had questions. Is this what we should be doing to and for our children? The SBAC gives results in the following year which does not inform instruction or change outcomes for students.

Prior to these past three years, teachers would accept all students as they crossed the threshold of the classroom door. Benchmark assessments would be used to build the classwork and homework which was delivered to each student at developmentally appropriate and instructionally sound levels to support growth over time through progress monitoring. Interventions for each child would be provided whether it was concept-related or part of a larger concern such as ESL, learning disabilities, special education, social/emotional or... The multiple intelligences of each child and their learning styles were all considered.

Accountability to and for student success is critically important to schools and districts. As such, it should be based on not just one test but should be based on a system of accountability for all schools which include many data points that are both student-grade equivalency and growth over time within the actual school year. Therefore, I am in support of the CEA proposed reforms as they address these specific needs for districts and schools.

We ask you to continue to visit districts and schools and classrooms to see what is being expected of Superintendents, Principals, Teachers and Students within their environments and happenings of the day-to-day to ensure that we prepare our students to be both confident and competent in every step of their educational journey.

Sincerely,

Alana Callahan

CASA Board Member

Retired Principal