



Testimony of
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***SB 380 An Act Concerning Exclusion of Student Performance Results
on the Mastery Examination from Teacher Evaluations***
Education Committee Hearing
March 7, 2016

Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the committee: I am the president of the State Vocational Federation of Teachers (SVFT), which represents more than 1,200 educators in the Connecticut Technical High School System (CTHSS). Of those 1,200 teachers, fewer than half teach in subjects in which student growth can be measured through standardized tests. Trade teachers, guidance counselors, deans of students, and many other educators do important work with students that is not measured in SATs or other standardized tests.

By statute, however, these tests are part of their evaluation. Nearly one quarter of these teachers' evaluations are based on standardized scores that have no connection to their curriculum or job performance. An evaluation that relies on literacy scores to assess the job performance of a masonry teacher is not only illegitimate, it's farcical. It is no longer enough to have instructors "teaching to the test," we now have them being scheduled to the evaluation. Guidance counselors are being asked to teach a class with a literacy component so that they can be observed meeting a literacy goal that only exists because the SAT will be 22.5% of their evaluation. The current system is the embodiment of the tail wagging the dog; instructional practices are being put in place not to improve student learning, but so the evaluations can be done.

SB 380 is not an attempt to destroy the evaluation system, but to make it a legitimate tool to improve instruction. Teachers are not adverse to being evaluated; I have been in the CTHSS for over 30 years, and there has always been an evaluation system in place. Requiring that system to include test scores that are often irrelevant to the teachers delegitimizes them in the eyes of the teachers. SB 380 allows the evaluation system to take a real, practical look at teachers' performance without cluttering it with irrelevant data. I strongly recommend you support this bill.

Thank you