

Testimony regarding:

***SB 380 An Act Concerning Exclusion of Student Performance Results on the Mastery Examination from Teacher Evaluations***

***HB 5557 An Act Concerning Recruitment and Retention of Early Childhood Educators***

***HB 5551 An Act Concerning the Commissioner's Network of Schools***

***SB 379 An Act Concerning the Recommendations of the Minority Teacher Recruitment Task Force***

Rose Reyes, Bilingual Educator, Member WFT, Member Kappa Delta Pi  
Education Committee Hearing  
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Good day Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Education Committee. I am Rose Reyes. I have been a Bilingual Educator in Connecticut for almost 15 years. I am a member of AFT Connecticut, Windham local 1557 and University of Connecticut chapter member of Kappa Delta Pi, a national honor society of educators. I am providing testimony for the above bills because of their urgency and impact they will have on Emergent Bilingual students in our public school communities.

***SB 380 An Act Concerning Exclusion of Student Performance Results on the Mastery Examination from Teacher Evaluations***

When almost 25% of a teacher evaluation is based on standardized assessments it is not difficult to imagine the negative impact it has had on curriculum and pedagogical approaches and educational experiences. In May 2015, the online article, [The Case Against Standardized Testing - Harvard Political ...](http://harvardpolitics.com/united-states/case-standardized-testing/) [harvardpolitics.com/united-states/case-standardized-testing/](http://harvardpolitics.com/united-states/case-standardized-testing/) explained, again, how standardized testing focus negatively impacted curriculum and student learning as well as how it compromised teacher evaluations. Students are not receiving a well rounded education and teachers' value is reduced by a metric. Even parents surveyed recently by CT PTA do not agree that statewide standardized tests are an appropriate way to assess mastery of subject (CT-PTA poll 1/16)

Also, we have not gained any new insight with the rebranding and persistence of standardized assessments. In our district we have State, district and common formative assessments. In fact, we have tests for the tests. A third grader can experience as many as seven assessments in a month and all we can show for this duress is what we have shown for decades: (socio-economic) class follows scores. An ASCD (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) 2013 article, recognizes that standardized tests "favor those who have socio-economic advantages" ([ASCD EDge - 15 Reasons Why Standardized Tests are ...](http://edge.ascd.org/.../15-reasons-why-standardized-tests-are-problematic) [edge.ascd.org/.../15-reasons-why-standardized-tests-are-problematic](http://edge.ascd.org/.../15-reasons-why-standardized-tests-are-problematic)) which is why attaching such a metric to teacher evaluations seemed inappropriate.

We are still at an impasse in the understanding that when an Emergent Bilingual student attains a proficiency level in their second language it is still inappropriate to test them for mastery in ELA and language embedded math. What is best for EB students is best practice of experiences and cooperative learning. These elements are not quantifiable yet priceless.

SB 380 can be the stepping stone to re-evaluating our evaluation system. By excluding the use of student scores on statewide mastery examinations in teacher evaluations curriculum emphasis can return to a well rounded experience instead of the narrow focus of artificial

achievement in the form of test preparation. Please pass SB 380 to help us regain a sensibility to evaluations.

### ***HB 5557 An Act Concerning Recruitment and Retention of Early Childhood Educators***

This bill is easiest to promote. Addressing the need for an appropriate wage scale for early childhood educators in State funded early childhood programs is a step in the right direction to recruit and retain the needed staff. Compensation that matches the educational requirement and attainment will assure greater commitment to early childhood education.

### ***HB 5551 An Act Concerning the Commissioner's Network of Schools***

I oppose many elements of HB 5551 because it adulterates the intent of the Commissioner's Network. For the State Department of Education to takeover "struggling schools", or worse, virtually sell them to private interest entities goes against all attributes of a democratic process and institution. We remember the General Assembly's 2007 action against Bridgeport's Board of Education; the 1996 State takeover of the Hartford School District; and the 2012 imposition of a "Special Master" in the Windham, Norwich and New London districts. All these efforts usurped the constitutional rights of the community to have representational input.

I am disturbed by the language that implies waiving of collective bargaining for our educators. It is through collective bargaining that we work together to address school climate and professional development to apply to improved learning environments.

If there will be no limit to the number of schools that will be assigned to the network I find it hard to understand how we could afford to service them equitably and in a meaningful manner without becoming a factory induced template. With Governor Malloy's budget proposed cuts in education in general, I find it short sighted to extend the reach of the network before general, equitable funding is restored.

State intervention in the form of take overs and/or handing overs has not improved the educational status of vulnerable districts, especially those with large populations of Emergent Bilingual students. With the focus on intervention and not enrichment we will just keep treading water.

Besides, HB 5551 looks like an attempt to privatize a public service and it ignores the reality of vulnerable districts. I respectfully request that the committee reject HB 5551.

### ***SB 379 An Act Concerning the Recommendations of the Minority Teacher Recruitment Task Force***

When it comes to representational diversity in our teaching staff we have a problem. Inspire of the fact that over thirty percent of our student population are children of color less than ten percent of our teaching staff and even less in upper administration are people of color. We understand there is a correlation between high academic indicators for students of color when matched with teachers of color who are effective. For the Emergent Bilingual students one of the hardships they encounter in our public schools is the insufficient number of language and culturally relevant teacher models. We must also work to ensure that Connecticut's educators. SB 379, hopefully, takes important steps to correct this problem. I would endorse a multi-prong approach using the task force, council and evaluation process for such a recruitment program.

We would be remiss if we did not acknowledge the need to re evaluate our reciprocity and licensing processes which have become, in effect, hinderances and barriers for the potential

and tenured out of state teachers of color. I respectfully request that the committee recognize the need to augment a system that recruits, retains and promotes minority teachers in an expeditious and supportive manner.

Thank your your time and consideration.

I remain  
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