



Testimony of
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Education Committee Hearing
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HB An Act Concerning School Paraprofessional Training.

Good afternoon Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischmann and members of the Education Committee. My name is Jackeline Aviles and I have been a Paraprofessional at the Academy of Engineering & Green Technologies at Hartford Public High School for 16 years. I am also Co-President of the Hartford Federation of Paraprofessionals.

Serving as a Paraprofessional for all these years, I have seen how more and more the district is depending on Paraprofessionals to assist teachers with implementation of new curriculum and behavioral tactics. Working with students with medically fragile needs, special education, learning disabilities and students with behavioral disorders is quite a challenge within itself. Paraprofessionals are among the lowest paid in the school system, yet we go beyond our roles. As Paraprofessionals, we have do it all; be educators, caregivers, nurses, parent liaisons, translators and even social workers. We are the person the children depend on for preparing them not only academically, but also socially.

Why not provide highly, up-to-date and effective training that will enable us to perform our duties. With the increased number of students that have learning and behavioral needs, Paraprofessionals should be trained on safety, not only for the students but for the Paraprofessionals. Knowing how to manage behaviors, collect effective data, assist with the new curriculum and follow up with technologies applied to the classroom are important for our success. There are applied behavioral programs for students that hit, bite, kick and injure Paraprofessionals on daily basis. The district needs to ensure proper training prior to the starting day and/or transfer of the position. A highly and effectively trained Paraprofessional would benefit everyone: the students, the Paraprofessionals, the teachers, the school and the district.

Paraprofessionals are productive workers in the school community and give a lot of themselves to students and families but we also need the district to provide us the necessary tools to perform the job.

Thank you for your time and this opportunity!