

Testimony Submitted to the Education Committee, March 2, 2016

Elizabeth C. Brown, President of the Waterbury Board of Education

HB 5470, AAC A Pilot Program for Students in High School Interested in Pursuing a College Degree in Education

Good morning, Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischmann and Members of the Committee, my name is Elizabeth Brown and I appear before you today in support of HB 5470, **AAC A Pilot Program for Students in High School Interested in Pursuing a College Degree**. The bill would establish collaboration among the state, higher education and a select group of school districts to offer students interested in teaching a pathway to obtaining a degree. This is a great opportunity for students and will help address a critical need for recruitment and retention of a diverse staff, especially in an urban district like Waterbury. I'm here today to request that you include Waterbury in the Pilot program.

Waterbury School District is one of five districts to receive a grant from the State Department of Education to develop a plan to recruit minority teachers. This effort is led by our own Connecticut Teacher of the Year, Jahana Hayes and Dr. Shawana Tucker, Director of Talent and Teacher Recruitment. The planning grant engaged many stakeholders in Waterbury including teachers, administrators, community leaders, the NAACP, and many city organizations. The goal of the grant is to increase awareness and interest in education careers; increase the number of Black and Latino candidates eligible to be hired as educators; and increase the number of Black and Latino candidates recruited and hired. The plan focuses on supporting and retaining existing minority teachers; developing curriculum and opportunities to expose high school students to teaching as a career; and developing relationships with higher education to create a pipeline into the teaching profession.

Waterbury's plan was accepted by the state in December and we hit the ground running. To date a Teacher Assistant Seminar is being piloted at Kennedy High School as a credit elective, and I must note that teachers are volunteering to mentor students at no cost to the District. Upcoming activities include; a Future Education Symposium at SCSU; college visits and participation in summer programs Upward Bound and Young Diplomats. In addition, the District is making a concerted effort to address issues of discrimination through a series of "Critical Conversations" with CHRO and Diversity training with SERC and participation in the Yancy Forum, offering a select group of Black and Latino teachers who are aspiring Administrators support to achieve their career goals in education.

The bill before you is an important step in addressing the broader challenges of recruiting and retaining minority teachers and administrators. The Task Force on Recruitment of Minority Teachers raised this issue and "Growing Your Own" teachers from within school districts are a key strategy for attracting students of color to the profession. I believe Waterbury School District is poised to benefit from this proposed pathway for teachers' program, and urge you to include Waterbury as a Pilot District.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify this morning. Respectfully, Elizabeth C. Brown, President of the Waterbury BOE. Contact: 203 560-7028