

Written Testimony

Education Committee Public Hearing

February 24, 2016

Regarding Bill # SB 175: "An Act Concerning Recommendations of the Department of Education"

I urge you to vote NO on SB 175

So many new doors are about to be open with the new federal ESSA that recently passed meant to eliminate the "test and punish" policies of the past yet in CT as I read this bill we are looking for ways to .. wait for it .. test and punish! The gig is up. State after state is dropping SBAC including our neighbors in MA. Parents protecting their children from the test and refusing should be a huge signal as the numbers rise every year. Since the state still cannot punish parents for exercising their unalienable rights to guide their child's education we see this bill attempting to withhold funding and lower ratings on a district if they drop below the 95% threshold. What is the only thing that is going to come from that? Districts putting pressure on parents, lying to them, attempting to coerce them into having their child take the test so they can get their money. Who is this for? Our kids education? Sounds like it benefits those projected to profit the most.

Giving the commissioner the power to grant graduation with the test of her choice. Just

No. What are we doing?

- The CSDE could simply accept the student and parent compliance that takes place during this

upcoming test administration since, by the time the SBAC test results are reported, a new negotiation with the federal government under ESSA can take place.

- The CSDE could join other states and withdraw from its agreement with SBAC.
- The CSDE could respect and honor the wishes of concerned parents who see the current testing practice as not only unproven, discriminatory, and unfair, but also ultimately harmful to their children.
- The CSDE could explore performance assessment, project based assessments, and student portfolio evaluations recently approved for other states that are a much more reliable and less damaging way to assess our kids.

It is my hope that as legislators representing the voters of our state that you will send a clear message and help the CSDE begin to chart a new course that will get beyond the failed past practices of imposed education policy initiatives and heal the damage that has been done to our students, their parents, and the profession of teaching in our State. The Every Student Succeeds Act will provide the opportunity to re-invigorate our educational practices if only we can break away from the rancor and distrust that has consumed this debate since the implementation of these unproven and highly-contested "education reform" policies imposed on our schools.

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