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Written Testimony of

Donald E. Williams, Jr.

**Connecticut Education Association**

Before the Education Committee

**HB 7251 AAC Reform District Turnaround Plans**

March 16, 2017

Good afternoon, Senators Slossberg and Boucher, Representatives Fleischmann and Lavielle, and members of the Education Committee. I'm Donald E. Williams, Jr, the Director of Policy, Research and Reform of the Connecticut Education Association, representing more than 43,000 active and retired public school

As to Sections One and Two of the bill, CEA is generally supportive of measures to increase training and professional development. The measures in HB 7251 that under certain circumstances require such training for boards of education, superintendents, and administrators in Alliance Districts may be worthwhile, as long as the guidelines crafted by the State Department of Education for the roles and functions of locally elected boards of education do not attempt to limit the authority and power of such local boards.

Section Three pertains to the process through which Alliance Districts may apply to the state for additional funding. The addition in lines 104 through 106 of the requirement that such applications "are developed, in part, on the strategic use of student academic performance data," is at odds with the majority of purposes for such funding in the statute, which include teacher and school leader recruitment, training for teacher evaluation, coordination with early childhood providers, providing wraparound services, recruiting minority teachers and administrators, etc. None of these purposes require "student academic performance data." Existing language already requires that the application "include objectives and performance targets," which makes sense and can be tailored to student performance where pertinent, or other objectives when student performance is not a rational measure.

Our recommendation is to delete the addition in lines 104 through 106.

Thank you.