



Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents

TESTIMONY ON SB NO. 183
FRAN RABINOWITZ, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
SUBMITTED TO THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 26, 2018

Representative Andy Fleischmann, Senator Gayle Slossberg, Representative Tony Boucher and Members of the Education Committee,

Good evening and thank you for the good work you do for Connecticut's children. Superintendents realize the difficult decisions you must make and the many stakeholders you don't always please. We appreciate the difficulties.

CAPSS is in favor of changing certification requirements for teachers from grades 1-6 also to include kindergarten, so if SB 183 is passed, elementary certification would then span kindergarten-grade 6.

Kindergarten is an incredibly important year in a child's school career, and it behooves us to have very well prepared teachers in that role who fully understand the developmental stages of children at that level.

The kindergarten teacher also has the responsibility to understand the transition that is needed from preschool to kindergarten for most students, but they must also be skilled at differentiating all components of the transition for students who have never attended preschool. I have visited many kindergartens- it was one of my favorite places to escape to as a superintendent, and I always recognized the challenges faced by these teachers. Not everyone can successfully teach kindergarten.

With all of that said, I have encountered many elementary teachers who I believe would have made superb kindergarten teachers. They had all of the prerequisite skills listed above and may have been looking for a grade change. I could not place them in kindergarten because they lacked the certification- they could only teach grades 1-6. Certified kindergarten teachers are becoming difficult to find. I believe most elementary teachers are being certified 1-6 to afford them the flexibility to change grades. I believe if we changed back to K-6 in Connecticut, we would have many more qualified, competent candidates.

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As a former elementary teacher who taught different grades, I know that there is always a learning curve when one changes grades and I am not suggesting that any elementary teacher can move from one grade to another without a thorough study of the developmental characteristics of children at that level as well as curriculum. That is true if one moves from grade five to grade three and it will be true if a certified elementary teacher moves to kindergarten. Competent professionals will do what is required to ensure that students are successful.

My elementary certification is old, but I refuse to allow it to expire. It extends from preschool to grade eight. I am not suggesting that Connecticut return to that certification span, but I do believe that allowing teachers to be K-6 certified will be in the best interest of our children and staff.

Frances Rabinowitz
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