Testimony Submitted to the Education Committee

by Robert M. Goodrich

Co-Founder of Radical Advocates for Cross-Cultural Education-RACCE, March 8, 2018

In Opposition of S. B. No. 359, An Act Prohibiting The Disaggregation of Student Data By Ethnic Subgroups In the Public School System

Good afternoon Representative Fleischmann, Senator Slossberg, Senator Boucher, and the esteemed members of the Education Committee.

My name is Robert M. Goodrich and I am the Co-founder of RACCE. RACCE is a grassroots think-tank that researches, raises awareness, and advocates for racial equity in our schools. Our primary strategy is to match data to the socio-cultural phenomenon that educators, students, and families experience on a daily basis. By doing so we are able to close the conceptual gaps between problems and solutions.

Therefore we stand in strong opposition to proposed bill S.B. 359, an act that would prohibit the collection of disaggregated student data on specific ethnic subgroups unless such student data is required by federal law or collected uniformly across the entire population of students.

In this day and age we didn't believe such a bill would be given a public hearing, but here we are. We acknowledge the claims of the individuals who have submitted testimony in favor of this bill but strongly disagree with the assumptions contained in their testimony.

Reducing the ability of schools, districts, or the Connecticut State Department of Education to collect and disaggregate data would only exacerbate the racial inequity that is persistent and pervasive here in Connecticut. If enacted this law would prevent crucial cross-sector collaboration and make it impossible to design, implement, and measure interventions or solutions for over forty-five percent (260,000) of our state's students.

Our experience tells us that school districts, like Waterbury, don’t disaggregate data available to them now. This law would prevent schools and school districts from advancing culturally responsive and culturally sustaining strategies as well as encourage the schools and districts that don’t use data disaggregation techniques to cover-up disparities that exist now. This experience allows us to aggressively advocate for more and better data collection and analysis, not less.

1In 2016, we lost a FOI contested case hearing because the school district does not disaggregate discipline date by race or gender. Therefore the district is not required by the rules and laws of FOI to create new documents. Access judgement here: http://www.ct.gov/foi/lib/foi/minutes/2017/04122017/2016-0345.pdf
This bill, if passed, would promote a colorblind whitewashed educational system that would work to further the oppression of the under protected and underserved. To fulfill its duty and to act in a manner that reflects the greatest amount of care and concern for the promotion of racial equity in our schools we urge this committee to stop S.B. 359 from proceeding to the next step of the legislative process. Finally, the promotion of S.B. 359 would have been thwarted if, in fact, the legislature had a tool available to them that is contained in S.B. 256. Having a Racial Ethnic Impact Statement to assess a bill like S.B. 359 would allow our elected officials to more easily make an informed decision on matters of this nature.

Respectfully,

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