



Testimony Supporting SB 455 : An Act Concerning Minority Teacher Recruitment and Retention

Testimony Supporting HB 5448: An Act Concerning the Alignment of Education and Workforce Needs

Testimony Supporting SB 458: An Act Concerning Various Revisions and Additions to the Education Statutes

Camara Stokes Hudson
Associate Policy Fellow
Education Committee
March 14th, 2018

Good Morning Senator Slossberg, Senator Boucher, Representative Fleischmann, Representative Lavielle and esteemed members of the Education Committee:

My name is Camara Stokes Hudson and I am presenting testimony today on behalf of Connecticut Voices for Children, a research-based child advocacy organization working to ensure that all Connecticut children have an equitable opportunity to achieve their full potential. Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in support of SB. 455: An Act Concerning Minority Teacher Recruitment and Retention and offer written support of HB 5448: An Act Concerning the Alignment of Education and Workforce Needs and .

Support for SB 455: An Act Concerning Minority Teacher Recruitment and Retention

A robust education ensures that all students — regardless of family and community resources— are able to pursue their chosen dreams and goals. That same education is also essential in ensuring the economic competitiveness of their communities, the towns that they come from, and by extension the entire state. For Connecticut to ensure that it remains strong into the future, education for all of its students must be a priority.

SB 455 makes several changes to teacher qualification requirements and adds a requirement of a representative from each racial/ethnic group in the state to sit on the Minority Teacher Recruitment Taskforce. Community engagement is a key aspect in the creation of successful and equitable education policies.¹ We applaud the decision to expand the voices of the communities from which many of Connecticut's students come from.

Between 2012 and 2016, the population of minority students in Connecticut's schools rose from 40 percent to 46 percent.² However, despite the strong link between minority student success and the number of minority teachers, the hiring of non-white teachers has not kept pace with the enrollment of minority students. As it stands, only 8 percent of teachers in the state identify as a minority.³ This disparity between the proportion of

¹ "Parent, Family, Community Involvement in Education." National Education Association. Retrieved from http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/PB11_ParentInvolvement08.pdf

² Connecticut State Department of Education. [Trend Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity: 2011-2017]. Retrieval at <https://edsight.ct.gov>

³ Connecticut State Department of Education. [2015-2016 Full-Time Educator Demographics]. Retrieval at <https://edsight.ct.gov>

students of color and the proportion of teachers of color means that many students of color in Connecticut will spend thirteen years in school only learning from White teachers. These students will miss out on the academic and social benefits from learning from a teacher who shares their cultures, family contexts and whom can serve as unique role models.⁴

Research suggests that there is a positive relationship between the academic success of minority students and those students having teachers that share their race. Black students who have Black teachers have been found to have greater gains in their reading and vocabulary test scores.⁵ Test score improvements in math were significantly greater in Latino Students that had a Latino teacher than those who had a teacher of another race.⁶ The impacts that minority teachers can have on subject area attainment are especially important considering that 42 percent of Black students do not meet state English Language Assessment standards,⁷ and 46 percent of Latino students do not meet Math standards.⁸

Furthermore, minority teachers have the benefit of raising aspirations for students who look like them. This is important when considering the clear and persistent gaps in graduation rates between minority and White students in the state. Having just one Black teacher in elementary school increases the likelihood of Black students graduating by 39 percent,⁹ and Black students who have a Black Geometry teacher are significantly more likely to take more complex math courses in the future.¹⁰ Similarly positive impacts can be seen on the drop-out rates and college expectations of Latino students who have a Latino teacher.¹¹

Improving minority teacher recruitment and retention is a relatively low-cost way to help improve outcomes for Connecticut's children of color. Learning from teachers of a similar race helps Black and Latino students engage with classroom content and imagine themselves pursuing further academic trajectories. The growing number of minority students in Connecticut demands that policies factor in their specific needs. **SB. 455 makes an essential factor in the success of minority students - minority teachers - a priority and in turn makes the success of minority students, and by extension the communities that they come from a priority as well.**

Support for HB 5448: An Act Concerning the Alignment of Education and Workforce Needs

For Connecticut's economy to grow and develop, it is essential that Connecticut's students are prepared to meet the specific-workforce needs of the state. There is available research that informs researchers and policymakers of the alignment of Vocational Programs and workforce needs,¹² but there is no up-to-date

⁴ The Albert Shanker Institute. The State of Teacher Diversity in American Education. The Albert Shanker Institute, 2015, The State of Teacher Diversity in American Education, www.shankerinstitute.org/sites/shanker/files/The%20State%20of%20Teacher%20Diversity_0.pdf

⁵ Hanushek, E. A., Kain, J. F., O'Brien, D. M. & Rivkin, S. G. (2005). *The Market for Teacher Quality* (No. w11154) National Bureau of Economic Research.

⁶ Clewell, B. C., Puma, M. J., & McKay, S. A. (2005). Does It Matter If My Teacher Looks Like Me? The Impact of Teacher Race and Ethnicity on Student Academic Achievement. Paper presented at Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, Canada

⁷ Connecticut State Department of Education. [2016-2017 Smarter Balanced Assessment Math and English Language Arts Scores by Race/Ethnicity]. Retrievable at <https://edsight.ct.gov>

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Gershenson, Seth, Cassandra M. D. Hart, Constance A. Lindsay, and Nicolas W. Papageorge. The Long-Run Impacts of Same-Race Teachers. Rep. IZA Institute of Labor Economics, Mar. 2017. <http://ftp.iza.org/dp10630.pdf>

¹⁰ Klopfenstein, K. (2005). Beyond Test Scores: The Impact of Black Teacher Role Models on Rigorous Math Taking. *Contemporary Economic Policy*, 416-428. Retrieved from <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1093/cep/byi031/abstract>

¹¹ Fraga, L. R., Meier, K. T., & England, R. B. (1986). Latino Americans and Educational Policy: Limits to Equal Access. *The Journal of Politics*, 48(8), 850-876

¹² Condon, A. (2018, January 28). *Economic Outlook and Prospects for Vocational-Technical Related Occupations* (Connecticut State Department of Labor). Report to the Education, Higher Education and Employment Advancement and Labor and Public Employees Committees

research regarding the alignment between traditional public high school curricula and workforce needs. This lack of analysis prevents policymakers, the business community, and educators from creating effective policies to close gaps in workforce training and preparation. **HB 5448 provides necessary information regarding statewide career readiness to inform efforts to improve the preparedness of Connecticut's students for jobs that keep them in the state.**

Support for SB 458: An Act Concerning Various Revisions and Additions to the Education Statutes

Connecticut Voices for Children supports the revisions to the education statutes called for in SB 458 which will enable better tracking of student enrollment and success in early and middle college programs, enabling the state to create a fuller picture of the college and career readiness (CCR) of all of our students.

We find this bill particularly timely given the growing awareness of the importance of CCR to the long term economic growth of our state. We know that the future of Connecticut lies in a prepared and productive workforce: one that has the skills, credentials, and knowledge to maintain our traditionally high ranking on national measures of workforce preparedness and productivity.

Across New England, the Nellie Mae Education Foundation has highlighted the importance of college and career readiness with the launch of the NEACCR: the New England Alliances for College and Career Readiness. These alliances, including one in Connecticut led by Connecticut Voices for Children, recognize that we must prepare all students from all backgrounds for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century, and that doing so will require cross- sector cooperation by government, business and civil society. By requiring disaggregated data concerning students in middle college, early college, high school, and the Connecticut Early College Opportunity program, SB 485 will allow better access to data, better data sharing, and better information upon which to make policy and budget decisions. **With this in mind, we very much support the change made regarding data access in SB 458 and look forward to working with the General Assembly on issues related to college and career readiness into the future.**

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify. If there are any follow-up questions, I can be reached at chudson@ctvoices.org or (203) 498-4240x116.

Retrieved from

https://www.cga.ct.gov/ed/related/20180123_Education,%20Labor,%20and%20Higher%20Education%20&%20Employment%20Advancement%20Committees%20Joint%20Meeting/2018%20DOL%20Annual%20Report.pdf