



# THE CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS

## TESTIMONY OF THE CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS

### SB 345- AN ACT CONCERNING CLIMATE CHANGE EDUCATION IN CONNECTICUT SCHOOLS.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MARCH 14, 2018

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I am Dr. Karissa Niehoff, Executive Director of the Connecticut Association of Schools. We represent school leaders in approximately 900 member schools-public, Vo-ag, CTECS, parochial, charter and magnet. Our member schools serve students in grades PK-12; from rural, suburban and urban settings. Testimony from CAS reflects the voice and experience of building leaders; those responsible for implementation of policy at the ground level, management of the day-to-day operations of schools, and provision of a safe, healthy learning environment for students and adults alike. CAS also assists school leaders in the implementation of curricula aligned with current standards, focused on best instructional practice and utilizing authentic assessment strategies.

While CAS supports the intent of SB 345, to increase awareness of climate change in a student’s public school experience, we do not believe that a new curriculum mandate to teach climate change is necessary at this time for the following reasons:

-CAS is already supporting efforts to increase science education in schools, especially at the elementary level. Working with content experts at the state level, we are planning multiple professional development workshops for school and curriculum leaders specific to the Next Generation Science Standards.

-The Next Generation Science Standards are focused on inquiry-based learning which is a strategy good for all content areas. This spring, a new state science test will be piloted based on the NGSS. Next year, the NGSS-based science assessment will become the state assessment. There will be professional development for schools relative to the new assessment and NGSS standards.

In view of these positive steps, CAS believes that the goal of SB 345 will be accomplished without a statutory mandate. Therefore SB 345 is not necessary at this time.

Thank-you for your consideration of my testimony.

*Dr. Karissa L. Niehoff*