



Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents

TESTIMONY ON S.B. NO. 874 AN ACT CONCERNING THE CREATION OF REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

To: Representative Bobby Sanchez, Senator Doug McCrory and Members of the Education Committee:

The Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) which represents the Superintendents of Connecticut's public schools and over a hundred other executive district leaders **have serious concerns about S.B. No. 874, in particular Section 5**, for the following reasons:

- Superintendent leadership is vital to the constancy and growth of all aspects of the education system. It is the Superintendent who works side-by side with the Board of Education to honor the district's mission and work toward the realization of the district's vision aimed at providing a quality education for every child.
- Every district must have a superintendent, regardless of its size. While cost effectiveness is important, the *education* of the children in the district is paramount. Quality teachers and building leaders are imperative, but so too is the leader of the school system, the Superintendent, whose charge it is to declare teaching and learning priorities, to ensure that the best classroom teachers are hired, to establish structures for supporting teacher growth, as well as the growth of principals who are responsible for the supervision and evaluation of teachers.
- The Superintendent is also responsible to ensure that all State mandates are met, such as certifying that all teachers are highly qualified and have the proper certification; ensuring that all staff receive annual training in mandated reporting of child abuse, sexual abuse and more; complying with IDEA federal law on servicing children identified as in need of special education, and children needing 504 plans under ADA; ensuring that school buildings are code compliant and meet State safety standards.
- In Connecticut most small districts have *part time or shared* Superintendents. Though the districts are small, having a Superintendent is imperative. It is this person who is ultimately responsible for all systems of the organization. Remove this part-time or shared Superintendent, and who is ultimately to be held accountable? These superintendents, though part time or shared:

- Hire Principals, Directors of Special Education and often teachers;
 - Serve on the front line with personnel issues;
 - Evaluate building principals and central office staff;
 - Oversee facilities, often trouble shooting in emergencies;
 - Engage more deeply in the budget, including development of the capital budget because of often having a part-time business manager;
 - Address frequently transportation issues;
 - Ensure State and federal mandates are being met;
 - Interface with the Board attorney when necessary;
 - Participate in negotiations of certain contracts;
 - Attend Board meetings, town meetings, area Superintendent meetings;
 - Make decisions on school closings, delayed openings or early dismissals whether or not the day of the week is a work day;
 - Engage continually with the various publics.
- A superintendent has specialized training in multiple areas. In small districts, there is no middle person to assume the lead in personnel complaints, CHRO complaints, investigations of misconduct, administrative evaluation, meeting with and reporting to Board of Education members, addressing parent issues that move beyond the building or a division, complying with special education law and regulations, e.g., adjusting the budget if additional staffing is needed for a new student entering the district.

We believe that elimination of the Superintendent as stipulated in SB 874, or fining a district that keeps its Superintendent, is totally improper and will serve to harm the district and the education of the students. We understand the financial challenges of the State, but believe the proposed approach is not the right approach. There are currently 28 one-school districts. Of these, 25 have part-time Superintendents. Moreover, all are economizing and many have many regional efforts underway, examples of which have already been shared with the Education Committee in my testimony on regionalization.

For the reasons stated above, we implore you to recognize and honor the importance of the position of Superintendent for each district in the State of Connecticut, and request that it not be viewed as a “school service” to be removed.

Respectfully submitted:
Fran Rabinowitz
Executive Director
Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents