Dear Members of the Education Committee,

We’re writing today with testimony for the public hearing on Wednesday, March 6, 2019 for Bill 7250 – An Act Concerning the Improvement of Child Development through Play.

Ms. Corbett has owned an education reform consulting practice, specializing in school and district improvement for nine years. Ms. LeMieux is a composer and music educator with a background in early childhood education and educational psychology. We both currently serve on the Norwalk Public Schools Board of Education, are Connecticut residents and mothers to pre-school and school-aged children.

We fully support and advocate increasing the amount of recreational time for students in elementary school. Unstructured recreation time is incredibly important for children’s social and cognitive development, collaborative problem-solving skills and the development of executive functioning, as well as for their physical fitness. Across the country, districts that have moved to increase recess time have seen broad benefits both academically and behaviorally.

While we support increasing the amount of time from the currently required twenty minutes, we do have the following questions that we hope will be addressed as this bill moves forward:

- Would there be additional funding from the state to support this change? As important as unstructured play and recreation is, increasing the time allotted to this by 30 minutes could place a burden on local school systems to either cut existing instructional time or to extend the school day – resulting in higher school costs and possible renegotiations with collective bargaining units.
- Is there a research basis for the moving towards 50 minutes, as opposed to 30? 40?

Creative and innovative schools are already figuring out how to increase recreational time during the day, how to incorporate activity or physical breaks during the academic blocks, and how to have more interdisciplinary learning to more effectively use the existing school day. Our students need more recreational time, not only for its academic and behavioral benefits, but also as a valuable growth and educational experience in itself.

Thank you,

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