



THE CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS

TESTIMONY OF THE CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS BEFORE THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Monday, April 29, 2019

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING

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Glenn Lungarini

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- Association for Middle Level Education
- National Association of Elementary School Principals
- National Association of Secondary School Principals
- National Federation of State High School Associations
- New England Association of Schools and Colleges
- New England League of Middle Schools

RE SB 1129: AN ACT CONCERNING VARIOUS INITIATIVES TO PROMOTE COMPUTER SCIENCE AND TECHNICAL TALENT IN EDUCATION.

Good afternoon members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Glenn Lungarini. I am the Executive Director of the CT Association of Schools - CT Interscholastic Athletic Conference ("CAS-CIAC"). CAS-CIAC represents approximately 1,000 public and parochial elementary, middle and high schools in Connecticut.

We support a wide range of activities both academic and athletic. The CIAC is the governing body for interscholastic athletics. CAS-CIAC advocates for the best interests of schools, students, faculty and administrators in providing exceptional, education-based experiences.

SB 1129 requires schools of all grade levels to incorporate computer science instruction into their existing program offerings including at least one course in computer science at the high school level. CAS-CIAC is opposed to SB 1129 due to (1) the restriction in elective credits a high school student will be able to take due to prescriptive legislation on curriculum mandates; and, (2) the fiscal responsibilities that will be placed on school districts.

As students progress through their educational career, it is imperative to engage them in coursework which they find of high interest. Doing so enhances their self-efficacy and provides motivation for life-long learning. However, legislative mandates that require students to enroll in courses diminish elective opportunities and restrict learning experiences in a student's field of passion. The value and belief of providing students a voice in their learning experiences cannot be heard when we prescribe the course of studies to be taken.

In addition to the prescriptive nature of SB 1129, there is also concern that this bill will impose additional fiscal responsibilities on districts. As districts continue to struggle with tight budgets, any unfunded curriculum mandate will result in pulling funds away from programs already in need.

While CAS-CIAC recognizes the importance of STEAM work, including computer science, we believe that providing high school students autonomy in choosing elective courses is essential in producing motivated life-long learners. Legislative curriculum mandates that restrict course options for students will not enhance student learning experiences.

Sincerely,

Glenn Lungarini
Executive Director

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Serving schools
and their leaders

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