



**Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, Inc.**

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**Testimony  
Submitted to the  
Education Committee**

**March 17, 2021**

**SB 1033 AN ACT CONCERNING THE INCLUSION OF COMPUTER SCIENCE AND FINANCIAL LITERACY AS PART OF THE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS.**

**HB 6618 AN ACT CONCERNING CERTAIN FUNDING ISSUES AFFECTING BOARDS OF EDUCATION.**

**HB 6619 AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A KINDERGARTEN TO EIGHT GRADE MODEL CURRICULUM.**

**SB 1034 AN ACT CONCERNING MINORITY TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION.**

**HB 6620 AN ACT CONCERNING THE RIGHT TO READ AND ADDRESSING OPPORTUNITY GAPS AND EQUITY IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS.**

The Connecticut Association of Boards of Education supports the provision in section 1 of SB 1033, which clarifies that computer science is included in the existing 9 credit course high school graduation requirement for science, technology, engineering and mathematics. However, CABE is opposed to the addition of financial literacy as another specific graduation requirement. While recognizing the importance of financial literacy, CABE urge you to refrain from the addition of this specific item to the existing high school graduation requirements. When the new high school graduation requirements were established there was extensive discussion of the coursework that would be prescribed in statute balanced with the need to allow student interest to be reflected in their course choices.

CABE strongly supports HB 6618 which addresses several important funding issues. Specifically, CABE supports:

- Section 1, which allows the Commissioner to grant some flexibility to Alliance districts in the expenditure of a portion of their funding
- Section 2, which allows boards of education to carry over any unexpended federal funds received to address the costs associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Since some of the eligible costs are ongoing, this allows boards of education to utilize these funds in a responsible and effective manner.
- Section 3, which allows a regional board of education to deposit up to 2% of the annual district budget into nonlapsing account. This provision supports fiscal responsibility and is consistent with the statute allowing local boards of education to carry over funds.

CABE supports HB 6619 which requires the Department of Education to develop a model curriculum that may be used by boards of education. The development of a model curriculum would reduce duplication of effort at the local level, and provide a resource that boards of education could adopt or modify as appropriate.

CABE supports SB 1034, An Act Concerning Minority Teacher Recruitment and Retention. The lack of minority representation in public schools is an issue of concern to all districts in Connecticut. We want our students to have the opportunity to learn from educators from a variety of backgrounds, races, and cultures. While progress has been made in increasing the number of educators of color, much work remains to be done. Currently students of color account for over 40% of Connecticut's student population, while only 9.6% of the state public school teachers and administrators are people of color. CABE has adopted a position urging all districts to continue their efforts to increase the recruitment of qualified individuals who reflect the state's diversity to the teaching profession and administration.

CABE established a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee to address this issue, as well as the lack of diversity on boards of education. Some of the work of that Committee has been to support school boards in having conversations with their community about the importance of diversity. There are also specific programs such as RELAY and the RESC Alliance teacher residency program which some Connecticut districts are using to enable staff to become certified educators. CABE has adopted a position urging all districts to continue their efforts to increase the recruitment of qualified individuals who reflect the state's diversity to the teaching profession and administration.

CABE urges you to support this and other initiatives to recruit and retain minority educators in Connecticut, and to commit the resources needed for successful implementation.

CABE supports efforts to address the critical issue of literacy. As you consider HB 6620 and the responsibilities it places on the State Department of Education, we strongly urge you to insure that the resources are available for successful implementation on a long term basis. The State Department of Education has been seriously understaffed for a number of years, and that challenge grows each year. Without a commitment to sustain resources, the capacity to implement the important work on long term basis will not be available, and meaningful support for students and districts. It is also important that teacher preparation programs provide our educators with the science based strategies needed to be effective in teaching literacy skills. We know that reading is a gateway skill to all other learning, and that "learning to read" is critical to the ability to "read to learn". The learning disruption created by the pandemic has exacerbated the existing gap in reading attain.

We appreciate your attention to these issues.