

Testimony of Interim Commissioner Susan Hamilton
Committee on Education Public Hearing
March 11, 2026

RE: House Bill 5468, An Act Concerning the Provision of Equivalent Instruction

Good Afternoon, Senator McCrory, Representative Leeper, Senator Berthel, Representative Zupkus and distinguished members of the Education Committee. I am Susan Hamilton, Interim Commissioner of Children and Families and I am submitting testimony on **House Bill 5468, An Act Concerning the Provision of Equivalent Instruction.**

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments on two sections of the bill that pertain to DCF.

Subdivision (2) of subsection (e) of section 1 would require schools to notify DCF if a parent seeks to withdraw a child from school to receive equivalent instruction. DCF would be required to conduct a review to determine if the child is the subject of an order for protective supervision or receiving protective services as defined in C.G.S. section 17a-93.

If the family is involved with DCF, we would be required to notify the school and removal for equivalent instruction would be prohibited. Section 7 amends our confidentiality statute, C.G.S. section 17a-28, to permit DCF to provide that information to the school without consent of the parent or guardian.

This section would require additional staff for our Careline to conduct reviews of our records and provide the notifications to schools. Data from the State Department of Education indicates that 1500 - 2000 students are withdrawn from public school every year. That influx of notices would be impossible to process at current staffing levels. We would likely need at least two processing technicians to manage the additional workload.

Also, the 2 business days allow for a very brief time to conduct such a review, especially if a number of withdrawal notices come in at once. We would request at least 10 business days following receipt of the case review request.

We believe it would be helpful if the statute included language that reads, "If the Commissioner of Children and Families determines that the child is not the subject of an order of protective supervision or receiving protective services, as defined in section 17a-93 of the general statutes, the

Commissioner is precluded from taking any additional action related to the notification unless a report is made pursuant to 17a-101a."

We look forward to working with the committee as the session advances.

