



## **Testimony of**

**Gary Peluchette**

**Before the Education Committee**

### **Re: SB 1021 AAC A Comprehensive Community Schools Pilot Program**

Good Afternoon Senator McCrory, Representative Sanchez, Senator Berthel, Representative McCarty, and distinguished members of the Education Committee. My name is Gary Peluchette and I am the president of the Bridgeport Education Association (BEA). I have been a teacher in the Bridgeport Public Schools for the past 34 years.

On behalf of the 1,500 members of BEA, we support SB 1021.

For teachers, time is precious. During the course of a teacher's day, we must, plan lessons, assess our students, whether through tests, projects, performance, or standardized testing. Monitor attendance, gather data, meets the needs of specific students as outlined in their IEPs, attend professional development, take part in the PPT process, confer with colleagues, administrators and parents. Oh yes, we also teach. Lunch and bathroom breaks are usually catch as catch can. Time is dear, and reaching out to our surrounding community is an aspiration that can be actively pursued with enactment of this bill.

My elementary school years were spent in the town of Los Lunas, New Mexico, population 6,000. Our three schools 1-6, 7-8 and 9-12 were the focus of our community. The town supported athletic events, student performances, and other school activities. 4th of July fireworks were launched from the far side of the baseball diamond. Town Meetings were held in the gym, the local paper published the list high school graduates, and those going on to higher education or military service. The school was at the heart of the town.

Somewhere along the way, this notion of the community being an integral part of our schools has been lost. We have been looking at data, and not at children.

It is my hope that the Community Schools initiative can rebuild that bridge between schools and their surrounding community. Having a person on staff to begin the work of reconnecting communities to their schools is paramount to successfully implementing this strategy in Connecticut, so that we can enjoy the success that this approach has had around the country.