

Testimony of

Joslyn DeLancey

Connecticut Education Association

Before the

Education Committee

Re:

**HB 6662 AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET
RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING EDUCATION**

February 22, 2023

Senator McCrory, Representative Currey, Representative McCarty, Senator Berthel, esteemed members of the Education Committee, my name is Joslyn DeLancey, and I am vice president of the Connecticut Education Association. CEA represents more than 40,000 active and retired teachers from over 150 school districts across the state.

CEA supports HB 6662 with reservation.

CEA thanks the governor and legislature for increasing reimbursements to school districts for special education costs. The governor's proposal, along with the legislature's recent passage of Emergency Certified HB 6671, provides welcome fiscal relief to school districts for the often-unexpected costs of special education services.

However, Sections 12 and 13 of HB 6662 include a provision that appears intended to treat Goodwin University Magnet Schools (GUMS) as a public entity for the purpose of the Teachers' Retirement System. A potential change in the administrative structure of GUMS would end the school's relationship with the Regional Educational Service Center, LEARN; this relationship has thus far ensured the treatment of GUMS, which is owned by the private entity Goodwin University, as a public entity.

This relationship has ensured that the teachers at GUMS would have access to the TRS as public employees under ERISA, which in turn protected the integrity of the TRS as a public sector plan. The relationship has also ensured that staff at GUMS are considered public-sector workers with the right to collectively bargain as public employees under the rules of the National Labor Relations Board.

Our concern is that although the legislature may act to deem an entity as within the public sector, such action is not the final word. Ultimately, the determination of an entity as being within the

public sector rests with federal entities, such as ERISA, NLRB, and the Internal Revenue Service; and it ultimately rests with the courts.

CEA supports the intent of Sections 12 and 13 of the bill, but CEA remains cautious pending other determinants of the status of GUMS as a public entity.

Thank you.