*Testimony of*

**Ray Rossomando**

**Connecticut Education Association**

*Before the*

**Education Committee**

*Re:*

**SB 363 AN ACT CONCERNING ASSORTED REVISIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUTES**

March 11, 2024

Representative Currey, Senator McCrory, Representative McCarty, Senator Berthel, and esteemed members of the Education Committee, my name is Ray Rossomando, and I am the Director of Policy, Research, and Government Relations of the Connecticut Education Association. CEA represents more than 40,000 active and retired teachers from over 150 school districts across the state.

CEA submits testimony on SB 363 AAC Assorted Revisions to the Education Statutes supporting changes to edTPA in Section 7 and opposing Section 8 regarding elected parent councils as written.

**Section 7** – CEA strongly supports Section 7 addressing edTPA and requests clarification that the costs of participating in edTPA not be passed on to aspiring educators.

As noted in CEA’s primary testimony on this bill submitted by Katie Grant, edTPA is a time-consuming, cumbersome, and disconnected assessment tool for determining an aspiring teacher’s ability to be successful in the classroom.

Additionally, edTPA is prohibitively costly. Aspiring educators already take on additional costs to participate in their student teaching experience.  Student teaching is an unpaid, full-time work experience – unlike the vast majority of other internships and work experience afforded college students. Furthermore, many teacher preparation programs actually prohibit or discourage student teachers from holding jobs during their experience.

CEA believes that if edTPA continues to be required in any capacity, aspiring educators should not bear the cost.

**Section 8** – CEA believes that parent engagement and input is critical to fully meeting the educational and developmental needs of students. While the parent council proposed for regional school districts may be well-intended, we believe that as written, Section 8 is problematic. Section 8 appears to emulate the existing role of School Governance Councils (SGCs) established pursuant to [CGS 10-223j](https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_170.htm#sec_10-223j) and effective for schools in need of improvement.  However, there are two important distinctions between this section as drafted and the existing SGCs.

School Governance Councils are advisory only and include participation and input from school staff, parents, students, and the community. As written, the proposed parent councils exclude input from others and have roles that are more than advisory and that are intrusive on the work of school staff.

Additionally, Section 8 proposes that membership in a parent council be determined by election. Under current law (CGS 10-46), schools in regional school districts are already overseen and directed by elected regional boards of education. The creation of elected parent councils to also oversee and direct work within regional schools creates conflicts and confusion over jurisdiction, accountability, and legal obligations for elected bodies representing member towns.

Thank you.