



Connecticut Education Association
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An affiliate of the National Education Association

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May 25, 2018

Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol Building
Room 200
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy,

In your possession is Public Act 18-89, An Act Concerning Disruptive Behavior and Classroom Safety. PA 18-89 seeks to address a growing crisis in our classrooms—physical injury to students and educators, and the need for a pro-active, non-punitive approach to create a safe school environment. Attached for your consideration is a memo providing further background regarding the effect of this legislation, its demonstrated positive impact where similar provisions have been enacted elsewhere, and its interaction with students receiving special education.

This legislation has benefitted from a collaborative approach and suggestions from Commissioner Dianna Wentzell, Child Advocate Sarah Eagan, mental health and children's needs advocate Susan Kelley, Executive Director of the Commission on Equity and Opportunity Subira Gordon, and numerous educators and legislators.

The growing crisis addressed in 18-89 is impacting all districts whether rural, suburban, or urban. In fact, over 70 teachers in Connecticut expressed their personal stories and the need for this bill in hearing testimony, the vast majority of whom—in fact over 5 times as many—came from districts that are not urban. Incidents that result in physical injury disrupt the learning environment for all students, and often result in lost learning time as injured students, teachers and para-educators seek medical treatment.

PA 18-89 focuses on prevention in an effort to reduce the incidents of physical harm to students and staff. As a result of its supportive and non-punitive approach, it is designed to lessen discriminatory discipline and the school-to-prison pipeline. It provides alternatives to current, permissible responses of suspension and expulsion, and emphasizes supports and appropriate interventions for students whose behavior may be a cry for help.

Please let us know if you have any questions—we are available to meet and answer any questions you might have.

Finally, thank you for your consideration, and for your support of similar measures during your tenure as governor. We hope that you will sign this important legislation into law.

Sheila Cohen
President, Connecticut Education Association

cc: Dianna Wentzell, Commissioner of Education;
Brian Durand, Chief of Staff;
Liz Donohue, Deputy Chief of Staff

Encl.