

Remarks of Jill Mack

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Before the Program Review and Investigations Committee

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Good afternoon Senator Fonfara and Representative Rowe, and members of the Program Review and Investigations Committee.

My name is Jill Mack, and I'm the Licensure Officer at Saint Joseph College in West Hartford. My comments to you this afternoon are my own and do not reflect those of the College. I speak in support of the establishment of an independent standards board for CT educators.

Prior to my returning to my CT roots, I was a teacher, standards board consultant, and an adjunct professor. In 1989, I was appointed by Gov. Madeline Kunin to the newly created Vermont Standard Board for Professional Educators, a quasi-independent SB. The VT Standards Board was established to give educators; both teachers and administrators, a voice in the governance of their profession and to undertake some tasks and responsibilities previously held by the VT DOE and State BOE. The board was composed of 23 members; teachers, administrators, higher education, school board, community, and one member of the VT State Board of Education.

Our first charge was to rewrite some very dated beginning educator standards defined in the regulations governing the licensing of VT educators. Our subsequent responsibilities were to:

- Establish 63 local relicensing boards for teachers and 5 for school administrators; part of our later work was initiating Individual Professional Development Plans and portfolios for relicensure,
- Establish a process for results oriented program approval for each of the VT teacher prep institutions and later grant approval for
- Establish a peer review process for granting emergency credentials to candidates who had not completed a teacher prep program (DSAPs),
- Develop new licensure endorsements (ESL , middle),

- Revise regulations for legislative approval and, finally,
- Make decisions about license revocation, suspension, and denial.

The board was staffed by a DOE coordinator and one other educator from a teacher preparation institution. The SB had full access to DOE legal counsel and any other dept. colleagues with the knowledge and expertise to aid us in our work.

My experiences on the Board, both as a member, and later as a consultant were **the highlight** of my professional career as an educator. It was exhilarating to know that collectively and collaboratively we were moving the profession forward, as well as taking some of the burden off the State DOE. A deep respect for one another and commitment to the tasks was evident from each board member. I attribute this to the care and time given to the selection of the initial charter members.

In closing – the time is right for Connecticut to join the other 22 states which have independent or quasi-independent educator standards boards. For a state who claims to be on the cutting edge of education reform – the time is right. The establishment of an ISB will permit the understaffed State DOE to focus exclusively on closing CT's achievement gap along with the other critical initiatives that are currently underway. I urge your support to establish an independent standards board for CT educators. Thank you.