

March 1, 2011

Dear Representative Fleischmann,

I am writing to you today because I am very concerned about one of the Governor's key proposals, requiring the CT Vo-Tech schools be phased into local districts.

A CT Vo-Tech School is not a typical magnet schools that can be run like those in the local districts. Our system thrives because Central Office serves as a hub through which all our schools are connected. Under the leadership of the Central Office, our teachers work with consultants and administrators to develop curriculums, create common assessments, and collaborate on any number of projects. Local magnet schools do not have a shared vision, a shared mission, or a shared approach, because they are each run and funded by local boards who maintain ultimate control.

This difference is what makes our system successful. Each academic area and trade area has a steering committee comprised of a representative from every school. These committees meet regularly to discuss the latest trends and research based practices; they share what is working in each school and what is not. We are always working to improve our system, our instruction, our students' success. This is the process that has powered each curriculum to ensure it is aligned with State standards, that designs our district-wide assessments, and ensures students are prepared to be successful at CAPT. And this is the process that HB 6385 would destroy.

Our students attend our schools because they want to learn a licensed trade and begin their careers immediately upon graduation. Our growing enrollment shows we are meeting their needs.

HB 6385 suggests that our seventeen schools should operate and be maintained under seventeen different school boards. Once that happens, the common vision is gone, curriculum deteriorates, instruction is compromised, and ultimately students lose. The cost to students is obvious; the benefits are unclear. Where are the cost savings? The towns and the State will now have to share the cost of educating the students.

What will happen to the over 10,000 students who want to learn a licensed trade and become taxpaying citizens immediately upon graduation? Can anyone put a price on that?

I ask that you support amending HB 6385 and remove section 16 that proposes changing the successful CTHSS.

Thank you,

Jan Hochadel