



State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services

DDS

Dannel P. Malloy
Governor

Terrence W. Macy, Ph.D.
Commissioner

Joseph W. Drexler, Esq.
Deputy Commissioner

**DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES TESTIMONY
BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE**

March 5, 2014

Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson, and members of the Public Health Committee. I am Terrence W. Macy, Ph.D., Commissioner of the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of our agency bill [S.B. No. 255](#) - **An Act Concerning Unified School District #3**.

[S.B. No. 255](#) repeals sections 17a-239, 17a-240 and 17a-241 of the Connecticut General Statutes that establish Unified School District #3 (USD #3), which is the state's school district overseeing the Birth to Three System's Early Connections program, and that require the DDS Commissioner to appoint a district superintendent. Also, it removes references to USD #3 in other sections of state statute. The Early Connections program, which is the state-run provider of the Birth to Three System, has been in the process of closing over the last three years and will see its final toddler exit Early Connections prior to July 1, 2014. After this date, as was planned, all Birth to Three services throughout the state will be provided through contracts with private provider agencies. And, after July 1, 2014, there will be no need for a USD #3 in statute except for historical reference as in section one of the bill.

Unified School District #3 was created in 1978 to educate children living in Department of Mental Retardation (DMR) institutions. In 1991, USD #3 was changed to serve only infants and toddlers living at home or in foster homes through the program Early Connections before the Connecticut's Birth to Three System existed. When the Birth to Three System was fully implemented in October of 1993, Early Connections, under the oversight of USD #3, became one of many local early intervention programs available to families.

Our Birth to Three programs remain some of the most successful results-based programs for infants and toddlers with suspected developmental delays or disabilities. The Birth to Three in-home support model that works with both the child and the child's parents has consistently achieved success in targeting children who are at-risk of developmental delay, and providing appropriate training and services to the family with the result that these children reach school age with fewer delays and less need for special education services. The Birth to Three System also is working in partnership with the new Office of Early Childhood to create a seamless system of supports for children from birth to five years of age.

Thank you for your continued support of DDS's Birth to Three System and the children with developmental delays, including children with intellectual disability and autism spectrum disorder, receiving services from this state-wide program. My staff and I would be happy to answer any questions that you have on Senate Bill 255. Please contact Christine Pollio Cooney, DDS Director of Legislative and Executive Affairs, at (860) 418-6066, if you would like additional information from DDS.