



Written Testimony of Randall Prose *(Delivered by Ben Wenograd)*

President, Windham Federation of Teachers

State Board of Education Meeting

September 4, 2013

Thank you Chairperson Taylor and Members of the State Board of Education for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Ben Wenograd. I am a Field Representative with AFT Connecticut and I have represented the Windham Federation of Teachers for the past 13 years. Since he cannot attend this meeting, I would like to read a Statement from our Local President, Randall Prose:

My name is Randall Prose and I am the current union president of WFT. I am a very trusting and optimistic person and hoped that the state intervention in Windham would be a positive boost for our schools. We were facing extreme challenges in town passing a budget and were struggling to find the resources to provide our students the services they sorely needed. I was hopeful these issues would be addressed by a collaborative relationship with the State. But we face more challenges than ever in our charge to best educate the students of Windham. Since the appointment of the Special Master two years ago, test scores have plummeted. Even though we had seen some test score increases in recent years, the huge achievement gap and still troubling scores were the reason for the intervention in the first place, but now the scores are even worse. Surely, these results demand a closer look at the effectiveness of recent changes that were imposed by the Special Master.

We appeal to you to work with the legislators and stakeholders to investigate this reform and make sure that the school choice agenda is not being implemented in lieu of quality education and best practice. I ask that any renewal of the Special Master in our district be done after we can look closer at the changes that have caused such steep declines under his control. There is a long list of challenges we and the students face as result of these changes that we would like to share with you in the months ahead. I am certainly willing to appear at a future meeting to address any questions you may have. I am hopeful that as a result of these discussions we will be able to have the type of productive and collaborative relationship I originally envisioned.

Sincerely,

Randall Prose