



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



EDUCATION COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 13, 2007

**TESTIMONY OF
GEORGE A. COLEMAN, INTERIM COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION
ON**

**RAISED BILL 7047
AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL DISTRICT ACCOUNTABILITY**

Last week, Governor Rell took a bold, historic step in proposing to the people of Connecticut significant new funding for the state's elementary and secondary schools. This initiative, if enacted, would provide funds needed to improve Connecticut's schools, raise achievement levels of Connecticut's students, and in time provide for the enhancement of Connecticut's workforce. However, to ensure that these additional funds accomplish these purposes, school districts must be held to high standards with clearly identified consequences if those standards are not met.

At the same time, a significant component of the federal No Child Left Behind law is that there be consequences for school districts in which students fail to improve over time. However, while that law provides a framework for those consequences, it does not empower the State Board of Education to undertake specific actions.

School district accountability is an integral part of both of these initiatives, but current state law does not provide the tools to do this effectively. The state must be able to intervene in ways that it has not done so before to ensure that Connecticut's students achieve to the best of their abilities, the state's money is well spent, and the federal requirements are met. Raised Bill 7047, very much like a proposal adopted by the State Board of Education after much careful consideration and deliberation, specifies actions that the State Board may take as part of intensified supervision and direction when a school district fails to perform over time. The Governor has proposed a similar, but not identical, accountability initiative in Bill 1114, "An Act Implementing the Governor's Budget Recommendations Regarding Education." Clearly, now is the time to set forth the powers needed by the State Board of Education to ensure the highest standards for Connecticut's students. We urge your consideration of these ideas and look forward to working with you on this very important issue.