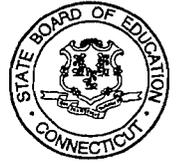




STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
FEBRUARY 13, 2007

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

RAISED BILL 1061  
AN ACT CONCERNING VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE CENTER FUNDING

Ongoing research in agricultural biotechnology, agricultural engineering, marine science technology, and other emerging agricultural industries have revolutionized the field of agriculture. Regional vocational-agriculture centers in 19 comprehensive high schools in the state are working to meet that challenge by providing educational programs in agriculture and related occupations.

The state provides funding to assist local and regional school districts which operate these centers through reimbursements of \$700 per full-time agriculture student and supplemental grants, but there have been no increases in the per pupil state aid for students in these centers for a number of years. Vocational-agriculture programs have an important role in public education and, like other school choice programs, are extremely valuable. In fact, the Governor has recommended adding approximately \$570,000 per year for the next two years for these centers.