



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



EDUCATION COMMITTEE
February 29, 2008

Public Hearing Testimony

Speaker:

Mark K.
McQuillan

Date: 2/29/08 Bill Number: 5593

**TESTIMONY OF
MARK K. MCQUILLAN, COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION
ON
RAISED BILL 5593
AN ACT CONCERNING EARLY READING SUCCESS GRANTS**

As you know, there is no funding in place for 2008-09 for the priority school district early reading success grant program pursuant to Section 10-265f of the General Statutes. The Department of Education has been working with the Appropriations Committee to restore some, if not all, of that funding, and we are hopeful that will happen. Intensive early intervention reading programs for students identified as being at risk of failing to learn to read by the end of first grade and students in grades one to three, inclusive, who are reading below grade level are extremely important. Students who do not learn to read in their early elementary years are at a significant disadvantage in reaching their academic potential.

Assuming that the early reading success grant program will be continued, the Department of Education supports Raised Bill 5593 so that we can better monitor the efficacy of the intensive early reading intervention programs being funded. Priority school districts receiving early reading success grants must currently report the number of students in grades one to three, inclusive, who are substantially deficient in reading and who are promoted from first, second or third grade to the next grade. Raised Bill 5593 proposes to require that priority school districts receiving early reading success

grants must also report the percent of students in grades one to three, inclusive, who are at or above proficiency for their grade level.

Additionally, the Department of Education believes that this program could be greatly improved by refocusing the use of the funds appropriated for this program. Currently, funds for this program can be used for intensive early intervention reading programs, as described above, full-day kindergarten programs and reducing class size in grades kindergarten to three, inclusive. We believe that funds for this program should be used only for early intervention reading programs, except that those priority school districts which are currently using these funds for all-day kindergarten should be able to use these funds to continue those programs. It should be noted that priority school districts receiving early reading success funds also receive the general priority school district grant pursuant to Section 10-266p of the General Statutes and those general priority school district funds may be used for all-day kindergarten and a number of other purposes. We believe that by focusing the grant program, we will be better able to direct the funds and to measure student achievement in reading. We look forward to working with the Committee on language to implement these changes.