



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



EDUCATION COMMITTEE
February 29, 2008

TESTIMONY OF MARK K. MCQUILLAN, COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION

ON RAISED BILL 404 AN ACT CONCERNING THE BILINGUAL EDUCATOR CERTIFICATE PILOT PROGRAM

Prior to legislation enacted in 2005, a bilingual educator certificate could only be issued to individuals certified in both a content area and in bilingual education. This was the only educator certificate that required dual certification. In order to increase the pool of bilingual educators, of which there was a severe shortage, and at the same time ensure high standards, a pilot program was established effective from July 1, 2005, to July 1, 2008.

During the course of this pilot, the State Board of Education's ability to certify highly qualified bilingual teachers improved. However, the Department of Education does not propose making these pilot provisions permanent because we are currently conducting a comprehensive review of all of the certification statutes and regulations. These efforts are expected to result in recommendations for statutory and regulatory amendments to a number of our teacher certification provisions. Since it is not yet clear what changes, if any, will be recommended for the issuance of bilingual educator certificates, it is now proposed in Raised Bill 404 that the bilingual educator pilot be extended for another three years while these more comprehensive activities are being undertaken.

At this point, to allow the pilot program to terminate and revert to the dual certification provisions would cause a great deal of confusion for school districts and would have a severe impact on the ability of schools to place qualified teachers in bilingual programs. We urge your support of this bill.