



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT**  
*DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION*



EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
February 29, 2008

**TESTIMONY OF  
MARK K. MCQUILLAN, COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION**

**ON  
RAISED BILL 405  
AN ACT CONCERNING GRANTS FOR COMPUTER-ASSISTED WRITING,  
INSTRUCTION AND TESTING**

Current law permits the Department of Education to establish, within available appropriations, a pilot program for the use of technology in providing computer-assisted writing, instruction and testing in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades in schools, including the Connecticut Technical High Schools. Raised Bill 405 proposes to expand the grade levels in which grants for this pilot program may be used to all secondary grades, i.e., grades six to twelve, inclusive. The Department supports this change.

This pilot program was established in 2005 to determine if computers and related applications have a positive impact on student achievement. Since that time, the Department has awarded \$1.5M in grants of up to \$100K each to approximately 20 school districts. An additional \$1M has been appropriated for more grants in each year of this biennium. This proposal will make it possible for students in middle and high school grades, and not just those in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade, to benefit from this technology.

Additionally, since all funds appropriated for this program must be used as grants to school districts, no funds have been available for evaluation, monitoring and technical

assistance. Since this is a pilot program, it is important to determine its effectiveness. Consequently, Raised Bill 405 would allow the Department of Education to retain up to 5% of the funds appropriated for this program for program evaluation, monitoring and technical assistance. We support this part of the proposal as well.