

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMISSION

WALLACE BARNES
CHAIRMAN

March 1, 2010

The Honorable John A. Kissel
The Honorable Mary M. Mushinsky
Co-Chair, Legislative Program Review
and Investigations Committee
State Capitol, Room 506
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: Raised Bill No.5165 – An Act Concerning High School Graduation Requirements

Dear Senator Kissel and Representative Mushinsky:

The Connecticut Employment and Training Commission (CETC) is Connecticut's state workforce investment board. CETC provides policy and planning guidance to the Governor and General Assembly on workforce development, training and education-related matters and promotes coordination of relevant efforts in Connecticut. The majority of CETC members are business sector employers, with the balance representing organized labor, education, state agencies, community-based organizations and other key stakeholders. The Connecticut Office for Workforce Competitiveness (OWC) provides technical assistance and support.

On CETC's behalf, I want to reiterate our appreciation for the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee's December 2009 report on the *Alignment of Postsecondary Education and Employment* (as originally noted in a letter of October 5, 2009). In particular I wish to express support for Raised Bill No. 5165, *An Act Concerning High School Graduation Requirements*, drafted in response to Recommendation 8 in the Committee report, proposing passage of legislation "reforming Connecticut high school graduation requirements as recommended by the State Department of Education in their proposed high school redesign."

For more than two years CETC has been watching closely the redesign process led by Education Commissioner Mark McQuillan, who also serves as a CETC member. Dr. McQuillan has reported to us on a regular basis on efforts intended to strengthen the educational attainment of all Connecticut students, culminating in graduation from high school with the skills and capabilities needed for success in post-secondary education and advancement in careers critical to future state economic growth and financial security for Connecticut's people.

Connecticut's recent application to the U.S. Department of Education for funding to implement the state's Race to the Top strategy for comprehensive educational reform embraces this foundation of high school redesign developed by SDE over the past two years. On December 17, 2009, CETC members voted unanimously to endorse a resolution supporting the state's Race to

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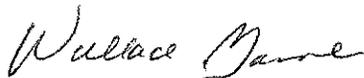
the Top application, noting our belief that the proposed education reform strategies are critical for improved achievement by Connecticut students and essential for sustained growth of Connecticut's economy. A formal letter of support for the Race To the Top application was signed individually by all CETC members.

By implication, CETC's endorsement of the state's Race To the Top application constitutes an endorsement of the proposed high school redesign addressed in the Committee's *Alignment* report, its Recommendation #8, and Raised Bill No. 5165.

We will continue to follow your efforts on these matters with great interest. In conjunction with our colleagues at the Office for Workforce Competitiveness, we would be pleased to consider providing any further support you may think helpful as you move forward with this critically important education reform legislation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Wallace Barnes".

Wallace Barnes
Chairman