

**TESTIMONY OF**  
**GEORGE A. COLEMAN, ACTING COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION**

**ON**

**RAISED BILL 6585**

**AN ACT CONCERNING MAGNET SCHOOLS, THE HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT AGE, AND  
NOTIFICATION OF FAILING STUDENTS**

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) **supports** Raised Bill No. 6585, *An Act Concerning Magnet Schools, the High School Dropout Age, and Notification of Failing Students*.

**Section 1**

Section 22 of Public Act 09-6 of the September Special Session, required the CSDE to develop a comprehensive magnet school plan for the General Assembly's Education Committee by January 1, 2011. Given the magnitude and complexity of the elements of magnet school plan, CSDE requested a delay in submission of the plan.

Section 1 of this bill requires the Commissioner to study issues regarding interdistrict magnet schools and report to the General Assembly's Education Committee by January 1, 2012. This reporting date will allow new members of the State Board of Education to provide input on the plan and an opportunity for magnet school operators and other stakeholders to consider the plan's recommendations. In addition, the CSDE recently updated a Results Based Accountability (RBA) report card on interdistrict magnet schools for the General Assembly's Appropriations Committee. As noted in the RBA, CSDE actions to "turn the curve" provide an opportunity to further inform the plan.

**Section 2**

The purpose of this section of the bill is to raise the age that a student may drop out of school to eighteen years of age; and will require parents, without exception, to have their child under 18 years of age to attend public school or to show that the child is elsewhere receiving equivalent instruction. The CSDE believes that these learners are best served through the comprehensive educational offerings of a school district's high school. This change will also provide clarity and consistency on what constitutes school age.

In order for students to remain in school and show stronger outcomes, CSDE looks forward to working with the Education Committee and the Governor to ensure that students receive the education they deserve and to make certain that the educational alternatives/options necessary and most beneficial are equivalent to what is expected of public school graduates.

Taking these issues into account, the CSDE **supports** Raised Bill # 6585.