



March 19, 2015

The Honorable Dannel P. Malloy, Governor
Office of the Governor
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: Request for Sustained Funding for the Connecticut Commission for Educational Technology

Dear Governor Malloy:

Please consider the request to provide sustained funding for the Connecticut Education Network (CEN) on behalf of the Connecticut Commission on Educational Technology. At the March 2, 2015 meeting of the Connecticut Commission for Educational Technology, the Commission unanimously approved an action to advocate for restoration of this funding.

In 1999, through Public Act 00-187, the State of Connecticut formally recognized the importance of technology for our education system. The Connecticut Commission for Educational Technology was established and launched the Connecticut Education Network. A choice was made to be on the vanguard of technology to ensure our children and citizens were as prepared as possible to embrace this evolving field. It was a prudent decision.

State leadership recognized that these technologies were absolutely required; yet having each entity pay for their own technology access was neither a cost effective nor an efficient use of limited resources. Pooling the funds to provide an actively-managed, centralized service was the best way to meet the goals of the day and prepare for emerging technology needs of tomorrow.

Since that time, the State has provided national leading capabilities to our schools and libraries. The investments we have made have leveled the playing field for the entire state and removed the obstacle of *ability to pay* from consideration when discussing how to bring educational opportunities to our citizens.

Indeed this investment has allowed Connecticut to stay ahead of the technology curve and introduce new methods of learning and assessment with relative ease. Our schools have been able to undertake one-to-one technology initiatives such as rolling out laptops, iPads and Chromebooks because our students have sufficient resources to access the internet. When the State rolled out online testing for students, there were no substantial technology issues because CEN was already leveraged to provide access.

Schools have used the network to share technology that they could not afford on their own. The Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology provides access to high-end computer modeling, CADD, and 3D manufacturing capabilities that none of our technical high schools would be able to afford or support on their own. This emerging technology is the future of manufacturing and crucial to the future economic development of this State. The Connecticut Education Network connects our schools to this important resource.

Local libraries have leveraged the network to become the digital *town green* where members of the community gather to learn and experiment with technology that they could not otherwise access on their own. The Booth-Dimock Library in Coventry, for example, uses the network to provide access to 3D printing technologies.

The Commission understands that the State is facing extremely difficult economic times; however, we also recognize that we cannot abruptly eliminate funding for CEN and shift the responsibility to pay for this critical asset to municipalities and libraries that have not been planning for this additional expense. Removing this funding without careful planning to allow for replacement with alternative sources will irreparably disrupt the value CEN delivers and the investments made to date.

Technology is the cornerstone of this State's progress. There is no segment of the economy that does not rely on technology to improve efficiency and broaden its reach. Our schools, libraries, research institutions and increasingly, our municipalities, are leveraging technology to share scarce resources. This unique network treasure ties our communities together and its value cannot be understated.

Just as transportation infrastructure is required for the State to remain competitive in moving goods across our state, the Connecticut Education Network is equally important in moving the critical resource of knowledge. Through the shared resources of CEN, our students stay abreast of technology, our library patrons learn skills that close the digital divide, and our municipalities remain vibrant by providing meaningful services that allow our communities to thrive.

We strongly urge that through your continued budget deliberations, you consider supporting sustained funding for the Connecticut Commission on Education Technology to avert this potentially devastating impact of this reduction and ensure the continued success of our State's educational future.

Respectfully,

Mark Raymond

Mark Raymond, Commission Chair
Chief Information Officer
Department of Administrative Services - Bureau of Enterprise Services and Technology
On behalf of the Connecticut Commission on Education Technology Membership

Cc: Benjamin Barnes, Secretary, Office of Policy and Management

Connecticut Commission on Education Technology Membership:

Mark Raymond, Commission Chair, Chief Information Officer, Department of Administrative Services

Nick Caruso, Senior Staff Associate, Connecticut Association of Boards of Education

Tom Dillon, Founder, Flagship Networks, Speaker of the House

John Elsesser, Town Manager, Town of Coventry, Connecticut Council of Small Towns

Russell Feinmark, Speaker of the House

Kathy Giotsas, West Haven Library, Connecticut Library Association

Judy Greiman, President, Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges

Kristy Hughes, University of Connecticut

Jeff Kitching, Superintendent, Plainville Schools, Office of the Governor

Rich Mavrogeanes, President, Discover Video, Pro Tempore of the Senate

James Mindek, State Department of Education

Michael Mundrane, Chief Information Officer, University of Connecticut

Lisa Pellegrini, First Selectman of Somers, Minority Leader of the Senate

Scott Shanley, General Manager, Town of Manchester, Connecticut Conference on Municipalities

Catherine Smith, Commissioner, Department of Economic and Community Development

Bart Stanco, Chief Information Officer, Gartner Group, Office of the Governor

William J. Vallee, Jr., State Broadband Policy Coordinator, Consumer Counsel

John Vittner, Director, Office of Policy and Management

Kendall Wiggin, State Librarian, Connecticut State Library

Scott Zak, Director of IS Applications, Board of Regents