



THE BOARD REPORT



2004-2005: Issue 5

April–June 2005

The following is a summary of the April, May and June meetings of the State Board of Education.

CONDITION OF EDUCATION IN CONNECTICUT

The Board received a draft copy of the *Condition of Education* report, which is organized around the framework of the Educational Learning Initiatives for Excellence (EdLIFE). The report responds to four questions: (1) Who are we teaching? (2) Who is teaching? (3) What and how are we teaching? and (4) How well are we teaching?

The *Condition* provides a status report on education throughout Connecticut, with an emphasis on the Education Reference Group I school districts (Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport, Waterbury, New Britain, New London and Windham). Contained in the report are data on public school enrollment, special education, pre-kindergarten experience, English language learners, minority student and staff, staffing quality indicators, the Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) Program, amount of instructional time, the availability of computers, family resource centers, choice programs, revenue sources, expenditures, standardized test data (including the Connecticut Mastery Test, Connecticut Academic Performance Test, National Assessment of Educational Progress, Scholastic Achievement Test, Advanced Placement), physical fitness, and dropout rates.

The document will be completed during the summer months and will be disseminated at the Commissioner's Back-to-School meeting in August.

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT ON CONNECTICUT STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Commissioner Sternberg presented to the Board a report titled, "Setting the Record Straight on Connecticut Student Achievement." The report acknowledges achievement gaps among subgroups of Connecticut students, but provides evidence of those gaps closing, based on 2000-2004 Connecticut Mastery Test data. Some of the findings include:

- From 2000 to 2004, the achievement of regular education, non-English-language-learners in Education Reference Group (ERG) I (which includes the state's largest cities and school districts with the highest concentrations of minority students) increased at a much faster rate than the achievement of students in ERGs A-H.
- In this same time period, the achievement of black and Hispanic students statewide increased at much faster rates (especially in grades 6 and 8) than the achievement of white students.

Commissioner Sternberg concluded, "These trends correlate with an influx of funds into new and ongoing state programs designed to increase the achievement of students at risk. High-quality programs are making a difference in closing the achievement gaps in Connecticut."

She also called to the Board's attention the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results that show that the performance gap between white and black students in Connecticut is essentially the same as other states, but one must keep in mind that the "ceiling" of performance in Connecticut is higher than that of any other state. The Commissioner spoke of the importance of not losing sight of the need to focus on improving the achievement of all our students.

CONNECTICUT VANGUARD SCHOOLS INITIATIVE

The Vanguard Schools Initiative was developed by the Department in partnership with the Connecticut Business and Industry Association to identify and recognize successful schools and to allow them to share and replicate their successful improvement strategies with other schools. This public/private partnership focuses on schools that have (a) adopted effective school improvement strategies; (b) determined the steps needed to implement those strategies; and have made the choices that enabled those strategies to succeed; and (c) converted their findings into a system of practical, useful tools and services for school leadership teams. A school might be considered a Vanguard School if it is a high performing school (i.e., 80 percent of its students are at or above goal in all three areas on state assessments for two or more years; or if it is a significantly improving school. A significantly improving school is one that demonstrates a consistent trend toward increasing the percentage of students at or above goal/proficiency in all three areas of state assessments for two or more consecutive years.

The benefits of becoming a Vanguard School include a \$15,000 award for discretionary use to continue implementing best practices as well as a \$5,000 award to share best practices with schools in need of improvement. In addition, recognition will be given to these schools at the state, regional and local levels. Schools will have the opportunity to present at a statewide best practice conference scheduled in 2006.

2004 CONNECTICUT MASTERY TEST (CMT) RESULTS

Commissioner Sternberg presented an overview of the statewide results on the 2004 CMT, the fifth and final administration of the third generation of CMT. Two trends emerged: (1) from 2000 to 2004, the participation rate of students on the CMT assessment significantly increased statewide. Two subgroups, in particular, had significant increases in their participation rate: students with disabilities' participation increased by 29 percentage points; and English language learners (ELLs) increased by 60 percentage points. "These increases resulted from the Department's and local school districts longstanding efforts to have more students take the CMT, and requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act," Commissioner Sternberg noted. She added that the State Department of Education believes these students should be tested at their instructional level, rather than at their grade level. She explained that she has requested that this change in practice be allowed, but it has been denied by the United States Department of Education.

The second key finding is an inconsistent pattern of either increased or decreased achievement across all subject areas and grade levels when analyzing the results of the total test-taking student population. This can be attributed to the significant change in the composition of students taking the test from year to year, due to NCLB requirements.

POSITION STATEMENT ON PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING EDUCATION, PRE-KINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE 12

The Board adopted a Position Statement on Principles Underlying Education, Pre-kindergarten through Grade 12. The statement sets forth those principles that the Board believes form the foundation for educating all students in Connecticut's public schools, regardless of a student's age, grade level or school configuration. The Board maintains, "All of Connecticut's school communities must function with a unity of purpose toward the growth, development and achievement of all students." The principles, listed below, should be reflected in the education our students receive in all our schools.

- ✎ Schools must provide challenging and rigorous programs of study to all students to prepare them to become fully educated, responsible citizens.
- ✎ Schools must be places where important and relevant learning takes place.
- ✎ Students must be taught in the ways that are most effective for them.
- ✎ Schools must link curriculum and instruction to ongoing assessment.
- ✎ Schools must recognize every student as a unique and contributing member of the school community.
- ✎ Schools must engage families and community members to be active and committed partners in the education of all children.

The statement has been disseminated to all superintendents and local boards of education for their consideration. The position statement is accessible via the Department's website at www.state.ct.us/sde.

RECOGNITION OF EXCELLENCE

OUTSTANDING CAREER AND TECHNICAL STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

The Board was pleased to have the opportunity to recognize the following career and technical student organizations award recipients for their outstanding community service projects:

- ✍ An Association of Marketing Students at Shelton High School, for sending baked goods to our troops overseas during the holiday season;
- ✍ Future Business Leaders of America at Southington High School, for planning and hosting the Annual Senior Citizens' Dance;
- ✍ Family, Career and Community Leaders of America at Thurgood Marshal Middle School, Bridgeport, for raising money for the American Cancer Society;
- ✍ Future Farmers of America, an association of agriculture education students at Lyman Hall High School in Wallingford, for its fundraising efforts to support students who traveled to Leon for the purpose of distributing supplies and plantings for two schools; and
- ✍ Technology Student Association (TSA) at Hall Memorial Middle School in Willington, for building and selling playhouses to support students with limited financial resources to participate in TSA conferences and activities.

STARS OF EDUCATION DISTINGUISHED STUDENT AWARD

The Board recognized Jimmy Tickey, a senior at Shelton High School, who earned the "Stars of Education Distinguished Student Award" issued by the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium. Mr. Tickey was the only high school student selected from the United States, based on his academic and career technical achievement, leadership and volunteerism.

OUTSTANDING EDUCATORS

The Board was pleased to have the opportunity to recognize the following individuals:

Teachers-in-Residence, Beginning Educator Support and Training Program

- ✍ Pamela B. Hogarth, a special education teacher in the Guilford Public Schools;
- ✍ Jack Rose, a mathematics teacher in Regional School District No. 4; and
- ✍ Joan Golden, a physical education teacher in the Hartford Public Schools.

Teachers-in-residence are released from their school districts to assist the State Department of Education in developing and implementing enhanced standards for new professionals entering Connecticut's schools. These individuals work on standards, instruction and assessment projects with state personnel, teachers from across the state, and national experts. They also present workshops and clinics to experienced educators around the state and make presentations at national conferences and to state and national professional organizations.

Leaders-in-Residence, Connecticut State Department of Education School Improvement Unit

- ✍ Denise G. Malnati, a K-12 art liaison and high school art teacher in the Windsor Public Schools

Modeled after the Teachers-in-Residence Program, the leaders work on standards, instruction and assessment projects with state personnel, teachers and leaders from across the state. They play important roles in developing professional development activities for principals and their school leadership teams to support the work around school improvement planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

National Board Certification

- ✍ Hetal Radia, an elementary school teacher at Bear Path School in Hamden;
- ✍ Brenda Berardy, a library media specialist at Windsor High School;
- ✍ Beverly Johnsen, a science teacher at Newtown Middle School;
- ✍ Todd Williams, a social studies teacher at Joseph A. Foran High School in Milford;
- ✍ Kim Lowell, a science teacher at Newtown High School;
- ✍ Veronica Ruzek, a social studies teacher at Newington High School;
- ✍ Barbara Trinks, a special education teacher at Windsor High School;
- ✍ Rosemarie Lacobelle, an elementary school teacher at Calf Pen Meadow School in Milford;
- ✍ Amity Goss, an elementary school teacher at Kathleen E. Goodwin School in Old Saybrook;

National Board Certification (continued)

- ✍ Rachael Manzer, a science teacher at Granby Memorial Middle School;
- ✍ Shawna Dionne, a mathematics teacher at Harborside Middle School in Milford;
- ✍ Pauline Reale, a reading-language arts teacher at Clover Street School in Windsor;
- ✍ Laurel Richie, a social studies teacher at Rocky Hill High School;
- ✍ Amy Fedigan, a world language teacher at Harborside Middle School in Milford; and
- ✍ Michael Maheu, an elementary school teacher at Southeast School in Mansfield.

These individuals achieved National Board Certification, a rigorous year-long performance assessment process required by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. The National Board was created in 1987 to improve student learning and strengthen the teaching profession through the development of a system of advanced, voluntary certification for teachers who wish to earn recognition for their accomplished teaching. Participants find the experience to be the most challenging and comprehensive professional development they have ever engaged in, and one that promotes self-reflection and continuous improvement in their teaching and in their students' learning.

GED Scholar

- ✍ Andrew Bradley was recognized for earning the highest score on the 2004 administration of the GED in Connecticut and the highest score since the inception of this award. Mr. Bradley scored 3980 of a possible 4000 points. He prepared for the exam through the Vernon Regional Adult Education Program.

STUDENT MEMBERS OF STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Best wishes to Tori Hendrix of Thomaston and Callan Walsh of Wilton, who served as the student members of the State Board of Education from July 1, 2004, through June 30, 2005. The Board adopted a formal resolution in recognition of the students' contributions during the past year, and wished them continued success in their educational pursuits.

RESIGNATION OF DEPUTY COMMISSIONER

The Board accepted with regret Deputy Commissioner John Ramos' resignation, effective June 5, 2005, and wished him great success in his new role as the Superintendent of the Bridgeport Public School System.

CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION: FRANKLIN ACADEMY

The Board renewed the Certificate of Exemption for Franklin Academy, a non-special education residential facility located in East Haddam. A certificate of exemption permits the operation of such a facility, but is not the equivalent to State Board of Education approval of a school. The school offers boarding and day options for students with nonverbal learning disabilities (NLD). NLD is not recognized by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or by Connecticut law as a disability entitling a student to special education and related services. Franklin Academy, completing its second year of operation, is currently a candidate for accreditation with the New England Association of Schools and Colleges and will work toward attaining state approval through NEASC accreditation.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT PROGRAM

The Board reviewed data on Connecticut's participation in the Advanced Placement (AP) Program, an intensive program of 34 college-level courses and examinations sponsored by The College Board. Connecticut ranked second nationally in participation of comprehensive public high schools. One hundred forty seven of 154 comprehensive and charter high schools took an AP exam in May 2004. The number of public school test takers has almost tripled in the past ten years, from 4,353 to 12,857, although some schools had no students who took an AP examination. These include five comprehensive public high schools, 14 of the 17 state technical high schools, the three charter high schools, one magnet school with students in Grade 12, and 8 alternative high schools. Connecticut public schools have had a consistently higher percentage of students with scores of three or better than public school students nationwide since the data were first available in 1978-79. 71.4 percent of Connecticut's public school students earned scores of 3 or more compared with 59.7 percent of public school students nationwide. Further, Connecticut ranked third in the nation in the percentage of public high school students scoring 3 or more. In May 2004, 25.6 percent of Connecticut public school graduates planning to attend four-year colleges earned a score of 3 or more on an

AP test that they took in high school, and 14.7 percent of our public school graduates earned a score of 3 or more on an AP test that they took during high school.

An examination of five popular AP tests reveals that Connecticut non-public students outperform public school students on all five tests, and Connecticut public school students outperform public school students nationally on all tests except Spanish. While the number of public school minority students taking an AP exam increased significantly in the past ten years (from 609 to 2,402), minorities represented 26.9 percent of all public school Grade 11 and 12 students in 2003-04, but only 18.7 percent of AP test takers. The number of students from Education Reference Group (ERG) I schools taking an AP exam increased from 585 in 1999 to 1,235 in 2004, a 111% growth, but only 33.5 percent earned a score of 3 or more, compared with 71.4 percent statewide.

The following districts were commended for AP program growth: Harding High School in Bridgeport; Danbury High, Fairfield High, Farmington High, Lyman Memorial High in Lebanon, Newtown High, Plainville High, Shelton High, Mark T. Sheehan High in Wallingford, Woodland High in Region 16, and Woodstock Academy. Also recognized were those schools that demonstrated AP program emerging growth – a 400% growth over five years, starting with ten or fewer students. These include James Hillhouse High School in New Haven, New London High and Valley Regional High in Region 4.

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE HARTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

The formal eight-year relationship between the Connecticut State Department of Education and the Hartford Public Schools is scheduled to end in December 2005. While recognizing areas in which the Department has seen positive results (i.e., community involvement and support; leadership and governance, curriculum and instruction, magnet schools, and student achievement in a few of the schools), Commissioner Sternberg stated that, "If the bottom line is improvement in student achievement for all of Hartford's students – and it must be – then we simply haven't seen enough."

"In order to ensure success, we must focus on eight key elements," Dr. Sternberg noted. "The SDE-Hartford partnership can work if we identify factors that have led to improved student achievement in some Hartford schools, continue to build upon them and find ways to replicate or adapt successful programs at other schools. Further, we need to examine existing resources and identify new ones to support programs that we know will significantly help improve student achievement. Our focus should remain on preschool, family resource centers, support and incentives for educators in Hartford, mentors for new teachers, high quality leadership, regular use of computers and web resources in the classroom; allowing principals to staff their schools with teachers who work effectively and in accordance with the philosophy of that school, and more time for learning – a longer school day and year." She concluded by noting that the same joint effort must go into the other communities where the same "educational underclass" would benefit from such assistance. These include Bridgeport, New Britain, New Haven, New London, Waterbury and Windham.

The Board approved the June 2005 *Report on Progress in the Hartford Public Schools*, for transmittal to the Governor, Education Committee of the General Assembly, the Hartford City Council and the Hartford Board of Education.

Superintendent Robert Henry and Board Chairman Robert Long expressed their support for the partnership and their hopes that the school system will continue to improve.

POSITION STATEMENT ON PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE

The Board adopted a revised Position Statement on Public School Choice. The statement supports the need to sustain a variety of educational options to meet the varied needs of Connecticut's students, and to encourage local and regional support for public school choice. The Board maintains that choice options "offer a creative and flexible environment that values each student's unique abilities, talents, interests, learning styles and backgrounds." Some of the major public school choice programs currently in operation are school readiness programs, interdistrict magnet schools, public charter schools, the Open Choice program, interdistrict cooperative grant programs, Connecticut's technical high schools, and regional vocational-agriculture centers.

This statement has been disseminated to all superintendents and local school boards and has been posted on the Department's website at www.state.ct.us/sde.

**REPORT ON COST OF IMPLEMENTING THE FEDERAL NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT
IN CONNECTICUT: LOCAL LEVEL COSTS**

The Board received a report on the costs to local school districts to implement the requirements of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. The costs to three school districts of different sizes, types and socioeconomic characteristics (Hamden, Killingly and New Haven) are highlighted in the report. Key findings of the report include:

- o To meet all the specific requirements of NCLB, the three sample local school districts will have to commit additional resources in staff time and actual dollar outlay through FY 2008;
- o The most costly requirement of NCLB at the local level is the set of responsibilities related to Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Hamden would need to spend \$6.8 million, Killingly \$2.7 million, and New Haven \$63.6 million in order to meet AYP responsibilities.
- o The second most costly requirement at the local level pertains to Responsibilities for Districts with Schools Identified for Improvement and for Districts Identified for Improvement. Hamden would incur \$2.3 million, Killingly \$1.5 million and New Haven \$33.9 million in meeting such requirements.

The report was prepared in compliance with Public Act 04-254, requiring the Commissioner of Education and the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management to analyze the costs associated with compliance with mandates imposed by the NCLB. The report was forwarded to the Education Committee of the General Assembly.

AUTHORIZATION OF STATE CHARTER SCHOOL ENROLLMENT FOR 2005-06 SCHOOL YEAR

The Board authorized a net increase of 263 seats for charter schools for the 2005-06 school year. This would bring the total enrollment to 2,944 seats in all existing charter schools. This number will provide for an expansion of enrollment in current grades and the addition of a grade at the New Beginnings Charter School, two grades at the Elm City College Preparatory School, and one grade at Odyssey Community School. The Board's action is contingent on the final state budget for charter schools.

**STATE CHARTER SCHOOLS:
PARK CITY PREP CHARTER SCHOOL, BRIDGEPORT
CONNECTICUT ACADEMY OF MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE, HARTFORD
ACADEMY OF DESTINY, BLOOMFIELD
CROSS CULTURAL ACADEMY OF ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY, HARTFORD**

The Board approved four new charter schools, contingent upon funding by the General Assembly and each school meeting several conditions prior to opening. The Park City Prep Charter School in Bridgeport will serve predominantly Bridgeport students from Grades 6 through 8. Its mission is "to dramatically improve academic achievement and raise aspirations of inner-city, African American and Latino middle school students, communities historically underrepresented in the fields of science, technology and math, through a rigorous, science and math-oriented curriculum." The Connecticut Academy of Mathematics and Science Charter School in Hartford will serve predominantly Hartford students in Grades 6-12 to "provide challenges and opportunities for students and to instill the necessary skills and knowledge needed for the rest of their lives." The Cross Cultural Academy of Arts and Technology is a proposed school that will serve Grades 5-6. The student population would consist of approximately 50 percent primarily of color, urban students and 50 percent primarily white suburban students. The mission is to prepare these students to be leaders and lifelong achievers in a multiracial, multicultural world through the development and application of artistic and critical thinking skills in "real world" problem-solving tasks. The Academy of Destiny Charter School in Bloomfield would serve approximately 200 students in pre-kindergarten through Grade 8. One half of the students would come from Bloomfield, 20 percent from Windsor, 20 percent from Hartford and 10 percent from area towns. The school's mission is to promote high academic achievement, leadership and citizenship.

OPENING NEW CHARTER SCHOOLS: PRIORITY ORDER

The Board approved the following priority order in opening new charter schools:

1. Cross Cultural Academy of Arts and Technology, Hartford
2. Park City Prep, Bridgeport
3. Connecticut Academy of Mathematics and Science, Hartford
4. Academy of Destiny Charter School, Bloomfield

This action is contingent on authorization of funding by the General Assembly and each school's compliance with all statutory and State Board of Education requirements.

REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CENTER (RESC) FUNDS

State statute requires that 6.25 percent of the 2005-06 funds appropriated to each of the RESCs be used to provide regional interdistrict activities reducing racial, ethnic and economic isolation. The Board designed that such funds be used to support interdistrict magnet schools operated by the RESCs, the Open Choice Program, professional development for teachers; minority teacher recruitment activities; and data collection and analysis of school districts' efforts to reduce isolation.

EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAM: UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAVEN

The Board extended program approval to the teacher preparation graduate programs at the University of New Haven through September 30, 2007.

The extension was granted in consideration of significant staff changes at the university. Dr. Jacqueline Jacoby, recently hired as Chair of the Education Department at the University of New Haven, is working to develop and implement a vision for the department that aligns with the NCATE performance-based standards adopted by the state in 2003. The extension will allow the university to present a more detailed, comprehensive picture of the programs and the direction the department is pursuing.

MITCHELL COLLEGE TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM

The Board extended full program approval to the Mitchell College undergraduate early childhood education program (Nursery-Grade 3) for the period September 30, 2006, to January 31, 2007. The extension will support the Department's efforts to stagger accreditation visits and will allow time to train visiting team members in the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards and processes.

ALBERTUS MAGNUS COLLEGE – TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM

The Board approved for a two-year period a new educator preparation program at Albertus Magnus College in New Haven. The school will offer initial programs in art, middle grades (general science, English, history/social studies, mathematics, Spanish) and secondary education (general science, English, history/social studies, Spanish, mathematics, biology, chemistry and business).

EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAM: SACRED HEART

The Board granted full program approval for the period September 30, 2005, through September 30, 2008, to the educator preparation programs at Sacred Heart University. The Board's action took into consideration the 2005 Sacred Heart University interim report and findings of the visiting team during an on-site accreditation visit to the university. The visiting team found that the university had made significant progress in addressing the findings of a 2003 visiting team in the following areas: sequencing of fieldwork and clinical experiences; opportunities for teacher candidates to experience diverse classrooms; diversity of faculty and student population; integration of the Connecticut Common Core of Teaching and Learning into courses, syllabi and fieldwork experiences; faculty-student ratios; administrative support; and affirmative action plans.

EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAM: UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD

The Board granted full program approval for the period September 30, 2005, through September 30, 2010, to the educator preparation programs at the University of Hartford.

The Board's action took into consideration the 2005 University of Hartford interim report and findings of the visiting team during an on-site accreditation visit to the university. The visiting team found that the university had made significant progress in addressing the findings of a 2002 visiting team in the following areas: candidate knowledge, skills and dispositions; assessment systems and unit evaluation; field experiences and clinical practice; diversity; faculty qualifications, performance and development; and unit governance and resources.

REPORT ON RACIAL IMBALANCE

The State Board of Education is required by state law to notify any local board of education which has one or more schools which are racially imbalanced, as determined by the State Department of Education. The Board is also required to notify any local board of education which has one or more schools having impending racial imbalance. One new school (Buckley School in Manchester) was cited. The four others which appear on the list were cited previously and have submitted plans to correct the imbalance or have been recognized by the Commissioner as “unique” schools and, therefore, are exempt from filing a plan.

Greenwich continues to operate the Hamilton Avenue School under the plan approved by the State Board in 2000, and West Hartford, which was recognized by the Commissioner as having unique schools, continues to operate an internal magnet school program. The Groton Board of Education’s plan to correct racial imbalance in the Eastern Point School was approved by the Board in 2004. The Department continues to monitor the racial imbalance in these schools on an annual basis.

ESTIMATING THE COST OF AN ADEQUATE EDUCATION IN CONNECTICUT

Representatives of the firm Augenblick, Palaich and Associates (APA) presented the findings of their study on the adequacy of funding for education in Connecticut. The firm was hired in the fall of 2004 by the Connecticut Coalition for Justice in Education Funding (CCJEF), a group comprised of mayors, education interest groups and other interested parties. The study was conducted to estimate the cost that school districts face to meet specific state standards and expectations and to estimate a base cost figure and adjustments to that figure for special needs students. Other cost related factors (district size and cost of living) were also examined. The results were then applied to characteristics of individual districts.

In conducting its work, APA drew upon two well-established data gathering and analysis techniques: the successful school district (SSD) approach; and a “professional judgment” (PJ) approach. The SSD approach determines a base, per-student cost by examining the spending of school districts that successfully meet state performance standards, and offers an important view of the present-day spending of successful schools. However, it does not include added cost adjustments required for special education, English language learners or at-risk students.

The PJ approach relied on input from panelists (experienced educators and education service experts) regarding the resources needed for different size schools and districts to educate their students to meet state and federal performance expectations. This approach is used largely to examine the future costs of districts in meeting performance standards.

The researchers identified a “starting base,” per student cost based on the size and needs of the district, as well as additional cost “weights” for students with special needs. The report can be accessed via www.ccjef.org.

REPORT ON PROGRAMS AND METHODS TO REDUCE RACIAL, ETHNIC AND ECONOMIC ISOLATION

The Board received a report on school districts’ efforts to reduce racial, ethnic and economic isolation, highlighting those opportunities for students to interact with students and teachers from other racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds. The report contains information on districts’ participation in the six interdistrict choice programs funded by the State of Connecticut. These include interdistrict magnet schools, charter schools, the Open Choice Program, interdistrict cooperative grants, technical high schools and vocational agriculture centers. 469 students

participated in the Open Choice Program in 1997-98, compared with an estimated 1,685 in 2004-05; 3,506 students participated in the interdistrict magnet program in 1997-98, compared with an estimated 13,781 in 2004-05. The number of students participating in the interdistrict cooperative grant program declined, due to a 27 percent reduction in funding in 2001-02. Enrollment in this program has ranged from 60,000 in 1997-98 to 90,000 in 2000-01 to an estimated 47,968 in 2004-05. State funding for the Open Choice Program has increased from \$1.1 million in 1997-98 to \$10.6 million in 2004-05; from \$9.8 million for interdistrict magnets in 1997-98 to \$67.6 million in 2004-05; and \$10.5 million for interdistrict cooperative grant programs in 1997-98 to \$14.1 million in 2004-05. Other choice programs available to Connecticut's public school students include 14 charter schools, 17 technical high schools and 19 vocational agriculture centers.

The Board's commitment to public school choice options is expressed in its position statement on choice (April 2005), which states, in part, "The Connecticut State Board of Education is committed to ensuring the highest possible achievement level for every Connecticut student. This commitment is realized in schools that offer a creative and flexible environment that values each student's unique abilities, talents, interests, learning styles and backgrounds."

INTERDISTRICT MAGNET SCHOOLS AND PROGRAMS

The Department presented a report on interdistrict magnet schools and programs in Connecticut. These schools offer a variety of educational themes, including the visual and performing arts, science and technology, languages and international studies, character education and mathematics. Highlights of the report include the following:

- This fall 20 interdistrict magnet schools will be located in the Hartford region. Five of these schools have been opened in response to the Sheff v. O'Neill case, two more will open this fall and one is definitely being planned, and one tentatively for 2006.
- The New Haven region has 18 interdistrict magnet schools, Waterbury has 3 and the Bridgeport/Stamford area has 5. Three schools are located in the New London region and one magnet school is located in Windham. This spring, construction is scheduled for an elementary magnet school on the campus of Western Connecticut State University.
- Student participation has increased from 1,522 in 1995-96 to 13,783 in 2004-05.
- Magnet schools are typically far more racially diverse than the individual local or regional school districts from which they draw their students.
- Five new interdistrict schools are opening in 2005-06.

SPECIAL EDUCATION IN CONNECTICUT

The Board reviewed a report containing data on Connecticut's special education services (2003-2004). Highlights of the report follow.

Prevalence

The prevalence rate in Connecticut has been on the decline since its peak of 13.9 percent in 1995-96. 12.1 percent of the 565,375 Connecticut school children received special education and related services as of December 1, 2003. Preschool children with disabilities represent 6.8% of the general population of 3-5-year-olds in the state and 13% of the total special education population served. The total amount spent on special education (unaudited) in 2003-04 was \$1,183,108,216 (61.7 percent local funding; 30.4 percent state funding, 7.8 percent federal funding and 0.1 percent from other sources).

Achievement

Students with disabilities who participated in the standard administration of the CMT scored at or above proficient an average of 37 percent of the time across all content areas, compared with 82 percent for their non-disabled peers. Students with disabilities who participated in the standard administration of the CAPT scored at or above proficient an average of 43 percent of the time, compared with 85 percent for their non-disabled peers.

Department Goals

The Department will continue its efforts to reduce the achievement gap between students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers and expand access to general education classrooms, curriculum and extracurricular activities. In addition, the Department will seek ways to reduce the overrepresentation and identification of students with disabilities based on race/ethnicity and gender and to increase the number of early intervention programs to assist students at risk of being identified as in need of special education.

State Advisory Council for Special Education (SAC)

Dr. James Granfield, Chairperson of the SAC, summarized the Council's activities during the past year and planned activities in the coming year. The Council provides policy guidance concerning special education and related services for children with disabilities, in accordance with the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Key issues being addressed by the Council include:

- o the seamless coordination of services designed for adjudicated youth with disabilities;
- o teacher certification. The Council believes that "the licensing and endorsement of teachers requires a blended, integrated and unified system of preparation to meet the diverse learning needs of students"; and
- o appropriate assessment of special education children and youth. The Council recommended that the Department develop clear guidelines and criteria for participation in alternate assessments authorized under the U.S. Department's No Child Left Behind Act.

In addition to the areas cited above, the Council will focus its attention on the following areas in 2005-2006: (1) the promulgation of regulations for IDEA with a particular focus on the evolution of criteria for determining highly qualified teachers in special education; and (2) the Connecticut Technical High Schools and their practices for admitting, including and transitioning students with disabilities to adult life.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANT

The Board approved the Department's application to the United States Department of Education (USDE) for the Early Childhood Professional Development Grant. The Department requested \$3.75 million to support efforts to increase the language, literacy and numeracy content knowledge and teaching competencies of early childhood educators in three of the state's priority school district communities.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM GRANT

The Board approved the Department's application to the USDE for the Foreign Language Assistance Program Grant. It is anticipated that \$450,000 will be awarded over a three-year period. Funds will be used to expand the kindergarten through Grade 12 Mandarin Chinese programs, provide professional development for world language teachers and increase the development of world language instructional units.

"INTEGRATING SCHOOLS AND MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEMS" GRANT

The Board approved the Department's application for funds to the USDE for the "Integrating Schools and Mental Health Systems" grant. \$335,057 was requested to complement the Department's efforts to improve school district capacity to support students' mental health needs. The Department would use the funds to support training and technical assistance to partnering schools.

STATE PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT GRANT

The Board approved the Department's application to the USDE for the State Personnel Development Grant. The goal of this grant is to reform and improve Connecticut's system of personnel preparation and professional development in early intervention, educational and transition services in order to improve results for children with disabilities. The Department applied for \$5 million over a five-year period and will partner with the Department of Mental Retardation, Southern Connecticut State University, Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center, and the New Haven, Bridgeport, Hartford and Waterbury school districts.

IMPARTIAL HEARING BOARD FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION DUE PROCESS HEARINGS

The State Board of Education reappointed Christine B. Spak as a member of the impartial hearing board for special education due process hearings, for a four-year term beginning May 2005. State statute assigns impartial hearing officers or the hearing board with responsibility to confirm, modify or reject the identification, evaluation or educational placement of or the provision of a free appropriate public education to a child or pupil requiring, or who may require, special education and related services.

REVOCATION OF EDUCATOR CERTIFICATE RAYMOND J. ACEY

The Board voted unanimously to revoke the professional educator certificate of Raymond J. Acey, after accepting and adopting the findings of fact and proposed final decision prepared by Hearing Officer Ruben Acosta. Mr. Acey taught in the Southington Public Schools from 1979 to 2001 and served as a volunteer coach for the girls' basketball team from 1982-1985.

CONNECTICUT TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL SYSTEM (CTHSS)

Construction Projects

The Board approved the CTHSS Long-Range Comprehensive Strategic Educational Physical Plant Master Plan, which contained construction projects at Oliver Wolcott Technical High School in Torrington (\$44,117,000) and Vinal Technical High School in Middletown (\$51,076,000). These projects will be submitted for inclusion on the 2005-2006 school construction priority list.

Hartford School for Aviation Mechanics

The Board approved a proposed construction project and cost estimate for the Hartford School for Aviation Maintenance Technicians, to be constructed at Brainard Airport in Hartford. The existing program at H.H. Ellis Technical High School in Danielson will relocate to this new facility upon completion, sometime in 2007 or 2008. Relocation to Brainard Airport was recommended by the Trade Technology Advisory Committee members and is intended to better serve Connecticut's aerospace industry and its citizens.

Establishment of Marketing Management and Entrepreneurship Trade

The Board authorized the establishment of a marketing management and entrepreneurship trade for the period September 2005 through June 2010. This trade will prepare students for small business and retail operations, including skills in marketing applications, economic concepts, inventory, buying and pricing, promotion, selling, customer service, merchandising, advertising, communications and accounting and small business ownership. The new trade will be piloted at Norwich Technical High School due to the vibrant economy that is emerging in southeastern Connecticut.

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

(effective June 1, 2005)

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE Address: 165 Capitol Ave. Room 301 Hartford, CT 06106 Telephone: (860) 713-6510 Facsimile: (860) 713-7002 E-Mail: pamela.bergin@po.state.ct.us To obtain a copy of a report considered by the Board, please contact the Office of Communications 860-713-6526.	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS <i>Allan B. Taylor, Chairperson</i> <i>Janet M. Finneran, Vice Chairperson</i> <i>Beverly R. Bobroske</i> <i>Donald J. Coolican</i> <i>Lynne S. Farrell</i> <i>Theresa Hopkins-Staton</i> <i>Patricia B. Luke</i> <i>Timothy J. McDonald</i> <i>Tori Hendrix, student member</i> <i>Callan Walsh, student member</i> <i>Betty J. Sternberg, Secretary</i> <i>Valerie Lewis, ex officio</i>
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MARK YOUR CALENDAR: The Board adopted the following meeting schedule for 2006:

January 4	May 3	October 4
February 1	June 7	November 1
March 1	August 2	December 6
April 5	September 6	

NOTE: The Board will meet on Wednesday, September 7, 2005, at the State Office Building in Hartford, 165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, Connecticut. The meeting will begin at 9:30 a.m. in Room 307A/B.

The Board Report is published monthly and is posted on the Department's Internet site (<http://www.state.ct.us/sde>). It provides a summary of matters considered by the State Board of Education at its regular monthly meetings. The Department welcomes comments and suggestions concerning the format and content of ***The Board Report***. Please submit your comments to Pamela V. Bergin, Office of the State Board of Education, 165 Capitol Avenue, Room 301, Hartford, CT 06106, or pamela.bergin@po.state.ct.us.