



THE BOARD REPORT



2003-2004: Issue 4

February and March 2004

The following is a summary of the February 4 and March 3, 2004, meetings of the State Board of Education.

WATERBURY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM AND NEW BRITAIN PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

At its August 2003 retreat, the State Board of Education decided to invite representatives of each of the Education Reference Group (ERG) I districts to attend a board meeting in the 2003-04 school year to discuss their district's performance and needs. The presenters were asked to respond to a series of questions sent to them in advance and to summarize for the Board progress made and areas that continue to need improvement in their school systems. In addition, districts were asked to reflect on what assistance from the state would help them achieve their goals. Representatives of the Waterbury Public Schools presented to the Board in February. Representatives of the New Britain Public Schools presented to the Board at its March meeting. Below are key points raised during their presentations.

NEW BRITAIN

Representing the New Britain Public Schools were Superintendent of Schools Doris Kurtz, Board of Education President Paul Amenta and Board Member Frances Wolski. Dr. Kurtz stated that upon her arrival in New Britain three years ago, she "jolted" the school system, with the full support of her board. She discussed the urgency of identifying the school system's needs and carefully aligning resources and policies to address those needs. The district's vision statement serves as the basis for all decisions concerning financial and human resources. It reads, *"To promote and sustain a culture and safe and secure learning environment that builds capacity in leaders, faculty and parents to improve academic achievement, equipping all students with the necessary aspirations, knowledge, and skills to successfully complete college and be lifelong learners."*

One focal point of her administration, she continued, is recognition and understanding of the student population being served, and educating board members, administrators and teachers accordingly. Dr. Kurtz emphasized her belief that all students can, must and will learn at high levels, and she insists that all instructional strategies and programs support this belief. One initiative undertaken to do so was the establishment of the House of Arts, Letters and Sciences, a program designed to promote high expectations and motivate students to reach their potential. In addition, innovative approaches to prevent student

failure and intervention strategies to help those who fall behind are a high priority.

New Britain purchased a curriculum instrument showing standards and how frequently each is measured; this will be applied to all grades and all subjects and will assist in meeting the educational needs of a highly mobile student population. Dr. Kurtz noted that the Roadmap to Learning is a standards-based delivery system, adding that since every district has its own culture and challenges, the Roadmap needs to be individualized to accommodate those unique characteristics (student needs, teacher talent, leadership style). She addressed the need to develop sustainable leadership at all levels—including teachers, administrators and parents.

The New Britain Public Schools cover the cost of the PSAT and AP tests for students, and give savings bonds to students who perform well. Other incentives offered to improve student behavior and academic performance include membership in the Honor Society or the Society for Young Scholars, a recognition ceremony for students reaching the goal level in all three areas of the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT), issuance of a gift certificate to the school store for students who meet a certain standard on the CMT or Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT), and giving movie tickets to "Rising Stars." Mrs. Wolski remarked, "The number of students earning recognition before Dr.

Kurtz became superintendent was small. The numbers have grown substantially since she became superintendent, as a result of the increased focus on the importance of academic achievement.”

Dr. Kurtz noted her concern with the level of local financial support, adding that it leaves very few discretionary dollars in the general fund and causes the system to rely heavily on grants. When asked how the Department can assist New Britain, Dr. Kurtz responded that it would be helpful to receive

model curriculums linked to the Department’s curriculum standards. She added that increased flexibility in determining how to use funds to best meet district educational needs, fewer forms to complete, and collaboration with other state agencies on information gathering and use of data would enable school officials to devote more time and energy to education.

WATERBURY

Waterbury Superintendent of Schools David Snead introduced Mayor Michael Jarjura. Mayor Jarjura stated, “There is no more important task than to educate our nearly 18,000 students in Waterbury.” Also joining the panel were Assistant Superintendent Paul Sequera, Assistant Superintendent Ann Cullinan and Chief Financial Officer Paul Guidone. Waterbury is home to approximately 100,000 citizens. The largest student population group is Hispanic (39.8 percent), followed by 31 percent white, 26.7 percent black, 2.1 percent Asian, and .4 percent Native American. Waterbury’s rental rates appeal to young families who cannot afford to live elsewhere. This accounts for a substantial increase in enrollment since 1995-96 (from 14,290 to nearly 18,000 today).

Superintendent Snead acknowledged improvement in Waterbury’s CMT and CAPT scores, and emphasized the school system’s high expectations for all students. These expectations are reflected in the district’s referral to students requiring additional assistance as “students at promise” as opposed to “students at risk.” One districtwide initiative that has benefited Waterbury students is the “Curriculum on the Wall,” a system in use in every grade and in every classroom. Daily objectives are posted on the board and carefully explained to students. Its counterpart, “Discipline on the Wall,” clearly states the school system’s expectations in terms of classroom behavior and assists the school system in its efforts to provide an atmosphere conducive to learning.

Other strategies that have been successful in improving student achievement include hiring a researcher who provided assistance to principals in interpreting test data, incorporating common planning times into the school year, increased academic time via programs such as the Saturday Academy and summer school programs, the use of student portfolios to assess performance, and providing a full-day kindergarten program.

Dr. Snead described how the school system intends to use a \$1.4 million “Smaller Learning Communities Grant” to assist with the transition of Grade 8 students into high school. Funds will be used to establish Grade 9 Academies at all three comprehensive high schools where smaller learning communities strategies will be applied (e.g., teacher advisors, academic teaming, career academies). To improve parental involvement, the district recently hired 23 parent liaisons – one for each elementary and middle school – and provides these employees with professional development.

In response to the Department’s question concerning how it could be of greater assistance to Waterbury, officials replied that additional on-site technical assistance, increased professional development opportunities, assistance in analyzing the needs of individual schools, and providing standardized tests in several languages to accommodate students who are new to the country would be beneficial.

APPOINTMENT OF ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER DIVISION OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

The Board appointed Frances M. Rabinowitz as Associate Commissioner, Division of Teaching, Learning and Assessment. Ms. Rabinowitz came to the Department in 2001 from the Bridgeport Public School System, where she was a teacher and served in senior executive positions from 1972 until 2001. She has extensive experience in curriculum design and development, and in working with priority school districts. She was responsible for the development and oversight of professional development, teacher and administrator orientation programs, and professional staff evaluation. Prior to being named Associate Commissioner, Ms. Rabinowitz served as the Department’s Chief of the Bureau of Curriculum and Instruction and, since November 2002, as Acting Associate Commissioner.

APPROVAL OF ELM CITY COLLEGE PREPARATORY CHARTER SCHOOL

The Board granted approval of a state charter to the Elm City College Preparatory School (ECCP) for a two- year period subject to the following conditions: (1) funding from the General Assembly (in addition to any funding the Department receives which is earmarked for expansion of existing charter schools); (2) receipt of documentation related to facility requirements, including safety, liability and insurance certificates; and (3) receipt of governance documentation related to incorporation status and identification of governing board officers. The two-year approval will expire if, at the end of that time, the school does not open.

ECCP will serve New Haven students from kindergarten through Grade 8, phased in over a four-year period. It will build upon and seek to replicate the performance of Amistad Academy, a public charter middle school in New Haven.

ECCP's primary mission is to strengthen the academic and character skills needed for all students to excel in the top tier of high schools and colleges, to achieve success in a competitive world, and to serve as the next generation of leaders in their community.

CABE/CAPSS SCHOOL GOVERNANCE POSITION STATEMENT

Dr. David Larson, Executive Director of the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents, Mr. Robert Rader, Executive Director of the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE), and Mary Broderick, CABE President, presented their organizations' joint position statement on school governance. The position statement communicates expectations for superintendent and local board of education working relationships and delineates board, superintendent and joint responsibilities.

ADOPTION OF POSITION STATEMENT ON LANGUAGE ARTS

The Board adopted a Position Statement on Language Arts, developed by the Board's Policy Development Committee. The statement reads in part, "The language arts are unique among the subjects because the underlying domains – reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing – include skills and competencies that are applied to learning in all of the disciplines." The statement describes the roles that teachers, schools, parents and educator preparation programs play in ensuring a quality language arts education. A copy is attached to this issue of The Board Report and has been posted on the Department's website (www.state.ct.us/sde/).

RECOGNITION OF TEACHERS WHO ACHIEVED NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION

The Board congratulated 21 teachers who are among the most recent group of teachers in the country to achieve National Board Certification. They join 70 Connecticut educators and 32,138 teachers nationwide who successfully completed the rigorous, yearlong performance assessment process required by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Receiving recognition for this significant accomplishment were:

Brian Beckius, E.O. Smith High School, Storrs
Arlene Buckwalter, West Shore Middle School, Milford
Jonathan Budd, Joel Barlow High School, Redding
Gay Collins, Waterford High School, Waterford
Mary Jayne D'Eugenio, Meadowside School, Milford
Mary Edwards, Conard High School, West Hartford
Diane Faiella, Tomlinson Middle School, Fairfield
Raffaella Ferraiolo, Essex Elementary School, Centerbrook
Susan Foss, Hamden Middle School, Hamden
Tara Fowler-Burn, Orange Avenue School, Milford
Sheila Hauser, Saxe Middle School, New Canaan

Dolores Holmes, Harborside Middle School, Milford
George Hunkele, Harborside Middle School, Milford
Christopher Melillo, Bear Path School, Hamden
Grace Morris, Tootin' Hills School, West Simsbury
Patricia Rayner, Bethel High School, Bethel
Heather Ross, Fawn Hollow Elementary School, Monroe
Audrey Sokol, Live Oaks School, Milford
Jessica Turner Shearer, Hall Memorial School, Willington
Dean Vaccaro, West Shore Middle School, Milford
Joann Walker, Orange Avenue School, Milford

State Board of Education Chairperson Craig Toensing commended these individuals for undertaking the National Board Certification process, stating that their successful efforts attest to their commitment to teaching and to the quality of their instruction. The State Department of Education offers teachers a \$1,150 subsidy toward the cost of applying for this certification (\$2,300). In addition, individual districts offer a variety of incentives to teachers working toward National Board Certification.

BEGINNING EDUCATOR SUPPORT AND TRAINING (BEST) PROGRAM PORTFOLIO PERFORMANCE RESULTS

The Board discussed a report on the BEST portfolio performance and related demographic data for beginning teachers submitting portfolios in the spring of 2003. The BEST program has evolved into a two-year program of support and assessment. The support component consists of school- or district-based mentors or support teams and state-sponsored training, such as portfolio clinics and discipline-specific support seminars. The assessment component requires beginning teachers in their second year of teaching to submit a content-specific teaching portfolio, documenting a five- to eight-hour unit of instruction with one class. In order to be eligible for the provisional educator certificate, beginning teachers must demonstrate through the portfolio assessment mastery of essential teaching competencies related to teacher content knowledge, planning, instruction and assessment.

The report contains the following key findings:

- ✍ only 1.5 percent of beginning teachers failed to meet the portfolio performance standard after their third year of teaching;
- ✍ beginning teachers in priority school districts do not do as well on the portfolio assessment as beginning teachers in more affluent districts;
- ✍ the majority of beginning teachers report receiving adequate support from their mentors during their first and second years of teaching; and
- ✍ more than 90 percent of beginning teachers report that the portfolio afforded them the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to design and implement instruction and assess students' learning; however, only 75 percent indicated that the portfolio demonstrates their ability to manage their classroom.

In response to these findings, the Department will investigate the reasons for the lower performance on the portfolio assessment by teachers in priority districts and will consider the appropriateness of the timing of the portfolio assessment in a teacher's career. Further, the Department will look at the impact of the portfolio assessment on teachers after completing the assignment and will study districts' use of Title II funds or other local funds to support new teachers and their mentors.

CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF BOARDS OF EDUCATION (CABE)

The Board held its annual joint meeting with the Board of Directors of the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education. This forum provides an opportunity for both boards to discuss areas of mutual concern and recent developments at the local and state levels, including the impact of the No Child Left Behind Act. Mary Broderick, President of CABE, reminded the members to recognize the many successful efforts to improve achievement across our state. When asked what would assist local school boards in fulfilling their mission, members replied: ensuring that children's basic needs (food, clothing, shelter) are met to enable them to learn; assistance from the Department's curriculum experts; adequate support for special education expenditures; support for educational technology; the ability to "piggyback" on health insurance and telecommunications contracts, thereby reducing expenditures; increased authority in terms of negotiating contracts; and access to individual student data.

APPOINTMENT OF HEARING OFFICERS

The Board reappointed to the Impartial Hearing Board for Special Education Due Process Hearings the following individuals: Scott P. Myers, Mary Elizabeth Oppenheim, Stacy M. Owens and Patricia M. Strong. These individuals will serve four-year terms commencing March 1, 2004.

**EXTENSION OF TIME TO HOLD REFERENDUM;
REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 15**

The Board approved a request made by the Regional School Reapportionment Committee of Regional School District No. 15 for an extension of the 90-day time limit provided by statute to hold a referendum on the Plan of Representation approved by the State Board of Education in December 2003. Region 15 serves students in Southbury and Middlebury.

**CONNECTICUT ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS**

The Board received the Annual Report of the Connecticut Advisory Council for School Administrator Professional Standards. The report summarizes the Council's work over the past year and focuses on strategies to strengthen the state's educational leadership. The Council has supported the implementation of the State Action for Educational Leadership Project grant, designed to strengthen school leadership for student achievement. Connecticut was one of 15 states awarded a Wallace-Readers Digest grant. A second major focus of the Council in 2003 was the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. The Council endorses the goals of the Act, but registered specific concerns about several of its requirements (e.g., how to measure adequate yearly progress; requirements pertaining to accountability for schools and school districts; special education and limited-English-proficient requirements; class size; and adequate resources to attain the NCLB goals).

**CONNECTICUT ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR
TEACHER PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS**

The Board received the Annual Report of the Connecticut Advisory Council for Teacher Professional Standards. The report summarizes the Council's work over the past year, which focused on teacher support and retention, including discussions regarding strengthening the teacher preparation, certification and professional services continuum and the impact of NCLB on these and other issues. The Council held its first joint meeting with the Advisory Council for School Administrator Professional Standards to discuss NCLB, teacher and administrator shortages, and the Wallace-Readers Digest grant. As a result of this joint meeting, it was proposed that the two groups co-sign a letter to Congress in support of changes to the NCLB legislation.

SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM

The Board approved the Department's State Plan for the Summer Food Service Program for Children (Fiscal Year 2004) for submission to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Summer Food Service Program for Children addresses the need to provide proper nutrition for children during the summer months. It is estimated that a total of 536,000 meals will be served during summer 2004. Grant funds in the amount of \$1,189,357 will be distributed to local and regional school districts and other sponsors. All areas in Connecticut where 50 percent or more of the schoolchildren are eligible to receive a free or reduced-price school meal qualify for this program.

STATE PLAN FOR ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY

The Board approved revisions to parts of the State Plan for Adult Education and Family Literacy. Since the expected reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act has not yet occurred, the United States Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education instructed states to submit a revision to their existing plans for the period July 1, 2004, through June 30, 2005. Changes were made that (1) establish revised levels of performance for adult education and literacy activities authorized under Title II, and (2) describe how the eligible agency will fund local activities in accordance with the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act.

**REGIONAL VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SCHOOL SYSTEM
(RVTSS)**

Appointment of Superintendent: The Board appointed Abigail L. Hughes as Superintendent of the Connecticut Regional Vocational-Technical School System, effective February 6, 2004. Dr. Hughes brings to the school system 36 years of experience in public education, most recently having served as Associate Commissioner of the Division of Evaluation and Research. Her experience also includes classroom teaching, long-range planning, development of special education and occupational curriculum and evaluation models, professional development in vocational education, and extensive knowledge of the No Child Left Behind Act.

Admissions Criteria: The Board adopted revised admissions criteria that will apply to incoming Grade 9 students for the 2004-05 school year only. The criteria will include (1) marks in prior grade or grades; (2) attendance in prior grade or grades; and (3) an enhanced interview process. Due to the delay in receiving the 2003 Connecticut Mastery Test scores, the Vocational-Technical School System will be unable to use the mathematics and reading scores as one component of the admissions criteria for incoming Grade 9 students.

Rolling Capital Improvement and Capital Equipment Plan 2003-2008: The Board adopted the 2003-08 Capital Improvement and Capital Equipment Plan for transmittal to the General Assembly. The report contains detailed information about the school system's long-range strategic education and physical plant master plan; alterations, renovations and repairs needed at each of the schools; and projected equipment needs and costs by school and by technology.

Reauthorization of Trades: The Board approved the following trades for the periods indicated:

Electronics	January 2004 through January 2009
Digital Microprocessor Technician	January 2004 through January 2009
Microcomputer Software Technician	January 2004 through January 2009
Graphic Communication	January 2004 through January 2009
Information Support and Services	January 2004 through January 2005
Interactive Media	January 2004 through January 2005
Network Systems	January 2004 through January 2005
Programming and Software Development	January 2004 through January 2005

Recognition of Skills USA/VICA Award Recipients: The Board commended the following individuals who placed in the 2003 national competition of Skills USA/VICA:

- ✍ Eric O'Malley, Class of 2003, Platt Regional Vocational-Technical School, First Place in Electronics Technology;
- ✍ Amanda Fairclough, Class of 2004, Henry Abbott Regional Vocational-Technical School, Fourth Place in Sheet Metal;
- ✍ Derek Seiple, Class of 2003, Kaynor Regional Vocational-Technical School, Fourth Place in Technical Drafting;
- ✍ Andrew Manseau, Class of 2003, Howell Cheney Regional Vocational-Technical School, Sixth Place in Diesel Equipment Technology;
- ✍ Natalie Ivanoff, Class of 2003, Emmett O'Brien Regional Vocational-Technical School, Eighth Place in Prepared Speech;

- ✍ Timothy Cox, Class of 2004, Vinal Regional Vocational-Technical School, Eighth Place in Opening and Closing Ceremonies;
- ✍ Cliff Daniels, Class of 2004, Vinal Regional Vocational-Technical School, Eighth Place in Opening and Closing Ceremonies;
- ✍ Jason Dubowsky, Class of 2004, Vinal Regional Vocational-Technical School, Eighth Place in Opening and Closing Ceremonies;
- ✍ David Olszewski, Class of 2003, Vinal Regional Vocational-Technical School, Eighth Place in Opening and Closing Ceremonies;
- ✍ Ryan Robbins, Class of 2004, Vinal Regional Vocational-Technical School, Eighth Place in Opening and Closing Ceremonies;
- ✍ Steve Simmons, Class of 2004, Vinal Regional Vocational-Technical School, Eighth Place in Opening and Closing Ceremonies;
- ✍ John Wolf, Class of 2004, Vinal Regional Vocational-Technical School, Eighth Place in Opening and Closing Ceremonies;
- ✍ Carmine Iapaluccio, Class of 2003, Henry Abbott Regional Vocational-Technical School, Ninth Place in Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration;
- ✍ Justin Lebel, Class of 2003, Platt Regional Vocational-Technical School, Ninth Place in Precision Machining Technology; and
- ✍ David Collins, Class of 2003, Ellis Regional Vocational-Technical School, Tenth Place in Masonry.

Students must place first in their chosen trade area or leadership event at the state level in order to compete in the national competition.

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

(effective July 1, 2003)

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS
<p>Address: 165 Capitol Ave. Room 301 Hartford, CT 06106</p> <p>Telephone: (860) 713-6510</p> <p>Facsimile: (860) 713-7002</p> <p>E-Mail: pamela.bergin@po.state.ct.us</p> <p>To obtain a copy of a report considered by the Board, please contact the Office of Communications, 860-713-6526.</p>	<p><i>Craig E. Toensing, Chairperson</i> <i>Janet M. Finneran, Vice Chairperson</i> <i>Amparo Adib-Samii</i> <i>Donald J. Coolican</i> <i>Patricia B. Luke</i> <i>Daniel Martinez</i> <i>Terri L. Masters</i> <i>Timothy J. McDonald</i> <i>Allan B. Taylor</i> <i>Yi-Mei Truxes</i> <i>Annika L. Warren</i></p> <p><i>Betty J. Sternberg, Secretary</i></p> <p><i>Valerie Lewis, ex officio</i></p>

NOTE: The Board will meet on Wednesday, April 7, 2004. The meeting will begin at 9:30 a.m. in Room 307 of the State Office Building, 165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT.

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.

Connecticut State Board of Education
Hartford

Position Statement on Language Arts

Adopted February 4, 2004

The State Board of Education believes that a strong language arts program is essential to ensure that students develop the skills they need to comprehend and communicate effectively. The language arts are unique among the subjects because the underlying domains — reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing — include skills and competencies that are applied to learning in all of the disciplines. These domains are the means by which we communicate and receive ideas and acquire new information. The ability to communicate with others through these domains is essential for a productive life.

The Board believes that the language arts contribute to children's education and preparation for life in numerous ways. For example, the language arts program:

- provides a foundation for students' success in all content areas and in future careers;
- enables students to obtain and communicate information;
- provides exposure to others' lives and to worlds beyond their own through literary text;
- helps students use language to think critically and to solve problems in everyday life; and
- provides students with the tools and motivation to continue their learning beyond school.

A quality language arts education should therefore be part of the core curriculum for all Connecticut students. PreK-12 language arts education program should enable students to achieve the goals and standards outlined in *Connecticut's Common Core of Learning* and the *Connecticut Language Arts Framework*. By the end of high school, all graduates should be able to:

- develop and communicate informed opinions through reading, interpreting and evaluating various texts;
- recognize the influences of individual, social, cultural and historical contexts on readers and writers;
- read and interpret texts in a variety of disciplines;
- write in a variety of formats;
- write and speak in acceptable standard English;
- construct meaning from communications in a variety of forms;
- read and respond to a variety of authors, texts and genres, and share responses to extend understanding and enjoyment;
- compose, revise and edit written materials using conventions of standard English, including correct spelling, grammar and legible writing;
- view theatre, film and art with an eye toward appreciation and evaluation;
- apply effective listening and speaking skills in a variety of settings;
- communicate with others to create interpretations and evaluations of written, oral and visual text; and
- appreciate the influence that contemporary and classical artists and authors have on human thought.

Improving student achievement in the language arts is therefore an important component of implementing the Board's general education agenda outlined in *Working Together for Student Achievement*.

(continued)

In providing all children with a quality language arts education, everyone has a role.

Teachers and schools play an essential role in ensuring quality language arts education by:

- providing a quality language arts program which includes reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing;
- providing a comprehensive PreK-12 reading program, which includes instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, oral language, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension;
- setting high expectations for all students to ensure earlier and more equitable opportunities to learn to read and write;
- providing a rigorous study of language arts skills and concepts and their applications to reading and writing in real-world contexts;
- creating classrooms that are rich learning environments that foster literacy in all students;
- providing more active student involvement with language arts, including:
 - reading and writing that relate to students’ current world and their future career needs and demands; and
 - using a variety of skills to foster effective communication and lifelong love of reading and writing;
- fostering more systematic and appropriate use of technological tools to enhance instruction in language arts;
- assessing students’ knowledge and skills and providing appropriate instruction based on that assessment;
- providing students with evaluations that are continuous and based on many sources of evidence;
- using a variety of teaching strategies to guide students in developing literacy, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities;
- collaborating with colleagues such as speech language pathologists, English as a Second Language professionals and teachers of sign language in the acquisition of literacy; and
- serving as role models in speaking and writing.

Parents play an essential role in children’s language arts learning by:

- providing multiple opportunities to engage their children in conversations and communications about life experiences;
- talking to and questioning their children from a very young age and carefully listening to their responses;
- reading to their children regularly and listening to their children read; and
- setting up the home environment with many print, media and visual materials.

Teacher and administrator preparation and professional development programs play an essential role in improving the quality of language arts education by:

- providing programs to develop skilled educators in the language arts;
- providing faculty members and administrators with opportunities to improve their ability to deliver quality instruction, including participation in local, statewide and regional in-service sessions and conferences specifically designed for employing the language arts in their discipline; and
- providing more professional collaboration and teacher externships to provide a stronger focus on language arts.