



THE BOARD REPORT



2004-2005: Issue 4

February and March 2005

The following is a summary of the February 2 and March 2, 2005, meetings of the State Board of Education.

REPORT ON COSTS OF IMPLEMENTING THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND (NCLB) ACT

The Board accepted the Commissioner's Report on the State-level Costs of Implementing the Federal No Child Left Behind Act in Connecticut. This report was required by Public Act 04-254, which called for the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management and the Commissioner of Education to analyze and report the costs associated with compliance with the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The study consists of two parts: Part I contains the state-level costs; Part II, to be released in April 2005, will report the findings of the study related to the cost of NCLB for local school districts. This study was conducted in conjunction with the Council of Chief State School Officers and the 12-state NCLB Cost Consortium. The school finance consulting firm, Augenblick, Palaich and Associates, developed the research methodology used in the study.

Key findings of Part I of the report include the following:

- To meet all the requirements of NCLB, the State of Connecticut will have to commit \$41.6 million in staff time and actual dollar outlay through Fiscal Year 2008;
- The most costly requirements of NCLB at the state level are those that relate to standards and assessment (\$41.6 million). After accounting for applicable federal revenues sent to the state, by FY 08 Connecticut expects to have a state-level deficiency over time (in staff time and actual dollar outlay) of \$8,025,000 for NCLB-related standards and assessments. The costs are associated with developing and implementing standards and assessments for expanding testing to Grades 3, 5 and 7. In addition, the state will incur the costs of developing and implementing a science assessment for Grades 5 and 8, and a total of seven separate alternative tests for special education students.
- The second most costly requirement of NCLB at the state level (\$19.25 million aggregated through FY08) which accounts for nearly one-fifth of the Department's total cost, are those related to providing Technical Assistance and Support Systems for local school districts and schools in developing and implementing improvement plans and corrective action plans.

Commissioner Sternberg will present Part II: Local-Level Costs to the Board at its April 6th meeting.

DISCUSSION OF CONNECTICUT'S REQUEST FOR WAIVERS OF CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND (NCLB) ACT

Assistant United States Secretary of Education Raymond Simon discussed with the Board the intent of NCLB and Secretary Margaret Spelling's response to Commissioner Sternberg's request for a waiver of certain provisions of the NCLB Act. Specifically, the Commissioner requested that Connecticut not be required to add testing in Grades 3, 5 and 7, citing that more testing (in addition to Grades 4, 6 and 8) provides no additional valuable information, and will impose a significant cost deficit. Commissioner Sternberg stated that those resources would be more effectively used if directed toward integrating technology into the existing testing program or toward modifying instruction for individual students. The Commissioner also requested that we be allowed to return to our practice of out-of-level testing of special education students when their planning and placement team has determined that this is the most appropriate.

An additional request to the U.S. Department of Education pertains to English language learners. Connecticut requested that students whose primary language is other than English be allowed a reasonable amount of time after arriving in the United States to be in our schools learning English before being tested in English in reading, mathematics and science. Further, Commissioner Sternberg also urged the USDE to consider focusing on supports, rather than penalties, for those students attending schools identified as “not making adequate yearly progress (AYP).”

Assistant Secretary Simon, speaking on behalf of Secretary Spellings, told the Board that the USDE will not change the requirement concerning annual testing. He explained the USDE’s belief concerning the significance of annual assessments in identifying strengths and weaknesses of students.

He expressed the USDE’s willingness to learn more about the benefits of a cohort analysis for determining adequate yearly progress and requested that Connecticut submit additional details on how such an analysis would be constructed and used to calculate AYP. Secretary Simon also expressed willingness to study further the possibility of an alternative assessment for students with cognitive disabilities and who struggle academically, but who do not have the most significant cognitive disabilities.

The Board expressed its support for the Commissioner’s proposals and urged Assistant Secretary Simon to give due consideration to them.

**QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: OPTIONS FOR CONNECTICUT
PRESENTATION BY DR. SHARON L. KAGAN, YALE UNIVERSITY**

Dr. Sharon L. Kagan stated that while we need more preschool services, we must focus on the quality of the programs offered. Too many programs are “mediocre” or “poor,” she noted, and we need to concentrate our efforts on ensuring that preschool programs are developmentally appropriate, especially for infants and toddlers. The majority of programs are offered by the private sector, and programs lack an infrastructure due to the absence of an overarching governance structure and finance base.

Dr. Kagan focused her remarks around the question: “What can Connecticut do to create a sound system of early childhood education programs?” She proposed that we focus on the following:

- **Program quality:** continue to support accreditation for high-quality programs, move towards a Quality Rating System (e.g., “3-star” or “gold-level” designations) for all programs that is linked to reimbursement funding and makes the quality level transparent to the public and parents.
- **Professional development:** to address uneven requirements to teach preschool and to reduce the high turnover rates in Connecticut child care centers (25-60%), Connecticut might consider more investment in Bachelor of Arts level teachers and recognize that both formal education and specialized training affects the quality of early childhood programs;
- **Governance:** Noting that there is no single perfect model or approach, Dr. Kagan suggested that we consider creating a study panel on governance to review several models that oversee early childhood programs, including the areas of funding, curriculum, staffing and communication among all stakeholders.
- **Standards, assessment and accountability:** Connecticut should encourage assessment-driven instruction and screen all children for developmental and health delays. In addition, it is important to evaluate specific programs and collect accountability data on a random sample of children. We need a *system of assessment*, Dr. Kagan added.
- **Links to schools:** It is critical for preschools to be linked to schools in order to promote continuity for children. The standards, curriculum and assessments must be synchronized, either within prekindergarten and kindergarten (horizontal alignment) or between prekindergarten and kindergarten (vertical alignment). Connecticut should refocus activity-driven transition activities between prekindergarten and kindergarten, and refocus its efforts at the kindergarten level on all domains of development. Lastly, Dr. Kagan added, it is important to ensure that the frameworks are aligned.

In conclusion, Dr. Kagan urged the board to “think quality, not quantity,” regard infrastructure as an investment, with at least 10 percent of all new funds for infrastructure; expand our concept of “early childhood” to include “birth through age 8;” and think of “ready children” as a function of ready families, ready teachers, ready school and ready communities.

**RESEARCH ON TRANSFORMING URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS
PRESENTATION BY DR. JANE HAMMOND, STUPSKI FOUNDATION**

Dr. Jane Hammond described the role of the Stupski Foudation in supporting school district reform efforts to improve achievement and close the achievement gaps. The Foundation believes that the school district is regarded as the core unit of long-term, sustained change. The Foundation developed an approach to implement district change, based on the following premises: Social justice demands that all children receive a high quality education; and equity is achieved by making decisions and allocating resources to ensure that *all* students achieve at high levels.

School and district improvement is contingent on:

- o All stakeholders sharing a relentless commitment to and responsibility for student achievement.
- o Strong, visionary leadership and careful alignment of action, resources and results.
- o Using a standards-based curriculum and effective, powerful teaching.
- o Active engagement of internal and external stakeholders;
- o Both employees and students being held accountable for results;
- o Continuous professional development for teachers, board members, leaders and support staff;
- o Having in place measures that promote building capacity.

Dr. Hammond described the importance of the state’s role in promoting success, noting that successful states are often those that have moved from a regulatory/compliance role to providing support to school districts. She added that the state can play a large role in helping to develop curriculum, particularly for those school districts without the capacity to do so. The state also plays an important role in setting standards and providing leadership development training that can be applied directly to the job. Regular on-site evaluation and keeping abreast of current research also supports positive, ongoing change.

**REPORT ON DISTRICTS MAKING ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS (AYP)
UNDER THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND (NCLB) ACT**

A total of 142 of the state’s 185 local, regional and statewide school districts and charter schools met the AYP standards for the 2002-2003 school year under the requirements of the federal NCLB Act. The 43 districts that did not make AYP include 40 local school districts, two regional school districts and the Connecticut Technical High School System. Thirty nine of these districts have also been identified as “in need of improvement,” meaning that they have not made AYP for two consecutive years in the same subject (reading or mathematics).

Resolution Honoring Chairperson Craig E. Toensing

The Board adopted a resolution in honor of Craig Toensing, who has served on the Board since 1993, and served as Chairperson since 1995. The Board recognized Mr. Toensing’s contributions to public education on the local, state and national levels, commending him for his “clear and strong leadership to the Board and the State Department of Education” and for his “commitment to achieving educational excellence and equity.” Mr. Toensing’s term expires February 28, 2005.

Resolution Honoring Terri L. Masters

The Board adopted a resolution in honor of Terri L. Masters, who will resign her post on the Board effective March 10, 2005. Ms. Masters was actively involved in the Legislation Committee and has served as the Chairperson of the Connecticut Technical High School Committee since April 2001.

Resolution Honoring Annika L. Warren

The Board adopted a resolution in honor of Annika Warren, who resigned from the Board. Ms. Warren served on the Audit and Department Matters Committee and the Policy Development Committee of the Board.

APPROVAL CYCLE FOR CENTRAL CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY AND UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS

The Board granted to Central Connecticut State University and the University of Connecticut a two-year extension of the program approval cycle to bring those programs into alignment with the seven-year cycle adopted by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. In the fall of 2003, NCATE moved from a five-year accreditation cycle to a seven-year cycle for all institutions of higher education that have been accredited two or more times. CCSU and UCONN, both having met this standard, will use the additional two years of preparation time to collect, analyze and systematize the candidate data required to gauge the impact of their programs. The two-year extension will extend approval to the two colleges to September 30, 2010.

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Board revised its Statement of Commitment to Equal Employment Opportunity to delineate the Board's and Department's responsibilities concerning recruitment and hiring practices, and to update the list of protected classes in accordance with state law. The statement is accessible via the Department's website, www.state.ct.us/sde.

APPLICATION FOR FUNDS: ADVANCED PLACEMENT INCENTIVE GRANT

The Board approved the Department's application for funds available from the United States Department of Education for an Advanced Placement Incentive Grant. The Department requested \$2,996,238 for a three-year period (April 2005 through August 2008). Funds will be used to assist priority school districts with the development, enhancement or expansion of pre-Advanced Placement (AP) courses in conjunction with AP courses in English, mathematics, science and other core academic areas at the middle or high school level.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CONNECTICUT ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR TEACHER PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

The Board received from the Connecticut Advisory Council for Teacher Professional Standards its 2004 Annual Report. The Council focused its attention on issues concerning teacher preparation, certification, support and assessment, with special attention on the impact of the No Child Left Behind Act on those issues. In the coming year, the Council plans to focus its attention on teacher quality and standards, from teacher preparation and certification through beginning teacher induction and service. It will continue to monitor the impact of NCLB on this process and make policy recommendations when needed.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CONNECTICUT ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

The Board received from the Connecticut Advisory Council for School Administrator Professional Standards its 2004 Annual Report. The Council focused its attention on strategies to strengthen the State's educational leadership and on the implications of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. The Council reported that it will focus on the following areas in 2005: administrator and teacher supply and demand; more efficient use of time for professional development; efforts to encourage and recruit teacher leaders; administrator induction and support programs; administrator certification and professional development; administrator compensation; and NCLB strategies.

SUMMER FOOD SERVICE STATE PLAN

The Board approved the Department's submission of the State Plan for Fiscal Year 2005—Summer Food Service Program for Children, to the United States Department of Agriculture. Based on the current funding structure, the projected cost of the program will be \$931,303. It is estimated that a total of 408,000 meals will be served during the summer of 2005. Connecticut has been a recipient of these funds since 1974.

STATE PLAN FOR ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY

The Board approved the revision of the Connecticut State Plan for Adult Education and Family Literacy for the period July 1, 2005, through June 30, 2006. The one-year revised continuation plan was required by the United States Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education pending reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act, and sets forth how the adult education and literacy activities under the Plan will ensure the improvement of Connecticut's initiatives and how performance will be evaluated in the coming year.

APPLICATION FOR FUNDS: CHARTER SCHOOLS PROGRAM GRANT

The Board approved the Department's application to the United States Department of Education for the Charter Schools Program Grant 2005-2008. Connecticut requested approximately \$1 million for 2005-2006, \$1.64 million for 2006-2007 and \$1.77 million for 2007-2008. If awarded, the grant will provide start-up funds for new charter schools and funds for evaluation of charter schools and professional development for staff members.

CONNECTICUT TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL SYSTEM (CTHSS)

Resolution in Support of the CTHSS

The Board passed a resolution in which it expressed its commitment to ensuring that all students in the CTHSS realize success in both academics and their trade/technology area, and are well prepared for postsecondary education, including apprenticeships, and immediate productive employment. The statement recognized the General Assembly's authorization of approximately \$710 million over the past seven years for facility renovations, new technology and textbooks to enable the system to meet the challenges of the modern economy and acknowledged that in order to continue to obtain resources for the CTHSS, the system must show that it has "mastered the arts of constructive change and continuous improvement in the quality of education it delivers." The Board expressed its support for Superintendent Abigail Hughes, her staff, CTHSS students, teachers, administrators, parents and community members who have been supportive of, and who have worked hard to implement the new mission of the CTHSS.

Support from the Business Community

The following individuals attended the Board meeting to express their support for the CTHSS leadership and direction being pursued to improve the quality of education offered in the state's technical high schools: Jamison Scott, New Haven Manufacturing Association; Tim Davenport, Member, Board of Hearing and Air Conditioning; Karen Wosczyzna Birch, Connecticut Community College System; Lauren Kaufman, CBIA and Jay Carlson, Manufacturing Association, Waterbury.

Rolling Capital Improvement and Capital Equipment Plan (2004-2009)

The Board approved the five-year rolling capital improvement and capital equipment plan, for submission to the General Assembly. The report contains a description of facility improvements and all equipment needs at each of the technical high schools.

Toyota Tapestry Grant

The Board approved the submission of an application for funds (\$10,000) to the National Science Teachers' Association for Toyota Tapestry Grant Application in Practical Botany: Using Science in the Community. The grant funds will be used by A.I. Prince Technical High School to develop a community gardening project with in-house academics.

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

(effective March 2005)

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NOTE: The Board will meet on Wednesday, April 6, 2005, at Rensselaer at Hartford, 275 Windsor Street, Hartford, Connecticut. The meeting will begin at 9:30 a.m. in Seminar Hall.

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.