

TO: The Honorable M. Jodi Rell, Governor, State of Connecticut
The Honorable Thomas P. Gaffey, Senate Chairman, Education Committee
The Honorable Thomas J. Herlihy, Senate Ranking Member, Education
Committee
The Honorable Andrew M. Fleischmann, House Chairman, Education
Committee
The Honorable David K. Labriola, House Ranking Member, Education
Committee

FROM: Dr. Betty J. Sternberg, Commissioner of Education

SUBJECT: Report on Progress in The Hartford Public Schools

DATE: June 2, 2005

I have attached for your review the June 2005 *Report on Progress in The Hartford Public Schools*, in accordance with Section 11-4a of the Connecticut General Statutes and Section 7 of Special Act 01-7, An Act Concerning the Hartford School District. The members of the State Board of Education discussed this report at its May 2005 meeting, and approved the report on June 1, 2005.

This report summarizes several key areas:

- o areas of positive change in the Hartford schools;
- o areas in need of improvement;
- o a summary of critical areas that drive improvement in schools; and
- o recommendations for the Department of Education's future involvement in the Hartford school district and a partnership model for the Department's involvement with districts in Educational Reference Group (ERG) I.

During the formal eight-year relationship between the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) and the Hartford Public Schools there has been improvement in several areas, including district leadership and governance, curriculum and instruction, community involvement and support, and the development of magnet schools.

In the most important guidepost, however, the improvement of student achievement for all Hartford schools, we still have not seen accelerated rates of change throughout the district – although some Hartford schools (e.g., Dwight School) have shown dramatic improvement.

In reviewing the student and staff data presented, and the summary of critical areas that drive improvement (pages 5-10 of the report), please know that there are four major recommendations to improve student success in Hartford and in other Educational Reference Group (ERG) I districts that will require legislative authorization *next year* (please see page 12). The recommendations are as follows:

1. define the nature of a formal partnership between CSDE and the Hartford Public Schools after our monitoring duties end in December 2005;
2. allow for flexibility in teacher assignments in schools and programs, length of school day and year, and institute salary bonuses based on student achievement indicators;
3. authorize the Commissioner of Education or her designee to participate in the selection of a new superintendent for the Hartford district if that need arises; and
4. establish similar formal partnerships between ERG I districts and CSDE based on the specific achievement levels of district students.

You will note that these recommendations reflect many of the statewide initiatives presented to you during this legislative session; further validating that improvement efforts in ERG I should be consistent with those in districts A through H.

I look forward to further discussion with you, the State Board of Education and the superintendents of all ERG I towns, as we continue to raise the academic aspirations, preparedness and achievement levels of all Connecticut students.

Attachment: *Report on Progress Report in The Hartford Public Schools, June 2005*

cc: Mr. Robert Henry, Superintendent, Hartford Public Schools
Members of the Hartford Board of Education
Mr. Eddie Perez, Mayor, City of Hartford
Members of the Hartford Court of Common Council
Senator Donald E. Williams, Jr., President Pro Tempore
Senator Martin M. Looney, Majority Leader
Senator Louis C. DeLuca, Republican Leader
Representative James A. Amann, Speaker of the House
Representative Christopher G. Donovan, Majority Leader
Representative Robert M. Ward, Minority Leader
Ms. M. Lisa Moody, Chief of Staff
Ms. Brenda Sisco, Legislative Director
Mr. Thomas P. Sheridan, Clerk of the Senate
Mr. Garey E. Coleman, Clerk of the House of Representatives
Clerk of the Education Committee
Office of Legislative Research
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