

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Theodore S. Sergi, Commissioner of Education

SUBJECT: Progress Report on The Hartford Public Schools

DATE: June 4, 2003

This transmittal serves to summarize several of the systemic achievements and areas of continuing need of the Hartford Public Schools, in accordance with Section 7 of Special Act 01-7. The continuing statutory charge to the Hartford Board of Education (formerly the State Board of Trustees) is to increase Hartford student achievement; to enhance the quality, adequacy and equality of educational opportunities for Hartford students; and to allocate and manage Hartford resources efficiently and effectively.

The Hartford Board of Education and Superintendent Robert Henry have continued a multifaceted approach to improving Hartford student achievement, providing professional development for administrators and staff members, and ensuring overall school improvement. The self-study process of elementary school accreditation through the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc. (NEASC) has been completed in over one-third of Hartford schools, in addition to the recent visit by an NEASC team to preschool programs supported by state school readiness funds. A yearlong effort to assist teachers in Hartford high schools to incorporate reading strategies across the curriculum has taken place to improve students' ability to succeed at the secondary level. Intradistrict choice options for Hartford students will expand from 11 to 17 Hartford schools in fall 2003. Plans to improve school facilities in accordance with the district's long-range facilities plan and magnet plan are underway at Hartford Public High School, Rawson, Burr, Naylor and Webster elementary schools, and at new host magnet schools through the support of the Hartford School Building Committee and a program management firm.

Sustaining, and *improving*, student achievement gains in state and local assessments are of primary concern to the Hartford Board of Education,

Superintendent Robert Henry and the State Department of Education. The attached chart compares Hartford student achievement in 2001 and 2002 to the first year of the state intervention, 1997. On most of the student performance indicators identified in the chart, the district has shown significant improvement when comparisons are made to the state average between 1997 and the current year. Of concern, however, are the *limited* gains made on the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT), the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) and the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) since last year. At the secondary level, the percentage of Hartford students at or above goal in the reading and writing sections of the CAPT has improved (Reading/Language Arts, from 9.0 to 13.4 percent; Writing/Interdisciplinary, from 17.2 to 23.0 percent). Furthermore, the percentage of Hartford graduates who earned a credit in algebra *decreased* from 88.3 percent in 2001 to 57.0 percent in 2002. A significant gain was made, however, in the percentage of 2002 Hartford graduates who scored at least 3 (on a 1-5 scale) on an Advanced Placement examination – from 28.1 percent in 2001 to 45.2 percent in 2002.

As Hartford central and local administrators and teachers disaggregate the achievement results of Hartford students – including subgroup analyses – the critical questions and solutions that should continue to be presented to the Hartford Board of Education are the instructional practices and concomitant professional development that need to be in place. Research-based strategies to differentiate instruction so that *all* students achieve *at high levels* should continue to be the goal. Current plans to identify and support gifted and talented Hartford students is a promising goal of the new Hartford Board of Education as it begins to quantify the gains of Hartford student subpopulations. State Department of Education consultants continue to assist Hartford content specialists in the development of curricula, instructional methodologies and assessments of student learning.

At a recent presentation by Hartford elementary school administrators to the Hartford Board of Education, the priority needs outlined continued to include the lack of funds in the 2002-03 and the proposed 2003-04 budgets to support reading intervention programs and reductions in class size to maximize student achievement. Hartford students with disabilities, in the emotional disturbance category, need additional support. Hartford teachers need district support in determining positive behavioral outcomes for all students. The expansion of successful school climate initiatives and research-based classroom management strategies may require additional public and private financial support.

As reported last year, the most pressing issue for the Hartford Mayor, City Council, the Governor and legislative leadership is whether the Hartford Public Schools can continue to make progress with a proposed budget in 2003-04 that apparently will be less than that of 2002-03. New financial commitments to renovate existing school facilities and to

provide additional magnet school options for Hartford students are also of great concern to district and municipal leaders.

In this time of fiscal constraints, the commitment to Hartford students – who are working to improve their results in reading, writing and mathematics – must continue. To close the disparities in Connecticut and Hartford’s student achievements requires that we collectively work with increased speed to focus resources in administrator and teacher professional development, curricula and instructional materials that meet the needs of Hartford students. Teachers, system leaders, parents, community groups and students who are reviewing school improvement goals, accreditation recommendations, school-based practices and achievement results, need more opportunities to present to the Hartford Board of Education. Their successes and challenges represent the path to further and faster progress.

The overall message of this communication should be clear: To state and local officials – please continue to provide resources for the further improvement of the Hartford Public Schools. To the Hartford Board of Education – please stay focused on the need for continuous improvement in student achievements.

cc: The Honorable John G. Rowland, Governor, State of Connecticut
The Honorable Thomas Gaffey, Senate Chairman, Education Committee
The Honorable Thomas Herlihy, Senate Ranking Member, Education Committee
The Honorable Demetrios Giannaros, House Chairman, Education Committee
The Honorable Robert Heagney, House Ranking Member, Education Committee
Members of the Hartford Board of Education
Mr. Robert Henry, Superintendent, Hartford Public Schools
Mr. Eddie Perez, Mayor, City of Hartford
Members of the Hartford Court of Common Council

Change in Hartford Student Performance Indicators Since 1996-97

Indicator	Most Current Year and Prior Year					School Year 1996-97		
	Year	Hartford	State	Hartford as % of State	(1)	Hartford	State	Hartford as % of State
CMT Math 4, 6, 8: % at/above goal (2)	2001-02	30.6	59.1	51.8%		18	56	32.1%
CMT Math 4, 6, 8: % at/above goal (2)	2002-03	29.0	59.2	49.0 %	?	18	56	32.1%
CMT Reading 4, 6, 8: % at/above goal (2)	2001-02	26.1	62.6	41.7%		19	60	31.7%
CMT Reading 4, 6, 8: % at/above goal (2)	2002-03	27.9	62.7	44.5%	?	19	60	31.7%
CMT Writing 4, 6, 8: % at/above goal (2)	2001-02	36.2	60.0	60.3%		25	52	48.1%
CMT Writing 4, 6, 8: % at/above goal (2)	2002-03	39.9	60.8	65.6%	?	25	52	48.1%
CAPT Math: % at/above Goal (2)	2000-01	7.7	44.6	17.3%		6	42	14.3%
CAPT Math: % at/above Goal (2)	2001-02	6.5	44.0	14.8%	?	6	42	14.3%
CAPT Science: % at/above Goal (2)	2000-01	6.8	43.4	15.7%		6	35	17.1%
CAPT Science: % at/above Goal (2)	2001-02	6.7	43.2	15.5%	?	6	35	17.1%
CAPT Reading/Language Arts: % at/above Goal (2)	2000-01	9.0	42.2	21.3%		7	35	20.0%
CAPT Reading/Language Arts: % at/above Goal (2)	2001-02	13.4	44.8	29.9%	?	7	35	20.0%
CAPT Writing/Interdisciplinary: % at/above Goal (2)	2000-01	17.2	48.7	35.3%		11	38	28.9%
CAPT Writing/Interdisciplinary: % at/above Goal (2)	2001-02	23.0	51.0	45.1%	?	11	38	28.9%
Dropouts: 4-year Cohort Rate (3)	2001	22.9	11.2	200.0%		44.1	15.7	280.9%
Dropouts: 4-year Cohort Rate (3)	2002	29.7	10.9	200.7%	?	44.1	15.7	280.9%
Dropouts: Annual 1-year Event Rate	2000	11.5	3.0	383.3%		13.4	3.9	343.6%
Dropouts: Annual 1-year Event Rate	2001	6.2	2.6	200.4%	?	13.4	3.9	343.6%
% Graduates to Educational Activity	2001	75.0	79.1	94.8%		65.6	75.6	86.8%
% Graduates to Educational Activity	2002	80.5	79.7	100.0%	?	65.6	75.6	86.8%
% Graduates Employed	2001	14.5	17.1	84.8%		11.2	18.5	60.5%
% Graduates Employed	2002	12.0	16.3	73.6%	?	11.2	18.5	60.5%
Physical Fitness: Percent Passing all 4 Tests (2)	2000-01	18.5	34.2	54.1%		15.3	28.1	54.4%
Physical Fitness: Percent Passing all 4 Tests (2)	2001-02	21.7	34.4	63.1%	?	15.3	28.1	54.4%
AP: % of Seniors Taking at Least One Exam	2001	8.8	16.3	53.7%		3.1	11.8	26.2%
AP: % of Seniors Taking at Least One Exam	2002	8.1	17.2	47.1%	?	3.1	11.8	26.2%
AP: % of Examinations Passed	2001	28.1	70.5	39.9%		37.8	73.1	51.8%
AP: % of Examinations Passed	2002	45.2	72.3	62.5%	?	37.8	73.1	51.8%
SAT I Total Score	2001	754	1005	75.0%		759	1008	75.3%
SAT I Total Score	2002	759	1005	75.5%	?	759	1008	75.3%

SAT I: Percent of Graduates Taking	2001	71.5	77.6	92.1%		47.8	73.7	64.9%
SAT I: Percent of Graduates Taking	2002	67.3	76.8	87.6%	?	47.8	73.7	64.9%
Graduates with Credit in Algebra	2001	88.3	90.0	98.1%		71.9	85.2	84.4%
Graduates with Credit in Algebra	2002	57.0	89.6	63.6%	?	71.9	85.2	84.4%
Graduates with 3+ Credits in a World Language	2001	34.8	55.5	62.7%		26.2	51.7	50.7%
Graduates with 3+ Credits in a World Language	2002	28.0	56.1	49.9%	?	26.2	51.7	50.7%

NOTES: (1) An upward arrow indicates improvement of at least five percentage points relative to the state average.
(2) Comparisons of results are across two generations of the tests with some differences in the components.
(3) Some improvement due to better record keeping starting in 1996-97.

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
June 4, 2003