



THE BOARD REPORT



2001-02: Issue 5

April 2002

The State Board of Education met on April 3, 2002. Below are highlights of the meeting.

CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

Dr. Randall Collins, Superintendent of the Waterford Public Schools and President of the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS), told the Board that CAPSS is focusing its attention on three issues: (1) teacher and administrator shortages; (2) the recently adopted federal legislation, *The No Child Left Behind Act*; and (3) special education.

David Clune, Superintendent of the Wilton Public Schools, stated that we anticipate that 40% of superintendents will leave the State within the next three years. This projection supports the need to “grow our own” and to provide mentor programs for new superintendents. Dr. Clune also stressed the importance of conveying to the public a positive image of the role of superintendents and their work on behalf of students as a measure to encourage others to pursue this career.

David Larson, Executive Director of CAPSS and retired superintendent of schools after 35 years of service, discussed ways to recruit and retain educators. He noted that there are shortages in the areas of special education, mathematics, and science, yet there is an abundance of elementary level teachers. High schools and colleges need to communicate this information to students planning to become teachers before they select a certification area, he added. Revisions to the state’s retirement system, such as a “portable retirement system” and giving more flexibility to earnings potential by teachers in the retirement system are two areas Mr. Larson suggested be examined.

Patrick Proctor, Superintendent of the Windham Public Schools, stated that the new federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) legislation was “right on” in terms of its intent to close the achievement gap, but provided modest resources and limited flexibility to support efforts to accomplish this major task. He also discussed the disproportionate amount of resources required to support special education, and hoped that additional funding would be provided by the state to reduce the burden on towns. *(CAPSS Presentation, continued on page 2)*

STATE AND DISTRICT EFFORTS TO REDUCE RACIAL, ETHNIC AND ECONOMIC ISOLATION

The Board received a summary report on several initiatives designed to reduce racial, ethnic and economic isolation in Connecticut’s public schools. These initiatives include interdistrict magnet schools, charter schools, OPEN CHOICE, vocational-agriculture centers and the state’s Regional Vocational-Technical School System.

Highlights of the report include an incremental steady increase in participation from 1997-98 through 2001-02 (pre-kindergarten through Grade 12) as follows: interdistrict magnets – 3,506 to 8,174; charter schools – 1,117 to 2,594; OPEN CHOICE – 469 to 1,540; vocational-agriculture centers – 2,489 to 2,658; and vocational-technical schools – 9,641 to 10,910. State funding has increased from 1997-98 to 2001-02 as follows: interdistrict magnets - \$9.8 million to \$35.7 million; charter schools - \$5.8 million to \$14.5 million; OPEN CHOICE - \$1.1 million to \$7.7 million; vocational-agriculture centers - \$2.6 million to \$2.8 million; and vocational-technical schools - \$79.9 million to \$105.3 million. The state-funded Interdistrict Cooperative Grant program, which supports part-time, after school, weekend and summer programs involving two or more school districts, has grown from 110 programs serving 60,000 students in 1997-98 to 230 programs serving 90,000 students in 2000-01. *(Reducing Isolation, continued on page 2)*

CAPSS Presentation *(continued from page 1)*

Kaye Griffith, Superintendent of the Madison Public Schools, discussed the need for superintendents to remain focused on student achievement. She expressed her concerns with the impact certain requirements of the ESEA legislation will have on her district. Dr. Griffith thought that the additional testing requirements in Grades 3, 5 and 7 would have serious implications on the allocation of resources, use of staff and need for additional personnel, and use of instructional time.

Jacqueline Jacoby, Superintendent of Glastonbury Public Schools, discussed the special services required by medically fragile children and how the educational and medical programs must be carefully blended to meet their needs. Dr. Jacoby spoke about the nursing services required, the special equipment needed, and the staff development required to train staff how to use the equipment. Training

staff in-district is one way to reduce the high costs associated with hiring experts to operate special equipment needed by these students, Dr. Jacoby added. The regional educational service centers play an important role in providing these services.

Joseph Castagnola, Superintendent of Portland Public Schools, explained to the Board the exorbitant costs associated with meeting the needs of some special education students. He cited one example of a student's transportation costs alone approaching \$60,000. He also expressed concern with the increasing number of students with special needs (as determined by the Department of Children and Families, for example) that are met in out-placement educational programs. The school becomes responsible for paying for the educational services provided at these sites, Mr. Castagnola explained.

Reducing Isolation *(continued from page 1)*

However, funding constraints in 2001-02 resulted in many applicants not being funded. Whereas \$17.9 million was budgeted for interdistrict cooperative grant programs in 2000-01, \$13.0 million has been budgeted in 2001-02 and it is projected that this will be level-funded in 2002-03. The report also details numerous initiatives that have been undertaken in support of improving educational opportunities and closing the achievement gap, including locally-funded interdistrict and intradistrict programs, curriculum revisions, professional development for educators, early childhood programs, and minority educator recruitment activities.

In order to ensure that all students have multiple and substantial opportunities to learn with students and staff from different racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds, in the future, the following must take place:

- creation of more interdistrict magnet schools;
- creation of more after-school, weekend and summer interdistrict programs to serve those communities with the greatest isolation;
- creation of more intradistrict magnets in the cities;
- continued growth of the OPEN CHOICE program; and
- continued expansion of state initiatives that improve the quality of urban education and ensure equal access and participation in programs and statewide efforts to close the achievement gaps between racial/ethnic and economic groups in all districts.

To obtain a copy of the report, please call Associate Commissioner Leslie M. Averna, 860-713-6550.

2001 ADVANCED PLACEMENT PROGRAM

The Board received a report containing the results of the 2001 Advanced Placement (AP) Program, an intensive program of college-level courses and examinations that is sponsored by the College Board. Highlights of the 2001 program include: Connecticut ranked second nationally in participation of comprehensive high schools; Connecticut ranked third in the nation, behind Illinois and New Jersey, in the average performance of public high school students; Connecticut has had a consistently higher percentage of students with scores of three or better than students nationwide; Connecticut nonpublic school students have scored slightly better than public school students since the reporting of these data in 1983-84, yet in three of the past ten years, Connecticut public school students had a higher percentage

Advanced Placement *(continued from page 2)*

of three or better scores than their peers in nonpublic schools. In addition, the report commended Litchfield High School, Conard High School (West Hartford), Farmington High School, Hall High School (West Hartford) and Avon High School for their top participation rates among public schools. Twenty schools had more than ten Grade 10 students who took an AP exam. A total of 20,677 students were enrolled in AP courses in 2000-01 according to the data provided on ED540, Graduating Class Report. [NOTE: This figure is duplicative because a student can enroll in more than one course.] For a copy of the report or additional information about Advanced Placement, please contact Associate Commissioner Abigail Hughes at 860-713-6800.

The Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies requires the Board to notify any local board of education that has one or more schools that are racially imbalanced or that have impending racial imbalance. This year's report, effective October 1, 2001, does not include any additional districts with racially imbalanced schools other than those cited in the past.

The schools cited as being racially imbalanced (Charter Oak School, West Hartford; Hamilton Avenue School, Greenwich; Smith School, West Hartford; and Washington School, Manchester) have been 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 the requirement of filing a plan. The Department will continue to monitor these districts to ensure compliance with their plans.

RENEWAL OF CHARTERS: ODYSSEY COMMUNITY SCHOOL AND JUMOKE ACADEMY

The Board accepted Commissioner Sergi's recommendations to renew the charters of both Jumoke Academy in Hartford and the Odyssey Community School in Manchester for a five-year period ending June 30, 2007.

Jumoke Academy opened in 1997 and now serves 250 kindergarten through Grade 6 students, predominantly from Hartford. The school provides a sound, basic education and employs early intervention principles. All children are taught a foreign language at Jumoke. The school is family-oriented and engages parents in their child's education. Students take advantage of the before- and after-school programs. The school is open from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. to accommodate the needs of working parents and to enhance the cultural, academic and recreational experiences for students.

Odyssey Community School opened in 1997 and currently serves 105 Grade 6-8 students, predominantly from Manchester. The school provides a small, family-friendly atmosphere and provides students with opportunities to maximize their education. Students are taught education fundamentals and how to use technology in order to consume and convey information. Strong support from the Odyssey community has benefited this school. The school has received support (financial and in-kind) from the Manchester Board of Education and from Manchester Community College, which allows Odyssey students to take courses at the college.

QUINNIPIAC UNIVERSITY: ON-LINE CROSS ENDORSEMENT PROGRAMS IN MATHEMATICS

The Board granted initial approval to the Quinnipiac University graduate on-line cross endorsement programs in middle grades mathematics (Grades 4-8) and secondary mathematics (Grades 7-12), effective April 3, 2002, through September 30, 2005. Quinnipiac University will launch this new program immediately as part of a statewide effort to address the current shortage of certified mathematics teachers in Connecticut.

The new program is aimed at individuals who hold a current provisional or professional educator certificate and who wish to add a mathematics cross endorsement (either Grades 4-8 or Grades 7-12).

Program participants must have a solid mathematics preparation in order to enroll in the program and must achieve a passing score on the appropriate PRAXIS II examination in order to complete the program.

**UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT:
UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS**

The Board extended program approval of University of Connecticut (UCONN) undergraduate and graduate educator preparation programs to September 30, 2003, in order to allow the school sufficient time to complete the portfolio review process required by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). Since Connecticut is a partnership-state with NCATE, Department staff, NCATE staff and UCONN staff will work together to reschedule the visit.

2002 TEAM NUTRITION TRAINING GRANT

The Board approved the Department's application to the United States Department of Agriculture for the 2002 Team Nutrition Training Grant. Connecticut requested approximately \$200,000. These funds will be used to provide training for school and childcare decision makers (including teachers, school food service personnel, principals, superintendents, board members, parents and leaders of children's organizations) on promoting healthy eating and physical activity.

REGIONAL VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SCHOOL SYSTEM (RVTS)

RVTS Annual Plan 2001-02: Interim Progress Report

The Board received an update on the RVTS' progress in meeting established goals under each of the school system's eight critical school practices (teaching and learning, school culture, technology, leadership, professional development, fiscal and facilities, assessment and accountability).

The plan provides for the measurement of the degree to which activities that support attainment of each goal have been completed.

**Governor's Task Force on the Future of the Regional
Vocational-Technical High School System**

In January 2002, Governor Rowland created the Task Force on the Future of the Regional Vocational-Technical High School System. The Task Force was charged with responsibility for developing "an action plan for vocational-technical education in Connecticut that will translate the short- and long-term needs of Connecticut's economy, particularly those supporting growth, emerging and technology industries, into the programming, budgeting and planning strategies for Connecticut's vocational-technical school system."

The Task Force is considering the following issues related to the RVTS: the mission and vision of the VTSS; performance measures used to determine the system's success; the image of the RVTS and what can be done to promote the school system; the trade offerings and the process used to determine whether trades should be reauthorized; and the system's relationship with industry.

The Task Force will continue its work over the next few months, resulting in the issuance of a final report and recommendations for the Governor's consideration.

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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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 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

