



THE BOARD REPORT



2001-02: Issue 3

January -February 2002

The State Board of Education met on January 9, 2002, and February 6, 2002. Below are highlights of the meetings.

CONNECTICUT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE TEST (CAPT) RESULTS

The Board discussed the first-year results of the Second Generation CAPT (CAPT 2), administered to approximately 40,000 high school students in May 2001. CAPT 2 results cannot be compared with prior years' results, yet a bridge study conducted by the State Department of Education shows that performance in 2001 generally followed the trend of small, but continuous, improvement. Highlights of the report include:

- ❑ Achievement consistently improved on the first generation of CAPT from 1995 to 2000, and the bridge study shows that the 2001 test takers performed slightly better than the 2000 test takers, particularly in writing and reading, with equal results in science and slightly lower results in mathematics.
- ❑ The achievement gap began to close during the first generation, and students in Education Reference Group I districts (Bridgeport, Hartford, New Britain, New Haven, New London, Waterbury and Windham) had larger improvement gains from 1995-2000 than the state as a whole.
- ❑ While the participation rate of special education students taking the state test and overall participation on all tests has improved, we need to ensure that all students participate in an assessment appropriate to their needs, and that students who are absent when the test is administered are provided re-testing opportunities.

The CAPT 2 is aligned with Connecticut's new curriculum frameworks and provides information about how students are performing in the content areas of Mathematics, Science, Reading Across the Disciplines and Writing Across the Disciplines.

NEW ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT (ESEA)

The Board held its initial discussion of recently passed federal legislation, *The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. This act, otherwise known as ESEA, encompasses nearly all federal K-12 education policies and has major implications on school, districts and states. Highlights of the 1100-page federal act follow.

- ❑ Commencing in 2005-06, states must test students in Grades 3-8 in reading and mathematics annually. Students will be assessed in science in three grades within Grades 3-12 beginning in 2007-08.
- ❑ Each state must define "adequate yearly progress," and in 12 years, all students are expected to reach "proficiency." State and district report cards will be issued beginning with the 2002-03 school year.
- ❑ Schools that are not demonstrating "adequate yearly progress" will be identified and required to develop and enact a two-year plan for improvement. Further actions will be taken and consequences imposed on those schools that continue not to make adequate yearly progress at the conclusion of the two-year improvement plan.

(ESEA, continued on page 3)

GRADUATION COMPETENCY REQUIREMENTS: A PANEL DISCUSSION

Representatives of the Tolland, Plainville and Wallingford school districts described their progress in establishing local graduation competency requirements, in accordance with the provisions of Section 10-223a(b) of the Connecticut General Statutes. This statutory section requires each local and regional board of education, no later than September 1, 2002, to specify the basic skills necessary for graduation for classes graduating in 2006 and thereafter. The statute requires that districts use the results of the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) as one way to assess a student's level of competency in such skills.

PLAINVILLE

Dr. Linda Van Wagenen, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, Plainville Public School System, stated that Plainville had been discussing this for some time prior to the passage of Section 10-223a(b). Plainville school officials sought input from several partners, including district personnel from all grade levels, students and the business and higher education communities. Business representatives stated they look for employees with solid academic skills, a good work ethic and strong skills in communication, problem solving, teamwork and leadership. Higher education officials thought that students should have, in addition to a strong background in mathematics and communication skills, the opportunity to explore different areas of interest. The Plainville School System is focusing on competency in problem solving, communication, the arts and technology. Students will be able to demonstrate competency in each of these areas in a variety of ways.

TOLLAND

Mr. Art Sajecki, Principal of Tolland High School, stated that Tolland began expanding opportunities for students six years ago, when it adopted block scheduling. Graduation competencies identified by the School Improvement Team include literacy, problem solving, tenets of good health, social responsibility, an understanding and application of the arts, the ability to use technology to access information for lifelong learning, and students' ability to set goals for themselves. **Dr. Kathryn Eidson, Director of Curriculum, Tolland Public Schools**, stated that each curriculum is being reviewed carefully against the competencies. Tolland is focusing its attention on the performances it expects of its graduates, and ensuring that the curriculum supports this goal. Dr. Eidson noted that the skills measured by the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) are in alignment with what Tolland wants students to know and be able to do.

WALLINGFORD

Dr. LeRoy Hay, Assistant Superintendent of the Wallingford Public School System stated that Wallingford began to develop performance standards in 1995 in response to a public misperception that graduates of its high schools were not fully literate. Wallingford school officials, recognizing that students need basic skills to be lifelong learners, relied heavily on Connecticut's Common Core of Learning in their review of their curriculum and instruction. Dr. Hay spoke about CAPT results being of more interest to the media than to the students who take the examination. Realizing this, Wallingford linked the performance standards to the four areas assessed by CAPT. If a student does not pass CAPT, he or she is required to demonstrate performance in another way. Currently, Wallingford has alternative tasks for English and mathematics, offered in Grades 11 and 12. This effort has resulted in an increase in the seriousness of students toward CAPT. He noted that this effort, while staff- and time-intensive, has resulted in all students (with some exceptions based on students' individual education plans) meeting established performance assessments.

Education Commissioner Theodore Sergi commended these districts for their success in developing graduation competencies, and encouraged districts across the state to contact the State Department of Education and other districts to discuss the requirements of Section 10-223a(b) of the General Statutes.

ESEA (continued from page 1)

- ❑ Federal funds are expected to increase in 2002-03 by 15 to 20 percent, which equals a \$1-4 million increase in each of Connecticut's three largest cities.
- ❑ Reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) will be addressed in 2002-03.
- ❑ Federal funds will be provided to states to develop state assessments.

The Department will convene a group of educators to advise it and the Board on several matters related to the requirements of the new legislation: the 2005-06 assessment; the 2002-03 report cards and what modifications are necessary to the current state, district and school Strategic School Profiles; and the need for state legislative amendments in the 2002 or 2003 Sessions of the General Assembly.

POSITION STATEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

The Board adopted a Position Statement on International Education. The Board asserts that Connecticut's public schools should expand international education learning opportunities for all students in pre-kindergarten through Grade 12. Such opportunities enhance students' abilities to function successfully in a multicultural, economically interdependent world. The Board states that international education is most effective when presented in a comprehensive, integrated manner. The Board's statement contains suggestions for consideration by local school systems in their discussions of how to integrate international education in their classrooms. A copy of the statement is attached to this issue of *The Board Report*, and has been posted on the Department's website (www.state.ct.us/sde).

SCHOOL LEADER LICENSURE ASSESSMENT AND PASSING STANDARD

The Board approved the School Leader Licensure Assessment as an alternate state competency examination for out-of-state candidates seeking certification for the education administrator endorsement. Also eligible to take this exam are in-state candidates who have failed to meet the standard on the Connecticut Administrator Test (CAT) after taking the CAT twice. The passing score on the SLLA was set at 161. This standard will be monitored. If, after a sufficient number of candidates have been examined, it is determined that an adjustment to the SLLA passing score is justified, a recommendation to adjust the passing standard will be made to the State Board of Education.

CONNECTICUT'S BLUEPRINT FOR READING ACHIEVEMENT: Curriculum Design and Teacher Training

The Board approved the joint report and recommendations of the State Departments of Education and Higher Education, which address the curriculum design and implementation of teacher training based on *Connecticut's Blueprint for Reading Achievement*. *Connecticut's Blueprint* was produced by a panel of reading experts, teachers, school administrators and higher education officials after an extensive review of research on how reading is learned and the knowledge and skills necessary for teachers to deliver effective reading instruction.

In September 2001, a survey was sent to all 14 of Connecticut's educator preparation programs, asking them to examine their current reading programs and indicate how the competencies defined in *Connecticut's Blueprint* are addressed in the course offerings at their institutions. Survey results indicate that the competencies are fully addressed in graduate programs. The five major competencies and their indicators are presented in undergraduate programs, but more instructional time would be required to address all competencies and each indicator beyond an awareness level.

The Board approved several recommendations to address the findings:

- ❑ Ensure that the course of study for elementary school teachers provides equal time and emphasis on phonemic awareness, phonological awareness, comprehension and knowledge of children's literature.
- ❑ Require that all teacher preparation institutions create performance assessments which evidence student competencies in all areas of *Connecticut's Blueprint*.
- ❑ State Department of Education staff members will provide assistance to those teacher preparation programs that report that they are not addressing all the competency indicators.
- ❑ Create an endorsement for a reading specialist, replacing the current remedial reading endorsement in the certification regulations. Reading specialists would receive in-depth instruction in each indicator of each competency, and would implement reading programs, mentor other teachers, develop reading units, diagnose reading difficulties and co-teach.

APPOINTMENTS

Kyra A. Nesteriak and James J. Ritchie were appointed as the Board's representatives to the Connecticut Advisory Council for School Administrator Professional Standards for a term ending January 15, 2004. The Council advises the Governor, State Board and Education Committee of the General Assembly on matters pertaining to administrator preparation, training, certification, professional development, assessment and evaluation, and professional discipline.

ANNUAL REPORT

In a separate action, the Board received the *2001 Annual Report of the Connecticut Advisory Council for School Administrator Professional Standards*. The report described the Council's focus on school administrator shortages and the need to identify strategies to maintain an adequate number of qualified school leaders in Connecticut's public schools.

APPROVAL OF TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS

QUINNIPIAC UNIVERSITY

The Board granted full program approval for the period October 1, 2002, through September 30, 2005, to the graduate Five-Year Middle Grades and Secondary M.A.T. Program at Quinnipiac University.

SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY

The Board granted full program approval for the period October 1, 2002, through September 30, 2004, to the early childhood undergraduate program preparing teachers for nursery through Grade 3.

SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN

The Board approved the State Plan for the Summer Food Service Program for Children for fiscal year 2002. This plan addresses children's critical need for proper nutrition throughout the summer vacation period. It is estimated that a total of 1,447,000 meals will be served during the summer of 2002 at a projected cost of approximately \$2.8 million. Grant funds will be distributed to local and regional school districts and other sponsors of summer food service programs.

The Board received from the Connecticut Advisory Council for Teacher Professional Standards its 2001 Annual Report. The primary focus of the Council in 2001 was on ensuring an adequate supply of qualified teachers in Connecticut's classrooms. In the coming year the Council will focus on areas of teacher support and retention, mandates and certification.

APPROVAL OF LONG-TERM PLAN FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Board approved a long-term regional plan submitted by the Norwich Board of Education to provide programs and services for Grade 7-12 students who have been identified as seriously emotionally disturbed. Norwich, Bozrah, Voluntown, Lisbon, Waterford, Stonington, Montville and Ledyard have submitted letters of support and have indicated that they will send students to the program. This facility will provide new options to students with special needs who are currently placed out of the Norwich district or in other districts within the LEARN area. State Board of Education approval is a prerequisite to approval by the General Assembly of a school construction grant.

The Board adopted the Finding of Facts and Recommended Decision concerning the revocation of the teaching certificates of Donna A. Simler, submitted by Hearing Officer Donal C. Collimore, and by a recorded roll call vote, revoked Ms. Simler's teaching certificates.

DENIAL OF PETITION TO BIFURCATE THE AMITY BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Board denied a petition submitted by Mr. Daniel Presnick of Orange to bifurcate the Amity Board of Education into two branches, one that deals with educational policy and a second that deals with financial matters. The Board found that bifurcation of a regional board of education would violate the Connecticut General Statutes, citing the following specific reasons for its decision: (1) a statutory provision requiring that the affairs of a regional school district be administered by a regional board of education, as a whole board, which shall elect, among other officers, a treasurer who shall be bonded; (2) a statutory provision that grants to the regional board, among other things, the power and duties conferred upon boards of education by the general statutes not inconsistent with laws concerning regional schools; and (3) a statutory provision that grants to the whole regional board of education the duty to prepare the annual budget of the regional school district.

BOARD ACTIVITIES

State Board of Education Chairman Craig E. Toensing is serving on the National Association of State Boards of Education Study Group on Low Performing Schools. The group meets quarterly and will issue a report on its findings in October 2002.

Board member Donald J. Coolican is serving on the National Association of State Boards of Education Study Group on Restructuring High Schools. This study group meets quarterly and will issue a report on its findings in October 2002.

Board member Terri L. Masters is serving on the Governor's Task Force on the Future of the Regional Vocational-Technical School System. The Task Force has been charged with the responsibility to develop an action plan for vocational-technical education in Connecticut that addresses both short- and long-term needs of Connecticut's economy. The Task Force is expected to issue an interim report in April 2002 and conclude its work in the summer of 2002.

Board member Patricia B. Luke has been attending monthly meetings of the New England School Development Council. This group will help develop a New England plan to strengthen school board/superintendent leadership for high student achievement.

VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SCHOOL MATTERS

BULLARD-HAVENS REGIONAL VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SCHOOL ROBOTICS TEAM

Representatives of the **Bullard-Havens Regional Vocational-Technical School Robotics Team** gave the Board a demonstration of the robot they had designed and constructed. The students competed in the Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology Competition in Orlando, Florida, and placed 18th out of 84 competitors. The Bullard-Havens Regional Vocational-Technical School team was deemed the highest-ranking rookie team overall, competing with 330 teams from throughout the nation. The Board commended the students and **Deborah Mills, their technology instructor and the 2002 Vocational-Technical Teacher of the Year**, for their creativity, commitment and accomplishments.

SCHEDULE OF TRADE REAUTHORIZATION

The Board approved a revised schedule of trade reauthorizations in the Regional Vocational-Technical School System. This action was taken in response to a recommendation made by the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee that related programs be reviewed in the same year. The five categories under which existing trades will be placed are consistent with clusters commonly referred to in industry. They are as follows: (1) Information Technology (to be reauthorized in 2004); (2) Manufacturing-Repair (to be reauthorized in 2005); (3) Health-Biosciences (to be reauthorized in 2006); (4) Retail-Tourism (to be reauthorized in 2007); and (5) Construction-Design (to be reauthorized in 2008). Some unrelated trades will be reviewed in January 2003 to bring them in line with the revised schedule of reauthorization.

TEXTBOOKS

The Board approved a list of textbooks for use in the Vocational-Technical School System.

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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To obtain a copy of a report considered by the Board, please contact the Office of Public Information, 860-713-6525.

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THE NEXT MEETING OF THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION IS SCHEDULED FOR WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6, 2002, AT 9:30 A.M.

The meeting will be held in Room 307 of the State Office Building, 165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, Connecticut. Visitors are advised to call the Office of Board Matters (860-713-6510) to confirm the meeting date and time.

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

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford

Position Statement on International Education

Adopted February 6, 2002

The Connecticut State Board of Education believes that Connecticut's public schools should expand international education learning opportunities for all students in pre-kindergarten through Grade 12. International education promotes knowledge and understanding of other countries – including their language, history, geography, religion, arts, and political and economic systems. It greatly enhances students' abilities to function successfully in a multi-cultural, economically interdependent world. In addition to ensuring that our students have a strong command of reading, writing and mathematics, and assisting our students in developing good character, we must also enable them to acquire an understanding of the world and its peoples. This, in turn, positions our students to understand their own connection with international issues and cultures, and how global issues are clearly linked to their lives and their future.

The Connecticut General Assembly adopted legislation in the 2001 Session that speaks to the importance of international education:

It shall be the policy of the state to encourage its students, teachers, administrators and educational policy makers to participate in international studies, international exchange programs and other activities that advance cultural awareness and promote mutual understanding and respect for the citizens of other countries. (Section 10-27 of the Connecticut General Statutes)

International education is most effective when presented in a comprehensive, integrated manner. It is maximized if built upon a solid foundation of knowledge about our nation's history and its influence on the development and preservation of democracy. International education goes beyond learning facts and figures about other nations; it promotes the understanding of cultural differences and similarities and enables students to understand how world affairs affect their lives and their community, state and nation. Such learning can take place through interdisciplinary projects that focus on worldwide issues such as the environment, energy, conflict resolution, resource allocation, human rights and civil rights. The study of a language other than English is a valuable tool in teaching students about the culture of other nations —and improves students' skills in critical thinking and English as well.

Local school systems can take several initiatives and maximize existing resources to integrate international education in their classrooms and schools.

- Integrate a worldwide perspective within existing courses of study at the elementary and secondary level (geography, history, government, economics, social sciences, second languages, mathematics, the arts and science) to provide

students with exposure to other cultures, and consider themes across the curriculum.

- ❑ Adopt policies and support programs designed to enable students to become proficient in English and at least one other language (i.e., begin study of world languages in early elementary school grades and continue through middle and high school years).
- ❑ Provide and host field study programs for students and teachers.
- ❑ Use community resources (museums, libraries, guest speakers, colleges and universities, cultural centers) and internal resources (e.g., individual students' staff members' parents' and community members' knowledge of or personal experiences in another country) to enhance classroom instruction.
- ❑ Employ internal resources (e.g., after-school language clubs, elective courses, etc.).
- ❑ Provide professional development opportunities to teachers and other education professionals to improve their knowledge of the rich history and culture of our nation and of other nations, and to increase their competence in second languages.
- ❑ Maximize use of existing technology resources in enhancing students' and teachers' communication with and information-gathering about other cultures.
- ❑ Apply existing research on effective ways to incorporate international education in public schools, and share successful practices with others.

America's future depends on its ability to reach out to the world and embrace the best contributions of all its people. The members of this and future generations need to have the skills, abilities and knowledge to preserve this nation and its ideals and be good neighbors. Providing students with a comprehensive, integrated international education will assist them in contributing to the achievement of these goals.

Adopted February 6, 2002
Scheduled for Review by State Board of Education not later than February 2006