



# THE BOARD REPORT



2001-02: Issue 4

March 2002

The State Board of Education met on March 6, 2002. Below are highlights of the meeting.

## ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN CONNECTICUT *Valley Regional Adult Education Program a Model in State*

The Board reviewed a report on adult education programs in Connecticut, *Connecticut Adult Education: Experience the Power of Lifelong Learning*. Recommendations proposed in the report address (1) access to a well-defined system of adult education, language and literacy services; (2) providing a system of high-quality education and support services which help adults meet their goals as parents, workers and community members; and (3) providing appropriate resources – money, time and services – to adult education programs.

Representatives of the Shelton Public School System described their adult education program and their success in providing participants with many needed services. **Leon Sylvester, Superintendent of the Shelton Public Schools**, stated that Shelton is part of the Naugatuck Valley as well as Fairfield County and serves a large, varied adult population. Dr. Sylvester described the current adult education program as “vibrant” and provided the Board with the history of the program. A 1975 fire at the main industry in town (B.F. Goodrich) resulted in a huge number of unemployed, undereducated adults in the Valley region. As a result, a lot of attention was placed on how best to meet the needs of these individuals. School officials, in collaboration with the State Department of Education, State Department of Labor, and business and industry officials, began a tool training program at Shelton High School, and provided placement services to those who lost their jobs as a result of the fire. The current and projected needs of the adult population are reviewed continuously, he noted, in order to ensure that appropriate educational services and programs are provided.

*(Adult Education, continued on page 2)*

## STATEWIDE CONNECTICUT MASTERY TEST RESULTS

Commissioner Sergi reported that average performance on the 2001 CMT improved somewhat over last year, and included an increasing number of test takers, including more limited-English-proficient students and special education students. Acknowledging his concern with the gaps in performance, Commissioner Sergi expressed his commitment to “attack the achievement gaps” and urged educators to analyze the data by racial groups, poverty level, special need, gender and school, and to take steps to change instruction to improve performance. In particular, districts need to concentrate on fourth grade reading.

- Grade 4 results showed 61 percent of students meeting the state goal in mathematics, 58 percent in reading and 61 percent in writing.
- Grade 6 results showed 61 percent of students meeting the goal in mathematics, 64 percent in reading and 60 percent in writing.
- Grade 8 results showed 55 percent of students meeting the goal in mathematics, 66 percent in reading and 60 percent in writing.

For detailed information about the results of the 2001 administration of the Connecticut Mastery Test, please access the Department’s website at [www.state.ct.us/sde](http://www.state.ct.us/sde). Click on “CMT Press Release, March 6, 2002,” or call Associate Commissioner Abigail Hughes at 860-713-6800.

## Adult Education (continued from page 1)

**Reina Marasco, Director of the Valley Regional Adult Education Program** described collaborative efforts with the workforce, family and community in determining the current needs of adults in the region. Ms. Marasco explained the advantages of bringing services to customers by providing programs at job sites and working around shifts.

The program also focuses on family literacy, Ms. Marasco noted. The adult education program works in conjunction with Even Start, addressing the educational and social needs of children and parents. The program, housed under one roof, allows adults to attend classes while quality programs for children and sibling care are provided. Parents of Even Start children participate in a 21-hour computer course and are allowed to take the computer home upon completion of the course. In addition, a family advocate provides parenting skill training to parents and conducts regular home visits. At each visit, the family receives a book to add to

its "home library." Ms. Marasco stated that the credit diploma program has become popular as an alternative to the GED course among the younger adult students. The program is housed in a career wing of Shelton High School, operating during the regular school day. "The primary purpose of all adult education services is to empower adults and families to become lifelong learners and enhance their opportunities for success," Ms. Marasco concluded.

**Sylina Gurnari, a former GED student**, described the impact the Valley Regional Adult Education Program has had on her life. She stated, "By obtaining my diploma and becoming an EMT, I was able to get a great job working with a community action agency. I am able to support my children and plan to enroll in a physician's assistant program. Without the support and understanding of the adult education program, I wouldn't be where I am today."

For further information about adult education in Connecticut, call Roberta Pawloski, Chief of the Bureau of Career and Adult Education at 860-807-2100. To obtain information about the Valley Regional Adult Education Program, please call Reina Marasco at 203-924-6651, extension 106.

## Recognition of Teachers

The Board honored the following teachers who successfully completed the rigorous yearlong National Board Certification Program:

- Marilynn Guerrero, a high school art teacher at Litchfield High School;
- Neela A. Thakur, a middle school social studies/history teacher at Ellington Middle School; and
- Dorothy T. Young, an elementary school teacher at Mary T. Murphy Elementary School in Branford.

Ms. Guerrero, referring to her involvement in the certification process, stated, "Going through the National Board Certification process was a great challenge and probably the most rewarding professional development activity in my career." Ms. Thakur commented, "It was extremely rewarding, and required a lot of hard work." She expressed appreciation for the support she received from her colleagues, principal and superintendent. Ms. Young thanked the State Board for financial support and likened the process to a "50,000 mile tune-up." She added, "The process has enriched my teaching, and is very child- and family-centered."

These teachers are among 53 Connecticut teachers who have earned National Board Certification. There are 16,037 teachers nationwide who have been awarded National Certification. Many Connecticut districts are providing incentives to encourage teachers to participate in this process. Commissioner Sergi stated that we anticipate increased growth in applicants as Connecticut continues to formulate initiatives to promote National Board Certification in Connecticut. For further information about participation in the National Board Certification process or successful district incentives, please contact Frances Rabinowitz, Chief of the Bureau of Curriculum and Instruction, at 860-713-6707.

## **ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION**

### **Connecticut State Board of Education and**

### **Board of Directors of the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE)**

The State Board held its annual roundtable discussion with the CABE Board of Directors. Members of the two groups discussed topics including the recently passed federal legislation ("No Child Left Behind Act") and its impact on local districts and the state; federal and state funding for education and special education; the relationship between early childhood education and adult education; teacher and administrator shortages; ways to close the achievement gap; funding for priority school districts; services for non-English-speaking students; the usefulness of Connecticut Mastery Test data; and air quality in school buildings.

CABE members who attended the session included Beverly Bobroske of Bristol, Mary Broderick of East Lyme, J. Callender Heminway of Granby, Alessandra Urist of Westport, Bobby Poole of Danbury, Steven Ledewitz of Amity (Regional District No. 5), Remie Ferreira of Terryville, Phyllis Harden of CABE Area 2, Gary Brochu of Berlin, Lynne Weeks of Windham, Joseph Musumeci of Woodstock, Arlene Pedone of Bethel, Sally Boske of Middletown, Frank Emanuele, Jr. of Cromwell, Thomas Reynolds of Ledyard, Eileen Baker of Old Saybrook, Sharon Jenkins of Bridgeport, Brian Perkins of New Haven, Richard Geremia of Waterbury and Beverly Washington of Groton.

Beverly Bobroske, President of CABE, and Craig Toensing, Chairman of the State Board, agreed that the annual forum has been an effective way to communicate ideas and concerns about public education in Connecticut.

#### **Special Education State Summit Replication Grant**

The Board approved the Department's application to the National State Directors of Special Education Policymaker Partnership for a \$25,000 State Summit Replication Grant. If awarded, Connecticut will use the funds to hold a summit that focuses on the issue of over-identification in special education. Participants would include policymakers, administrators, service providers, families and advocates.

#### **Amendments to Charter: New Beginnings, Inc.**

The Board approved amendments to the state charter originally approved in 1999 for New Beginnings, Inc. This school, to be located in Bridgeport, is awaiting funding by the General Assembly. It intends to serve 140 students in kindergarten through Grade 3, beginning in the fall of 2002. The school will serve Bridgeport students and will recruit students from Stratford and Trumbull.

#### **Approval of Plans of Representation – Regional School Districts No. 10, 12, 13 and 17**

The Board approved the plans of representation submitted by the reapportionment committees of Regional School Districts 10, 12, 13 and 17. The plans propose the configuration of the regional boards of education in each district, based on the member towns' population and in compliance with statutory requirements. Following public meetings on the plan in each town, the Reapportionment Committee in each district shall set the date for referenda in each town of the region. The plan of representation is established upon a majority of affirmative votes in each town of the region.

#### **Petition for Reconsideration – Revocation of Teaching Certificates**

The Board granted Ms. Donna Simler's petition for reconsideration of its February 6, 2002, decision to revoke her teaching certificates for a specified limited purpose.

**RVTSS Rolling Capital Improvement and Capital Equipment Plan 2001-06**

The Board approved the RVTSS Rolling Capital Improvement and Capital Equipment Plan 2001-06. The plan describes the system's activities over a five-year period to address the facility and equipment needs of each of the 17 vocational-technical schools. Upon approval by the Board, the Plan was submitted to the General Assembly.

**Approval of Textbooks**

The Board approved list of textbooks for use in the RVTSS. Prior to being recommended for State Board approval, textbooks are reviewed by members of the Program Steering Committee, Textbook Review Committee and program consultants.

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**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE</b></p> <p><b>Address:</b> 165 Capitol Avenue Room 301 Hartford, CT 06106</p> <p><b>Telephone:</b> (860) 713-6510</p> <p><b>Facsimile:</b> (860) 713-7002</p> <p><b>E-Mail:</b> pamela.bergin@po.state.ct.us</p> <p>To obtain a copy of a report considered by the Board, please contact the Office of Public Information, 860-713-6525.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Craig E. Toensing, Chairperson</i> <i>Janet M. Finneran, Vice Chairperson</i> <i>Amparo Adib-Samii</i> <i>Jennifer E. Chudy</i> <i>Donald J. Coolican</i> <i>Andrew Gladstein</i> <i>Patricia B. Luke</i> <i>Terri L. Masters</i> <i>Timothy J. McDonald</i> <i>Allan B. Taylor</i> <i>Annika L. Warren</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Theodore S. Sergi, Secretary</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Valerie Lewis, ex officio</i></p>
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**THE NEXT MEETING OF THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION IS SCHEDULED FOR WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3, 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](mailto:pamela.bergin@po.state.ct.us)

