



# THE BOARD REPORT



2002-2003: Issue 3

November–December 2002

The following is a summary of the November 6, 2002, and December 4, 2002, meetings of the State Board of Education.

## SUCCESSFUL PRACTICES: REPORTING ON ACHIEVEMENT GAPS Danbury Public Schools Middletown Public Schools

### Danbury

William Glass, Acting Superintendent of the Danbury Public School System, stated that the first step in closing achievement gaps is identifying where they exist and what causes them. Data reveal how schools compare with others within the school system and with the state as a whole, and are reported to the community. Mr. Glass described the “Learning Tree” model used by the Danbury school system. The model is linked to the state curriculum frameworks and national standards, and represents the whole educational experience of students. The leaves of the tree focus on subject matter (exit outcomes at various grade levels); the trunk focuses on habits for lifelong learning; and the roots represent the attitudes and attributes of learners.

Grade Level Learning Guides are provided to teachers at each grade level, and serve as an outline of what students should know and be able to do at the end of the school year. These benchmarks build upon the standards from the previous grade level, leading to a vertical curriculum alignment. Principals rely on a Learning Guide Toolbox, an instructional monitoring guide, which supports the concept of “principal as instructional leader.” Achievement is reported by subgroups to clearly illustrate progress in closing identified gaps.

The school system has developed an academic profile system that allows teachers to track individual progress on a longitudinal basis for each student. Relying on a diagnostic prescriptive model, teachers can continuously “diagnose” student performance and “prescribe” an educational experience that meets the student’s individual educational needs. *(Danbury, continued on page 3)*

### Middletown

Carol Parmelee Blancato, Superintendent of the Middletown Public School System, introduced Sally Boske, Chairperson of the Middletown Board of Education. Mrs. Boske explained the Board’s concern with the underrepresentation of minority and female students enrolled in Advanced Placement courses.

Responding to the Board’s direction, the school system conducted districtwide assessments of obstacles to participation in Advanced Placement classes, participation in gifted and talented programs, extracurricular activities, attendance and dropout rates, performance on the Connecticut Mastery Test, professional development, and the curriculum. In concert with the community, the school system developed a Diversity Enhancement Plan to (1) raise expectations and standards, with a focus on minority and female students; (2) increase parent and community involvement in the school system; and (3) expand after-school activities.

Superintendent Blancato discussed a few initiatives that the system pursued to implement the Diversity Enhancement Plan, such as requiring all students to take algebra and geometry in order to graduate, and providing after-school and summer-school support programs to improve student achievement. “Now in the fourth year of the diversity plan,” she added, “we are beginning to close the achievement gap.”

John Hennelly, Assistant Superintendent, reviewed questions asked of principals in assessing their progress in meeting the *(Middletown, continued on page 3)*

### Reappointment of Commissioner

The Board reappointed Theodore S. Sergi as Commissioner of Education, to a four-year term coterminous with the term of the Governor.

## **SUCCESSFUL PRACTICES:**

### **CONNECTICUT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE TEST**

**Bulkeley High School, Hartford  
Middletown High School, Middletown**

#### **SCHOOL CLIMATE**

**Wilton High School**

##### ***Middletown***

Middletown Superintendent of Schools Carol Parmelee Blancato told the Board that Middletown High School has improved its performance on the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT). She explained that the administration conducts a thorough analysis of the scores, and shares its findings with staff members and board of education members. In turn, an action plan to address areas in need of improvement is developed and implemented.

John Hennelly, Assistant Superintendent of the Middletown Public Schools, described initiatives that have resulted in a marked increase in CAPT mathematics scores. "We attribute the increase in scores to our focus on performance learning (e.g., real-world problem solving), and Middletown's requirement that all students take algebra and geometry."

CAPT data are disaggregated by gender, race/ethnicity and economic need, and are compared within the school, to the Education Reference Group, and to the state. To continue progress in this area, Middletown has designated as "next steps" the following:

- ✍ rather than focus on "test prep," emphasize skills integration;
- ✍ look closely at--and help students look closely at and address--performance in specific skills;
- ✍ find incentives to encourage students to examine and improve performance; and
- ✍ understand and agree upon the value of these skills, and help students do the same.

Middletown plans to improve participation on CAPT and to conduct a careful analysis of gender discrepancy in math and science. Attention will also be placed on helping students of color improve their performance, and helping teachers to realize the connections between what they teach and what is assessed.

##### ***Hartford***

Superintendent of Schools Robert Henry stated that the school system's attitude toward CAPT has changed, and he has seen an increase in the seriousness of students and faculty toward the test. "At Bulkeley High School," he continued, "we looked at the rate of teachers' success, and saw certain replicable elements that could be expanded throughout the school. For example, attendance is taken at the beginning of every period, which has increased student attendance throughout the day. In addition, the central office places emphasis on CAPT when meeting with principals." Superintendent Henry noted that scores and participation increased simultaneously, defying the assumption that an increase in student participation ordinarily results in a decrease in performance.

Evelyn Irizarry, Principal of Bulkeley High School, stated that she "is pleased, but not satisfied, with Bulkeley's improved test scores." One measure effective in improving performance on CAPT, Mrs. Irizarry continued, is rehiring retired teachers to tutor students in areas measured by CAPT. In addition, the school has stepped up efforts to communicate the importance of the test to parents, staff members and students. Another initiative that has contributed to Bulkeley's improved CAPT scores is the Reading Across the Disciplines program, in which every teacher has received training. Further, Mrs. Irizarry stated, CAPT review classes have helped students prepare for the test.

Timothy Sullivan, Assistant Principal of Bulkeley High School, spoke about the importance of data-based decision making. Data analysis at the school level enables building administrators to examine individual student performance as well as teacher performance and subject-level performance. This information is invaluable in helping students and teachers focus attention on honing specific skills not met on the CAPT assessment. CAPT classes are offered to students to provide them additional instruction and practice in those areas deemed in need of improvement.

### ***Wilton: School Climate***

Deborah Low, Principal of Wilton High School, discussed efforts to personalize Wilton High School and improve the school climate as it grows in enrollment. She cited national research that calls for strategies to personalize a larger school environment and to ensure that each student is engaged in the school program. The plan entails faculty members meeting with a group of approximately 20 students twice weekly. The group sessions would focus on various themes. Teachers would receive a stipend for serving as faculty mentors, and would be relieved of cafeteria and study hall duties. An aide would be hired to fulfill those duties.

The program is designed to enable students to develop skills that assist in their transition to high school. It also teaches them how to identify their learning styles, set academic goals and assess their own learning experiences. Benefits of the program, Ms. Low continued, include a greater sense of belonging, ensuring that “quiet students” do not fall through the cracks, greater comfort and ease in adapting to the high school, and encouraging students to reach out for extra academic help. The Wilton Board of Education approved this model conceptually. The district awaits whether this will be incorporated into the budget, she added.

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## **REPORTING ON ACHIEVEMENT GAPS (continued from page one)**

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### ***MIDDLETOWN***

Diversity Plan’s goals. He stated that at the elementary school level, it has been observed that there is a greater emphasis on diversity and greater and significant participation in after-school activities, and that communication with parents has improved. In addition, minority student performance on the CMT has improved at the elementary school level. At the middle school level, data reveal mixed trends in minority participation in advanced offerings, and improved performance on the CMT. Modest improvements were revealed at the high school level in terms of minority participation in advanced language arts, science and social studies courses, whereas minority participation in advanced mathematics courses decreased.

Mr. Hennelly reported that the program has been successful in raising awareness of the gap between minority and nonminority students in advanced mathematics classes, as well as in raising the performance of the students who have participated in the program.

While acknowledging steady, modest improvements, Mr. Hennelly added, “We find some of the data disturbing and need to concentrate efforts on closing the gaps.”

### ***DANBURY***

Edward Robbs, Principal of Broadview Middle School in Danbury, described one example of how the school system is working to close achievement gaps. Recognizing that no minority students were enrolled in advanced mathematics classes when he began working at Broadview, in cooperation with the Superintendent he started a “Student Academic Success” program. The program provides additional support to Hispanic and black students and is designed to raise their level of performance in mathematics.

## LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS: PART II AND PART III

The Board approved additional legislative proposals for submission to the General Assembly. Included in **Part II** of the Board's legislative package are proposals that would:

- ✂ improve the operation and funding of the **interdistrict magnet school program**
- ✂ expand the **minority teacher incentive program** to include students interested in becoming student support services personnel;
- ✂ allow state school construction reimbursement and a bonus for construction of a **family resource center** in an elementary school;
- ✂ eliminate the cap on the expenditures for computer equipment for **adult education programs** that are eligible for reimbursement and require coursework in civics and American government for the issuance of an adult education diploma;
- ✂ require towns to provide the same **health services** to students in state charter schools as they are already required to provide to students in private nonprofit schools;
- ✂ require the State Bond Commission to act on **bond authorizations for the Regional Vocational-Technical Schools** for equipment, repairs, buses and technology by August 31 each year;
- ✂ provide that state funds for the **costs of providing educational services to certain special education students** be included in the budget of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services rather than in the Department of Education budget;
- ✂ streamline the **school-to-career program**
- ✂ provide a process for the state to **intervene in school district operations** in certain circumstances;
- ✂ permit school districts to adopt **equivalencies for graduation credits** to provide greater flexibility in determining compliance with state-mandated graduation requirements;
- ✂ extend the current **regulations concerning educator certification** that were to have been repealed on July 1, 2003, to allow for a comprehensive review of Connecticut's educator certification continuum;
- ✂ amend provisions concerning construction bonuses for cooperative arrangements made pursuant to Section 10-158a of the Connecticut General Statutes;
- ✂ specify that the mandate requiring certain Grade 4 and Grade 6 priority school district students to attend **summer school** be within available appropriations;
- ✂ amend the provisions concerning the **reemployment of retired teachers** to raise the amount of money they are able to earn when they are employed temporarily and allow them to be employed for not more than two years with one board of education, without the statutory salary limitations, in subject shortage areas and other positions deemed necessary by the Commissioner of Education;
- ✂ amend the statute concerning **school construction grant applicants** by changing the date by which local funding must be secured from June 30 to November 30 in order for a project (for which an application was filed by June 30) to be included in the priority list for the subsequent year;
- ✂ define a method of **prioritizing individual school construction projects within categories** on the annual school construction priority list submitted to the General Assembly for grant authorizations;
- ✂ provide that the Commissioner of Education, rather than the State Board of Education, approve a town or regional school district's entering into a **design-build contract for new school construction**;
- ✂ extend the validity of the **elementary education and comprehensive special education endorsements** to include kindergarten;
- ✂ extend the following provisions concerning educator certificate holders to **individuals with permits and authorizations issued by the State Board**:
  - the denial of issuance or reissuance of certificates to applicants convicted of enumerated offenses;
  - the requirement that the Department of Children and Families (DCF) notify the state agency responsible for the issuance of a certificate when the Commissioner of DCF has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused by a staff member of a public or private institution or facility providing care for children or private school who holds a certificate issued by the state; and
  - the requirement that copies of mandated written reports concerning certified school employees be sent to the Commissioner of Education;
- ✂ **update provisions concerning the Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) Assessors** by specifying that the beginning teacher shall be assessed by educators with teaching experience in the same general subject area as the beginning teacher;
- ✂ amend the special education statutes, including conforming state provisions with federal regulations, clarifying that boards of education can make placements in private facilities providing special education only if the facility is approved by the Commissioner of Education, except that the Commissioner may give

- prior approval to placements in non-approved or out-of-state facilities if he determines that there is no approved private facility that is appropriate and available for a particular child;
- ✍ allow the Department to use up to 50 percent of **unexpended school readiness funds** for supplemental grants to towns, and up to 50 percent of those funds to enhance the system of professional development for preschool educators in school readiness programs;
- ✍ require all **state-funded Head Start programs** to allocate at least 10 percent of their state funds for activities designed to increase the literacy and numeracy skills of children and provide for a five-year limit to grant awards, with reapplication after five years; and
- ✍ clarify and simplify the listing of which services family resource centers must provide.

Included in **Part III** of the Board's legislative package are proposals that would:

- ✍ **authorize the Commissioner to intervene in matters of controversy involving a local or regional board of education** which, in the opinion of the Commissioner, put at risk the quality of education in the school district; allow the Commissioner to engage in fact-finding and provide mediation concerning the matter in controversy, require the local or regional board of education to cooperate fully with the efforts of the Commissioner; and authorize the Commissioner to issue findings, reports and advisory opinions, including recommendations for further action by the local or regional board of education and require such board to respond to the Commissioner's recommendations within a prescribed period;
- ✍ **consolidate the priority school district, school readiness, early reading success, extended school building hours and summer school grant programs** by creating a block grant program for targeted purposes in districts with the most need;
- ✍ provide that, in order for a local or regional board of education to be eligible for a grant for information technology, it must have a **technology plan** developed or updated during the three-year period preceding the date of application for grant funds. This change will align the state statute with federal guidelines for technology plans and will reduce the administrative burden on districts while providing for a more coordinated, comprehensive approach by allowing for more time for implementation and evaluation;
- ✍ amend the school health statutes to **allow the dissemination of medications**, without parental consent, in times declared by the Governor as **civil preparedness emergencies**, while allowing parents to notify local or regional boards of education in advance that they do not consent to such practice; and
- ✍ require that individuals who interact with students and are **employees of providers of supplemental services pursuant to the No Child Left Behind Act** be fingerprinted and submit to state and national criminal history records checks.

### ASSESSMENT OF PARAPROFESSIONALS

The Board adopted the ParaPro Assessment as the form of assessment for paraprofessionals, effective January 1, 2003. The *No Child Left Behind Act* requires a rigorous state or local assessment as one option to assess current and newly hired paraprofessionals. The Connecticut State Department worked collaboratively with 16 other states and the Educational Testing Service in the development of a state assessment for paraprofessionals that meets the federal requirements. The Board adopted a passing standard of 457. The national pass rate at this standard on a pilot assessment was 79.1, and is consistent with first-time pass rates for most Praxis examinations. As with other assessments, the standard will be monitored and reviewed after one year of Connecticut test data is collected.

### POSITION STATEMENT ON TIME IN RELATION TO STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

As part of its five-year review cycle, the Board discussed whether the existing *Position Statement on Time* needed revisions. The version presented to the Board by the Policy Development Committee contained only minor edits, and will be presented for adoption in January 2003.

### COMPLAINT AGAINST THE NEW BRITAIN BOARD OF EDUCATION: FAILURE TO MEET MINIMUM EXPENDITURE REQUIREMENT (MER) IN 2002-2003

Pursuant to Section 10-4b of the Connecticut General Statutes and Section 10-4b-3(a)(2) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, the Board initiated a substantial complaint against the New Britain Board of Education based on a projected MER shortfall of \$3,382,806 in 2002-2003. While it is still possible that this issue may be resolved at the local level, the Board voted to initiate a formal inquiry in the event that local resolution proves unattainable.

## CONNECTICUT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE TEST (CAPT) RESULTS

The Board reviewed the 2002 CAPT results, administered to a total of 37,096 students. Roughly 46 percent of Grade 10 students scored at or above the state goal on each test, the highest percentage since the test was first administered in 1995, when 35 percent met the goal. Approximately 45 percent met the state goal in 2001. The 2002 CAPT marks the second year that the second generation CAPT has been administered to Grade 10 students, which means that comparisons can be made to the 2001 CAPT results.

Although there were significant improvements in participation rates, student attendance – especially that of special education students – remains an issue in some districts. Commissioner Sergi noted, “Even with the increase in student participation on the test and some increases in scores, no one should be satisfied with the results. The very small rate of improvement and the persistent gaps among groups counter the good news of more students taking the test. We are going to have to step up our annual progress in order to meet the new federal statutory expectations both in terms of the growth in achievement and the participation rate.” Superintendents were mailed a copy of the press release and circular letter on the 2002 CAPT results in November. For further information about the CAPT results, access the Department’s website at [www.state.ct.us/sde](http://www.state.ct.us/sde).

## UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL EDUCATION: PANEL PRESENTATION

The State Board of Education has supported quality preschool education for all Connecticut’s three- and four-year-old children. The State Department of Education, in partnership with the Department of Social Services, provides approximately \$40 million for the state school readiness and child daycare grant program, which funds high-quality preschool placements for more than 6,000 children. At least 60 percent of the children enrolled in school readiness grant programs in any district must be from families who are at or below 75 percent of Connecticut’s median family income.

The Head Start Program supports an additional 6,500 children in Connecticut’s priority and transitional school districts at a cost of approximately \$45 million. The State Department of Education administers a Head Start grant of \$5.1 million, allowing another 440 children to receive a Head Start program. In addition, the Department of Social Services provides center-based daycare to another 3,282 children in Connecticut so that families with preschool children can maintain employment.

Dr. Walter Gilliam, psychologist and Associate Research Scientist at the Yale University Child Study Center and faculty Fellow at the Yale Bush Center on Child Development and Social Policy, shared his findings of studies in prekindergarten service delivery and the impact of early childhood programs. Dr. Gilliam informed the Board that every evaluation of preschool education programs reveals that there is a direct, positive relationship between children who have been enrolled in preschool programs and later academic achievement, a corresponding lower rate of grade retention and a clear benefit to all children enrolled in such programs. Dr. Gilliam explained that in Bridgeport, it was found that 48 percent of students in a control group were retained in Grade 1, versus one percent of students who had a school readiness experience. He added that there is a notable increase in language skills for students enrolled in mixed socioeconomic preschool programs as opposed to nondiverse programs. Ninety percent of classrooms accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) have been rated as “good” or “better,” Dr. Gilliam noted. This is important in that Connecticut requires NAEYC accreditation within three years of receipt of funding.

Dr. Steven Barnett, Professor of Education Economics and Public Policy and Director of the National Institute for Early Education Research at Rutgers University, shared with the Board findings of his research over the past 20 years. There is broad evidence supporting the economic and educational benefits of quality preschool programs, Dr. Barnett stated. He summarized the results of studies of three preschool programs (Chicago, Michigan and North Carolina) and the concomitant, significant, long-term cost benefits in terms of earnings, productivity, reduced crime, participation in higher education, etc. “The benefits of preschool programs are not restricted to low-income children,” Dr. Barnett continued. “Middle-income children constitute 60 percent of children enrolled in preschool programs and, due to the large number and diverse needs within this group, they also benefit from a preschool experience.” Dr. Barnett concluded by telling the Board that Connecticut is second in the nation in terms of preschool enrollment, with 61 percent of 3- and 4-year-olds in a preschool program.

## **PETITION FOR DECLARATORY RULING – NONNEWAUG TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION, ET AL.**

The Board agreed to issue a declaratory ruling in response to the petition filed by the Nonnewaug Teachers' Association. The Nonnewaug Teachers' Association filed the petition on October 3, 2002, requesting a ruling with respect to whether the Virtual Teacher Program used by Regional School District No. 14 is in violation of the certification requirements set forth in Connecticut General Statutes. The State Board of Education will hold informational hearings on this matter on January 16 and February 19, 2003. The hearings will be held in the State Office Building in Hartford.

## **FALL HIRING REPORT 2002**

The Board reviewed the *Fall Hiring Report and Related Data 2002*. A few highlights noted in the report follow.

- ✎ The total number of certified positions in Connecticut has increased by more than 9,000 since 1987, and student enrollment also increased.
- ✎ 92.6 percent of certified positions were filled by October 1, the highest percentage over the last 15 years.
- ✎ ERG I districts had the highest percentage of vacancies on October 1 (13.3 percent, compared to an average of 2.6 percent across all other ERGs), but this is a marked decline of 5.3 percentage points compared to October 1, 2001, data.
- ✎ The greatest shortage areas, based on 2001-02 data, were special education, music, speech and language pathology, and mathematics. 2002-03 data reveal that speech and language pathology is the greatest shortage area, followed by bilingual education, special education and music.
- ✎ The number of Durational Shortage Area Permits (DSAPs) issued to districts has increased significantly over the past six years, from 35 in 1997-98 to 805 in 2001-02. As of October 1, 2002, 466 DSAPs have been issued for the current school year. The largest number of DSAPs were issued in Spanish, special education and Grade 7-12 mathematics.

The report states that more than 40 percent of our educators will be retiring within the next 10 to 12 years. Student enrollment is expected to peak at 582,000 in the fall of 2005, and to be very close to the fall 2001 enrollment of 570,000 in 2010. Also detailed in the report are the state initiatives to attract and retain educators. The report concludes by stating that Connecticut has been experiencing problems with finding qualified certified teachers in certain subject areas and in urban districts with lower annual salaries and benefits. In addition, the *No Child Left Behind Act* requires that by 2005-06 all teachers teaching in core academic subjects be highly qualified (i.e., hold full certification). Based on the 2001-02 Education Staff File data, 2.4 percent of Connecticut's teachers teaching core academic subjects are not "highly qualified." This requirement will have implications for districts to find and hire fully certified teachers.

## **APPROVAL OF PROGRAM: EASTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY**

The Board granted full program approval for the period December 4, 2002, through September 30, 2007, to the Eastern Connecticut State University graduate teacher preparation programs preparing teachers in the following secondary endorsement areas: biology, earth science, English, history/social studies and mathematics.

## **INTENT TO AMEND REGULATIONS**

The Board declared its intent to amend Section 10-76h-11 of the Regulations of State Agencies concerning special education due process hearings by adding a new subsection concerning the appearance of counsel at special education due process hearings and Section 10-76d-18 concerning the right to review and inspect student records by clarifying the extent to which material in a student's file is required to be copied.

## **APPLICATION FOR FUNDS: IMPROVING THE HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELL-BEING OF YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH COORDINATED SCHOOL HEALTH PROGRAMS**

The Board approved the 2003-2004 cooperative agreement application titled "Improving the Health, Education and Well-being of Young People Through Coordinated School Health Programs" for submission to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Connecticut's application for \$874,354.07 contains four priority areas: youth risk behavior survey; HIV prevention for school-age youth; coordinated school health programs; and asthma demonstration project.

## OUTSTANDING EDUCATORS

The Board recognized the following educators for their accomplishments:

- ✍ **Wendy Nelson Kauffman, 2003 Connecticut Teacher of the Year.** Ms. Kauffman is a social studies teacher at Bloomfield High School. She will receive national attention as Connecticut's representative in the 2003 National Teacher of the Year Program.
- ✍ **Janice Huber Bacewicz, a finalist in the 2003 Connecticut Teacher of the Year competition.** Ms. Bacewicz is an elementary art teacher at Birch Grove Primary School in Tolland.
- ✍ **Dorothy Bain Raviele, a finalist in the 2003 Connecticut Teacher of the Year competition.** Ms. Raviele is a world language teacher at Bristol Central High School.
- ✍ **Hugh D. Birdsall, a finalist in the 2003 Connecticut Teacher of the Year competition.** Mr. Birdsall teaches English to speakers of other languages at the LEARN Multicultural Magnet School in Waterford.
- ✍ **Karen Smith, Connecticut Association of Schools' 2002 Elementary School Principal of the Year/National Distinguished Principal.** Ms. Smith, Principal of Walter A. Derynoski Elementary School in Southington, served as Connecticut's representative in the 2002 National Distinguished Principal Awards Program.
- ✍ **Laura Russo, Connecticut Association of Schools' 2002 Elementary School Assistant Principal of the Year.** Ms. Russo is the former Assistant Principal of Hill Central Elementary School in New Haven.
- ✍ **Paul Cavaliere, Jr., Connecticut Association of Schools' 2002 Middle School Principal of the Year.** Mr. Cavaliere, Principal of Sage Park Middle School in Windsor, will serve as Connecticut's representative in the 2002 National Middle School Principal of the Year competition.
- ✍ **Rochelle Schwartz, Connecticut Association of Schools' 2002 Middle School Assistant Principal of the Year.** Ms. Schwartz is the former Assistant Principal of Litchfield Junior and Senior High School, and will serve as Connecticut's representative in the 2002 National Assistant Principal of the Year competition.
- ✍ **John Goetz, Connecticut Association of Schools' 2002 High School Principal of the Year.** Mr. Goetz, Principal of Danbury High School, will serve as Connecticut's representative in the 2002 National High School Principal of the Year competition.
- ✍ **Walter Zalaski, Connecticut Association of Schools' 2002 High School Assistant Principal of the Year.** Mr. Zalaski is the Assistant Principal of Simsbury High School.
- ✍ **David Cressy, Connecticut Association of Public Schools Superintendents' 2003 Superintendent of the Year.** Dr. Cressy, Superintendent of Schools in Cheshire, will serve as Connecticut's representative in the 2003 National Superintendent of the Year competition.
- ✍ **John Reed, Connecticut Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development's 2002 Education Leader of the Year.** Dr. Reed retired as Superintendent of the Newtown Public School System.
- ✍ **Colleen Morey, Connecticut Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development's 2002 Education Leader of the Year.** Ms. Morey is the Coordinator of Physical Education, Health, Family and Consumer Sciences, and Athletics for the Greenwich Public Schools.
- ✍ **Ronald Zeppieri, 2002 School Business Official of the Year.** Mr. Zeppieri is the Business Manager for the Old Saybrook Public Schools.

**BEGINNING EDUCATOR SUPPORT AND TRAINING (BEST) PROGRAM  
PORTFOLIO PERFORMANCE RESULTS 1999-2002**

The Board reviewed a report on the BEST portfolio performance results. Key findings of the report include the following:

- ✍ The vast majority of beginning teachers successfully completed the portfolio assessment with their first submission.
- ✍ Beginning teachers in priority districts do not do quite as well in the portfolio assessment as beginning teachers in more affluent districts.
- ✍ The majority of beginning teachers reported receiving adequate support from their mentors during both their first and second years of teaching.
- ✍ Beginning teachers also reported receiving support from other individuals and relatively high levels of satisfaction with that support.
- ✍ Beginning teachers reported that the portfolio afforded them the opportunity to demonstrate their teaching competency.

The Department will continue to make improvements in the BEST Program, including further streamlining portfolio requirements, expanding professional development opportunities around the portfolio process, and promoting a "master mentor" model of support. The Department will convene a task force during calendar year 2003 to re-examine Connecticut's Continuum for Teacher Quality to ensure that all its teachers and school leaders develop programs that will build upon the successes of the past and meet future challenges.

**ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR SCHOOL APPROVAL**

The Board reappointed Linda Corona, Armand Fabbri, Sheryl Herriman and Margaret Sheehy, and appointed Jane Garibay to the Advisory Council for School Approval for terms ending June 2005. The Council is responsible for reviewing and recommending all procedures, evaluation instruments, material and criteria related to the state approval process in collaboration with the State Department of Education. It also is charged with the review of applications of schools for state approval and makes recommendations concerning their approval to the State Board of Education, and reviews applications of accrediting agencies for recognition by the State Board.

**APPLICATION FOR FUNDS:  
FULBRIGHT-HAYS GROUP PROJECTS ABROAD PROGRAM**

The Board approved an application for funds titled "Changing China: A Geographic Perspective Project" for submission to the United States Department of Education. Funds will be used to support 17 teachers in a 4-week field experience in China. The project is designed to strengthen international studies in Connecticut schools.

**APPLICATION FOR FUNDS:  
READING FIRST**

The Board approved the submission of a grant application in the amount of \$7,392,983 to the United States Department of Education for the Reading First Grant. A maximum of 17 grants to 17 school districts (including the 14 Priority School Districts, 10 transitional school districts and the "distressed" municipalities as identified by the Department of Economic Development), serving one school selected by each district, will be identified based on competitive proposals submitted. The Reading First program focuses on using proven methods of early reading instruction in kindergarten through Grade 3 classrooms, and on preparing classroom teachers to screen, identify and eliminate reading barriers facing their students.

**APPLICATION FOR FUNDS: CONNECTICUT EARLY READING SUCCESS INSTITUTE**

The Board approved the Department's application to the United States Department of Education for the Fund for Improvement of Education (FIE) Program. The \$800,000 grant will enable the Connecticut State Department of Education, in collaboration with the University of Rhode Island and Haskins Laboratory, to continue to provide support to priority school districts to broaden the training of professionals in best practices in reading instruction.

**APPLICATION FOR FUNDS: HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

The Board approved the Department's application for \$50,000 to the United States Department of Health and Human Services for the "Healthy Tomorrows Partnership for Children" grant. Funds would be used to produce five major projects in partnership with Connecticut Public Television (CPTV) that promote and improve the health, education and well-being of Connecticut's children by targeting information to parents and families of newborn babies.

## Regional Vocational-Technical School System (RVTSS) Matters

### **TUITION AND FEE STRUCTURE**

The Board approved a proposal to increase 2003-2004 tuition rates for full- and part-time adult programs, summer school, breakfast and lunch prices, use of facilities fees and production rates.

### **STRATEGIC SCHOOL PROFILE 2001-2002**

The Board reviewed the Strategic School Profile District Report 2001-02. The report contains data on the Regional Vocational-Technical School System (RVTSS), including enrollment trends, student diversity, school need, school resources, information about staff members' education, attendance and experience; and student performance as measured by the SAT, NOCTI, attendance, physical fitness, dropout rate, CAPT scores and graduate follow-up data. Highlights of the report include a small, steady increase in both mathematics and science (4.5 percent and 3.6 percent, respectively) and a significant increase (17.1 percent) in reading in the number of students at or above proficiency on CAPT; a decrease in the number of students scoring in the "intervention level" of CAPT (i.e., mathematics, 9 percent decrease; science, 4 percent decrease; and reading, 26.6 percent decrease). In addition, the NOCTI system assessment results are approaching the national average in both the written and performance segments, with 66 percent of all seniors tested in NOCTI to date. The system also has realized an increase in the number of students taking the PSAT and the SAT. The report also details concerns, including the need to improve writing scores on both CAPT and NOCTI; the performance of bilingual students on the Language Assessment Scale (LAS) assessment; class size in certain schools; and the need to address a significant increase in the number of bilingual and special education students in specific schools. The report is posted on the web and has been forwarded to all directors of vocational-technical schools.

### **REAUTHORIZATION OF TRADES**

The following trades were reauthorized, pursuant to Section 10-95i(b) of the Connecticut General Statutes: Architectural Drafting, Electrical, Masonry, Plumbing and Heating, and Signal and Communication, to January 2008; Hairdressing/Cosmetology/Barbering and Hotel/Hospitality, to January 2007; Health Technology, Home Health Aide/Certified Nurse Assistant, and Surgical Technician, to January 2006; and Welding/Metal Trades Technology and Building and Remodeling, to January 2005.

### **ADMISSIONS CRITERIA STUDY**

The Board received the first report on the relationship between admissions scores and performance in the RVTSS, as required by state statute. The report contains the proposed design for the Admissions Study and an explanation of the research activities completed in response to current reporting requirements. It also includes information about technological challenges related to establishing the database, a descriptive profile and initial analysis of the 2003 cohort and a summary of next steps in the admissions study project.

### **2001-2002 ANNUAL PLAN**

The Board received a report on the progress of meeting the goals of the 2001-2002 Annual Plan. The report cites several accomplishments as well as concerns with regard to the VTSS meeting the goals. This information is used by the central office in setting its goals and objectives, and is addressed in individual school improvement plans. Superintendent Spera reported, "The 2002-2003 Annual Plan, along with the alignment of funds to support curricula activities, staff training, high-quality teachers and meeting requirements of the *No Child Left Behind Act*, will enhance the system's efforts to demonstrate yearly progress in both student and system goals."

### **CHARLES E. GOOLEY MENTORSHIP PROGRAM**

The Board approved the RVTSS application for funds to Northeast Utilities for funds available under the Charles E. Gooley Mentorship Program. Grant funds will enable A.I. Prince Regional Vocational-Technical School to provide a mentorship program that would include enrichment and tutorial activities to one student each year who exhibits leadership skills but is academically marginal. The RVTSS requested \$102,329 over a five-year period.

# CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

(effective July 1, 2002)

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE</b></p> <p><b>Address:</b> 165 Capitol Ave. 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> <a href="mailto:pamela.bergin@po.state.ct.us">pamela.bergin@po.state.ct.us</a></p> <p>To obtain a copy of a report considered by the Board, please contact the Office of Public Information, 860-713-6526.</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>Donald J. Coolican</i> <i>Natalie L. Ivanoff</i> <i>Patricia B. Luke</i> <i>Terri L. Masters</i> <i>Timothy J. McDonald</i> <i>Derek Smitt</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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**NOTE:** The next meeting of the State Board of Education will be Wednesday, January 8, 2003, 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 and suggestions 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).



