



# THE BOARD REPORT



2002-2003: Issue 1

September 11, 2002

*The following is a summary of the September 11, 2002, meeting of the State Board of Education.*

## COMMISSIONER'S BACK-TO-SCHOOL MESSAGE Relentlessly Pursuing Success for Every Student

Commissioner Sergi delivered his 2002-2003 Back-to-School message. The Commissioner focused his remarks on effective leadership in the pursuit of success for every student and closing the achievement gaps. He urged superintendents, local school board members and all involved in the public schools to continuously review data on student achievement and focus resources to identify and close gaps in student achievement. Commissioner Sergi stated, "While every day in school should be fun, challenging, rewarding and satisfying in its own right, it must also be another strong step in the direction of lifelong achievement, independence, good citizenship, health and well-being." In explaining this challenge, he highlighted the "significant differences in achievement between rich and poor students, white and African-American and Hispanic students, boys and girls, native English-speakers and limited-English-proficient students, and students with disabilities and those without. Gaps exist not just between communities, but within every community and within every school," Commissioner Sergi explained. He added, "I have every expectation that with our continuous focus on every student, the 2002-03 school year will be the best ever." The complete version of the Commissioner's message has been posted on the Department's website ([www.state.ct.us/sde](http://www.state.ct.us/sde)).

Commissioner Sergi introduced **Dr. James Thompson, Principal of Simpson-Waverly School** in Hartford, and **Lois Luddy, a teacher at Simpson-Waverly and Hartford's Teacher of the Year**. He commended Simpson-Waverly, an Education Reference Group (ERG) I school, for "beating the odds" and demonstrating that socioeconomic status does not always predict student achievement. He noted that continuity in leadership should not be underestimated, informing the Board that Dr. Thompson has been the principal at Simpson-Waverly for 16 years, and has worked in the Hartford Public Schools for a total of 34 years.

Dr. Thompson stated that more than 95 percent of students in Grades 4 and 6 score at or above the state average on the reading and mathematics subtests of the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and 60 percent score above the goal level on reading and mathematics. Dr. Thompson attributes the school's success to a **school improvement plan that sets clear expectations and accountability measures** for staff members and students; offering **professional development** tailored to promote success in literacy and numeracy; and establishing **specific goals to enhance student achievement**. This year's goals, he noted, are to improve writing and mathematics achievement as assessed by the CMT, to improve reading achievement as assessed by the CMT and Success for All, and to become a Blue Ribbon School. When asked what is the single most important factor in determining a school's success, Dr. Thompson replied, "Consistent effective

instruction, coupled with parental involvement, has the greatest effect on academic achievement."

Lois Luddy stated that this is her 28<sup>th</sup> year of teaching in the Hartford Public Schools. She said that in order to be a successful teacher, one must understand the individual needs and learning styles of her students, support the goals and objectives of the school system and be committed to educating *all* children. She explained that although the district's curriculum may be prescriptive, there is room for teachers to be creative in how they teach. Mrs. Luddy stated that Dr. Thompson is an effective educational leader who communicates clearly the high expectations he has of his teachers. Equally important, she added, he ensures that all supports are in place to help teachers meet those expectations.

For further information, please contact Dr. Thompson at 860.695.5160.

### ***Oath of Office: Natalie Ivanoff and Derek Smitt***

Newly appointed student State Board of Education members Natalie Ivanoff and Derek Smitt were administered the *Oath of Office of Public Official*. Natalie, a senior at Emmett O'Brien Regional Vocational-Technical School in Ansonia, and Derek, a senior at Orville H. Platt High School in Meriden, were appointed by Governor Rowland to serve on the Board for the period July 2002 through June 2003.

This is the fifth year the Connecticut State Board of Education has had student members, and the first year a student from the Vocational-Technical School System was appointed to the Board. Chairman Craig E. Toensing welcomed the two students and stated, "Natalie and Derek attended the Board's retreat in August and presented several good ideas about ways to improve the quality of public education. We look forward to receiving their continued input during the coming year."

### **S.A.T. RESULTS**

Commissioner Sergi reported that 31,399 Connecticut students took the SAT in 2002, an increase of almost 1,500 students over last year and the highest number in more than 20 years in the state, placing Connecticut first among the states in test participation rate. Performance remained strong this year, one point below the 25-year highest average score. Connecticut's combined average score was 1018, two points below the national average. The national average represents a participation rate of approximately 4 of 10 high school graduates, compared with Connecticut's rate of more than 8 of 10 graduates. Commissioner Sergi acknowledged Connecticut's participation and performance, but pointed out, "The persistent gap between minority and nonminority student scores continues to reflect the economic conditions and disparities in Connecticut." He added, "Higher education should be within everyone's reach. Preparing for and taking the SAT is a vital step on the path toward higher achievement and advanced study." In addition to having the highest participation rate in the nation, other highlights include:

- ✂ Connecticut's performance was among the best in the nation when taking into account both participation rate and average score (first in participation, and eighth among 23 states with participation rates 50 percent and above);
- ✂ Connecticut's percentages of students scoring 600 and above on the verbal (22.9%) and math (24.4%) sections show that high numbers of Connecticut's students are performing well above the national average on the SAT;
- ✂ more Connecticut students are considering pursuing higher education in state;
- ✂ females in Connecticut continued to improve their SAT performance, scoring equally to males on the verbal portion, and reducing the gap on the mathematics test to 30 points, the smallest gap in the past 30 years; and
- ✂ 23 percent of Connecticut graduates took at least one of the SAT II Subject Tests, well over twice the national rate of 9 percent.

For further information, please call Abigail Hughes, Associate Commissioner, at 860-713-6800.

### **POSITION STATEMENT ON EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

The Board adopted *Educational Leadership: A Collaborative Effort to Improve Student Achievement*. This position statement highlights the critical need for effective educational leaders who can promote changes required to adequately prepare students for the world today and in the future. The statement will be shared with Connecticut superintendents, principals and local board of education members, and is intended to elicit discussions in school districts about the roles and responsibilities of all who are involved in public education: school board members, superintendents, principals, teachers, students, parents and community-based partners. A copy of the statement is attached to this issue of *The Board Report*, and is posted on the Department's website ([www.state.ct.us/sde](http://www.state.ct.us/sde)).

### **POSITION STATEMENT ON PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

The Board adopted the revised *Position Statement on Preschool Programs and Services*. This statement, originally adopted by the Board in 1997, reflects the provisions of and priorities set forth in the Board's 2001-2005 *Comprehensive Plan*. The new statement, while preserving the primary goals of the original statement, advances the importance of local school board leadership in each community to ensure that the educational needs of the preschool-age population are met. It outlines the local board's responsibilities to strengthen the connections with private and public partners to address the multiple needs of preschool children, and the State Board's responsibility to ensure that all children enter Connecticut's schools ready to learn. This statement will be disseminated to educators and local school board members, and has been posted on the Department's website ([www.state.ct.us/sde](http://www.state.ct.us/sde)). A copy of the statement is attached to this issue of *The Board Report*.

## **DRAFT POSITION STATEMENT ON ADULT EDUCATION**

The draft of a revised *Position Statement on Adult Education* was reviewed. The statement, to be presented for adoption in October, addresses accessibility to adult education, English-language and literacy services and the need for appropriate measures to determine program effectiveness in meeting the needs of adult learners. The statement also explains the link between adult education and enhancing literacy in the family. The statement is intended to elicit discussions across the state concerning how best to serve approximately 500,000 adults in Connecticut who lack basic skills in reading, writing and computation.

## **CERTIFICATION REGULATIONS**

The Board discussed potential changes to certification requirements that would be implemented through the regulatory or legislative process. Discussion topics included (1) extending the special education endorsement to the kindergarten level (currently it is valid for Grades 1-12); (2) extending the elementary education endorsement to kindergarten (currently it is valid for Grades 1-6); and (3) repealing the certification regulations that are due to take effect July 1, 2003, and eliminating the expiration date of the current regulations. A panel of superintendents and deans of education provided comments and concerns about the current and prospective certification regulations, and made recommendations to the Department. The Board will continue its consideration of the proposed changes at its October meeting.

## **TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM: EASTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY**

The Board granted full program approval to the Eastern Connecticut State University undergraduate and graduate educator preparation programs for the period October 1, 2002, through September 30, 2007.

## **TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM: SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY**

The Board granted full program approval to the Southern Connecticut State University elementary education/bilingual education dual certification program. This dual certification undergraduate program fully meets the requirements of dual certification under current certification regulations and for the new elementary/bilingual certification under the 2003 regulations. The program was approved for the period October 1, 2002, through September 30, 2004, in order to synchronize the review cycle for this program with other endorsement areas that already have been granted full program approval.

## **TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM: CONNECTICUT COLLEGE**

The Board extended from September 30, 2004, to September 30, 2005, program approval of the Connecticut College teacher preparation programs in order to allow the school additional time to adequately prepare for the scheduled shift to the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) program approval standards.

## **CHARTER SCHOOL ENROLLMENTS: 2002-2003**

The Board approved the redistribution of six seats authorized for Amistad Academy to Common Ground Charter School, Explorations Charter School and New Beginnings Charter School, which will each gain two additional seats to accommodate additional students.

## **IMPARTIAL ARBITRATORS**

The Board approved a resolution recommending to the Governor the following individuals as impartial arbitrators, representing the interests of the public in general: Sandra Biloon, Susan Boyan, Lynn Alan Brooks, Laurie Cain, Leeland Cole-Chu, J. Larry Foy, Janis Jerman, Richard Kosinski, Susan Meredith, David Newton, Kevin Randolph, Steven Rolnick, Thomas Staley and Gerald Weiner. Subsection (a) of Section 10-153f of the General Statutes requires the Governor to appoint, with the advice and consent of the General Assembly, not less than 24 nor more than 29 members of the Arbitration Panel of the Department of Education. Of these, not less than 10 nor more than 15 shall represent the interests of the public in general.

## **CONNECTICUT ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR TEACHER PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS**

Rodney A. Lane, Dean of the School of Education at Southern Connecticut State University, and Brian Maitland of People's Securities, Inc., were appointed to the Connecticut Advisory Council for Teacher Professional Standards for the period October 1, 2002, through September 30, 2003. The Board is required by statute to appoint two of the 17 Council members. One appointee is to represent the faculty or administration of a Board-approved teacher preparation program and the other is to represent business and industry. The Council advises the Governor, State Board of Education and Education Committee of the General Assembly on teacher preparation, recruitment, certification, professional development, assessment, evaluation and discipline. It also reviews regulations and other standards concerning the approval of teacher preparation programs.

## **IMPARTIAL HEARING BOARD FOR SCHOOL ACCOMMODATIONS AND STUDENT EXPULSIONS**

David Biklen and M. Jackson Webber were reappointed to the Impartial Hearing Board for a four-year term beginning September 12, 2002. The hearing board is charged with responsibility for holding public hearings and rendering final decisions regarding school accommodations pertaining to transportation, residency or otherwise. It also hears and renders final decisions in expulsion matters involving students in the Regional Vocational-Technical School System. The Board authorized the Commissioner to designate, as appropriate, one or more persons from the Impartial Hearing Board to conduct hearings as required. Including Mr. Biklen and Mr. Webber, there are 20 members serving on this board.

## **COMMITTEE FOR THE APPROVAL OF CONNECTICUT EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS**

The Board appointed Barbara Chock, Margaret Deignan, Cynthia Dubea and Maria Mojica to the Review Committee for the Approval of Connecticut Educator Preparation Programs for the period October 1, 2002, through September 30, 2005. The review committee makes recommendations to the Commissioner of Education concerning the educator preparation programs visited at higher education institutions.

## **APPLICATION FOR FUNDS: WOMEN'S EDUCATIONAL EQUITY PROGRAM**

The Board approved the Department's application for funds (\$166,694) under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act, for the grant titled, "Giving Young Women an EDGE (Education Designed for Gender Equity). Grant funds would be used to promote programs and services that target the educational needs of non-English-speaking girls, African American and Latino families, and girls with disabilities.

## **2003 LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS: PART I**

The Board discussed legislative proposals for the 2003 General Assembly. The proposals do not have an impact on the budget, and mirror those that were presented last year. While not enacted by the General Assembly in 2002, they did go through the public hearing and committee approval processes, and were adopted by one chamber.

Proposals were discussed that would (1) support improvements to the indoor air quality of public schools; (2) allow schools to record the CAPT results for each student on his or her permanent record and transcript and require schools to note on such records successful achievement on any one or more component parts and to issue a certificate of mastery for each such component; (3) support improvements to the Beginning Educator Support and Assessment (BEST) Program; (4) conform state law to the federal categories of "racial and ethnic minorities;" (5) allow for calculating at the beginning of the fiscal year the amount of money a school

readiness program has available for program administration, to improve fiscal planning by towns; (6) include advanced practice registered nurses in the list of licensed practitioners who are able to provide to school districts written notice restricting the physical activities of students; (7) make technical and minor changes to the education cost sharing statutes; and (8) amend the statute concerning the administration of no-nexus state agency placement grants to conform with the dates established by the General Assembly in 2000 for other similar grants for students requiring special education.

These proposals will be submitted to the Board for approval in October, along with a new list for discussion.

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

### **Sabbatical Leave Report**

Caren Menard, a science instructor at W.F. Kaynor Regional Vocational-Technical School in Waterbury, reported on her sabbatical leave experiences. Ms. Menard explored how to integrate technology into the instructional program – both within the classroom and in the field. Her research included the use of technology at the Discovery Museum in Bridgeport, the Harris AgriScience and Technology Center in Bloomfield and the Mystic Aquarium and Institute for Exploration. Ms. Menard participated in the JASON Project as a teacher Argonaut and was a research scientist aboard the RV Atlantis. During her latter experience, Ms. Menard tracked harbor seals and conducted a census study of the seals' return to Long Island Sound following a 20-year hiatus. The results of her research and recommendations for using technology will be posted on the Department's Intranet and eventually on the Internet, allowing others to model her lesson plans.

### **Other Business**

The Board received a status report on school construction projects in the RVTSS and approved several textbooks for use in the school system. Superintendent Dominic Spera provided a preliminary report on enrollment in the RVTSS, stating that as of September 10, 2002, 12,033 full-time high school and adult students were enrolled. He noted that this year there was a record number of applications, and consequently a record number remaining on a waiting list (2,231). A report based on October 1, 2002, data will be provided to the Board after that date.

# CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

(effective July 1, 2002)

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**NOTE:** The Board will meet on October 9, 2002. The meeting will begin at 9:30 a.m. in Room 307 of the State Office Building, 165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT.

***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).



