



THE BOARD REPORT



2006-2007: Issue 3

December 6 and 18, 2006

The following is a summary of the December 6 and December 18, 2006, State Board of Education meetings.

A SUPERIOR EDUCATION FOR CONNECTICUT'S 21ST CENTURY LEARNERS: DRAFT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR EDUCATION 2006-2011

The Board discussed a revised draft of its 2006-2011 comprehensive plan for education, *A Superior Education for Connecticut's 21st Century Learners*. The groundwork for the plan was developed by a 21-member advisory panel comprised of representatives of education, parent and student organizations, business and industry, and organized labor. The Board's Policy Development Committee worked on the development of the plan for several months thereafter, and centered it on the Board's three priority areas over the next five years:

- o high-quality preschool education for all students, including preschool programs aligned with *Connecticut's Preschool Curriculum and Assessment Frameworks* and linked to the *Connecticut Framework: K-12 Curricular Goals and Standards*;
- o high academic achievement of all students in reading and writing, mathematics and science, with a focus on students in high-need schools and districts; and
- o high school reform, so all students graduate and are prepared for careers in a competitive, global economy.

The Board acknowledged that, while the agency's outstanding work in promoting career and adult education will continue, the three identified areas must receive significant attention in order to address the unacceptable achievement gaps that continue to widen in reading and mathematics among students who differ in gender, race, ethnicity and socioeconomic status. The Board directed the Department of Education "to address these priorities with a sense of urgency and deliberate speed." The Board is expected to adopt the final document at its January 3, 2007, meeting. The plan will then be forwarded to the Governor and the Education Committee of the General Assembly, and will be disseminated statewide.

A STUDY OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN CONNECTICUT

Drs. Sally Reis and Peter Behuniak of the Neag School of Education at the University of Connecticut presented the findings of a four-phase study of student achievement in Connecticut public schools. The study revealed the following factors as those most important to high levels of student achievement.

- o **A firmly established sense of school and home community**, where teachers and administrators encourage parental involvement and parents report that their children feel welcomed at school.
- o **A culture of high achievement**, in which all parties (teachers, administrators, parents and students) work together to overcome obstacles to learning. This culture includes high levels of support by administrators for teachers, meeting the individual needs of students, teachers having more direct instructional time and spending less time on discipline.
- o **A common vision, based on high expectations for students**. Teachers in successful schools have a stronger, consistent commitment to high expectations for and accomplishments from their students.

Student Achievement in Connecticut (continued)

- **A network of teacher support, supported by administrators.** Teachers in successful schools are regularly provided with and participate in self-selected professional development opportunities.
- **A strategy for using data-driven decision making.** The use of data-based external and internal indicators of student achievement guides decisions by teachers and administrators.

The authors of the report conclude, "The results of this study do not suggest any single, identifiable recipe that can be adopted by a school hoping to emulate the success of the schools discussed in the report. Rather, it is the dedicated determination of a group of outstanding educators working collaboratively with parents and students to promote a culture of high achievement that will achieve this goal."

Louisa Calka, Principal, Westover School in Stamford, stated that her faculty uses two words to describe her leadership style and vision for achievement in the school: high expectations and accountability. Ms. Calka stated that "teamwork" is one of the most important things at Westover School. The parents of her students are extremely dedicated and her teams of administrators, support staff members and custodians also help to make Westover the outstanding school that it is.

GOVERNOR'S EARLY CHILDHOOD RESEARCH AND POLICY COUNCIL

Dr. Janice Gruendel, Governor Rell's Senior Advisor on Early Childhood and co-chair of the Early Childhood Cabinet, explained to the Board that the Cabinet was formed to help ensure that all of the state's young children reach appropriate developmental milestones from birth to age 5; begin kindergarten with the appropriate skills to be successful, and have early educational experiences that extend children's birth-to-five learning and ensure consistent progress in achieving reading mastery.

The report issued by the Cabinet, *Ready by 5 & Fine by 9*, was released in October 2006 and presented 10 priorities:

1. ensure fiscal support for high quality preschool for all 3- and 4-year-old children in families at or below 185 percent of the poverty level;
2. address state reimbursement inequities for center-based preschool programs;
3. develop a multi-year early childhood work force professional development plan to ensure compliance with state law and selected national certification programs;
4. provide health, mental health and education consultation to preschool programs to enhance the skills of directors and teachers for meeting the comprehensive needs of children;
5. support the design and implementation of the kindergarten assessment;
6. develop a comprehensive strategic plan for serving infants and toddlers;
7. ensure that HUSKY children receive regular well child visits and an annual developmental assessment;
8. provide all families and caregivers with information about child development;
9. expand eligibility categories in the Birth-to-Three Program to include mild developmental delays and environmental risks; and
10. support local communities in developing birth-to-five councils for planning and monitoring early childhood services.

Dr. Gruendel told the Board that the National Governors' Association is very interested in Connecticut's work in this area. She noted that Senator Christopher J. Dodd is drafting an early childhood investment bill that promotes public/private partnerships in early childhood care and education.

To build on the work of the Cabinet, Governor M. Jodi Rell formed and ordered the Early Childhood Research and Policy Council to develop a plan that addresses implementation costs, management by state government and accountability measures. Joining the Board to discuss their work were the Council chairs, John Rathgeber, President of the Connecticut Business and Industry Association; Valerie Lewis, Commissioner of the Department of Higher Education; and David Nee, Executive Director of the Graustein Foundation. The panelists discussed the importance of quality early care programs for all children who cannot afford them, and the need for collaborative efforts by all state agencies, parents,

providers and community entities to address the needs of children from birth through age 8. Mr. Rathgeber stated that we must enable our children to be successful in school if we are to become competitive in a global economy. He detailed the work of the subcommittee that researched cost estimates to accommodate students in need of services, including providing some funds to parents to allow them to "purchase quality programs." The panelists commented on the potential for significant long-term savings both in human and financial terms that would result from an investment in school readiness and early intervention services.

Early Childhood (continued)

The panelists discussed with the Board the need for adopting policies and implementing quality programs that are informed by research, workforce development, accountability measures, and a plan to greatly expand Connecticut's early childhood system. In addition, parents need to be well-informed on the

importance and availability of services for their children.

The Council's report and recommendations will be submitted to Governor Rell for her consideration.

LEARNING FOR LIFE: BUDGET OPTIONS FOR THE 2007-2009 BIENNIUM

The Board adopted 2007-09 budget expansion options that will be submitted to the Office of Policy and Management to be considered for inclusion in the Governor's proposed budget for the next biennium.

The Board's proposed options support the three priority areas in the Board's 2006-2011 Comprehensive Plan: high-quality preschool education: high academic achievement of all students in reading and writing, mathematics and science; and high school reform initiatives to ensure that all students, upon graduation, are prepared for careers in a competitive, global economy (see description above). They are intended to address the unacceptable achievement gaps that persist in reading and mathematics between high-performing and low-performing students who differ in gender, race, ethnicity and socioeconomic status.

Priority 1: Preschool

- Increase state funding for Head Start (\$1 million in each year of the biennium).
- Add 3,850 preschool spaces in 19 current or former priority school districts (\$28,351,400 in 2007-08 and \$56,702,800 in 2008-09).
- Provide an additional \$10,000 to each of the 19 current or former priority school districts to hire a school readiness liaison (\$190,000 in each year of the biennium).
- Fund a kindergarten specialist position to support local education agencies and the school readiness continuum (\$85,000 in each year of the biennium).
- Support two new positions to provide administrative support and leadership to early childhood programs serving children from birth to age 5 (\$170,000 in each year of the biennium).
- Increase the school readiness grant to priority schools and towns by \$7,000 each, to \$114,000 (\$343,000 in each year of the biennium).
- Provide funds for professional development for preschool and kindergarten teachers in effective instructional practices, based on *Connecticut's Preschool Curriculum and Assessment Frameworks* (\$1 million in each year of the biennium).
- Expansion of preschool teacher preparation, in collaboration with Connecticut's higher education institutions (\$3.2 million in 2007-08 and \$4.2 million in 2008-09).
- Provide scholarships to up to 400 teachers per year to seek an early childhood credential (\$1.2 million in each year of the biennium).
- Provide funds to regional educational service centers and early childhood trainers to implement and maintain the early childhood standards and program requirements (\$3 million in each year of the biennium).

Total amount proposed for Priority 1: \$37,339,400 in 2007-08; \$66,690,800 in 2008-09

Priority 2: Achievement

- Increase capacity to assist schools identified under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act as in need of "corrective action" (\$680,000 in each year of the biennium).
- Provide training for schools identified under NCLB as "in need of improvement" in *Beyond the Blueprint: Best Practices in Adolescent Literacy* (\$750,000 in each year of the biennium).
- Cambridge Assessments for schools identified under NCLB in the third year of "in need of improvement" (\$3 million in each year of the biennium).
- Provide leadership training for principals in schools identified under NCLB as "in need of improvement: (\$1.5 million in each year of the biennium).
- Support superintendent and principal coaches (\$3.37 million in each year of the biennium).
- Provide professional development for teachers and coaches (\$500,000 in each year of the biennium).

Budget Expansion Options 2007-2009 (continued)

- Evaluate the Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) Program (\$500,000 in first year and one million in the second year of the biennium).
- Support external master teachers (\$2.25 million in each year of the biennium).
- Support mentorship and training for beginning teachers (\$420,000 in each year of the biennium).
- Develop capacity for recruitment of high-quality minority educators in urban districts (\$300,000 in each year of the biennium).
- Develop and provide model curriculum in reading and mathematics for Grades PK-8 in 2007-08, and develop and provide model curriculum in algebra and geometry for Grades PK-8 in 2008-09 (\$240,000 in each year of the biennium).
- Provide funds to the State Education Resource Center for district- and school-based instructional support in the implementation of curriculum (\$250,000 in each year of the biennium).
- Develop formative assessment and evaluation tools, beginning with Grades 3-5 in reading and mathematics in a small number of schools (\$730,000 in each year of the biennium).
- Support two positions to train and support districts in the use of formative assessments (\$170,000 in each year of the biennium).
- Develop a standardized health information data collection system to meet state-mandated reporting requirements and to track health needs of students (\$375,000 in each year of the biennium).
- Develop a statewide longitudinal education data system (\$3.7 million in each year of the biennium).
- Develop strategies to support minority male academic success (\$250,000 in each year of the biennium).
- Supplement funding for the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act in expanding or improving services to ensure that homeless children succeed in school (\$458,932 in each year of the biennium).
- Enhance the 14 existing Young Parents Programs (\$770,670 in each year of the biennium).
- Expand opportunities for parents of young children to improve their literacy skills (\$1.615 million in each year of the biennium).
- Increase the adult education reimbursement grant to cover costs associated with increasing access to adult education programs (\$2.1 million in each year of the biennium).
- Increase funding to Family Resource Center programs to expand and enhance services that support the families' and schools' ability to partner for school success (\$1.631,892 in each year of the biennium).
- Increase parent capacity to support kindergarten through Grade 4 curriculum, targeting those students with the lowest performance and greatest need (\$500,000 in each year of biennium).
- Establish a competitive grant program to provide adults without a high school diploma with the skills, competencies and credentials necessary to compete in Connecticut's future workforce (\$500,000 in 2007-08 and \$1 million in 2008-09).
- Support 100 full-day kindergarten classes.
- Fund one consultant for art and music to provide leadership and technical assistance to all school districts (\$85,000 in each year of the biennium).

Total amount proposed for Priority 2:

\$27,756,494 in 2007-08; \$28,390,194 in 2008-09

Priority 3: High School

- Fund a Department of Education dropout prevention specialist position to work with school districts (\$85,000 in each year of the biennium).
- Identify districts with high dropout rates and help those districts to develop alternative programs (\$1.57 million in each year of the biennium).
- Provide grants to schools to develop in-school suspension practices (\$1 million in each year of the biennium).
- Provide student behavioral support programs to allow teachers and administrators more time to focus on instruction (\$1 million in each year of the biennium).
- Provide competitive grants for high schools to implement the essential components of successful high schools and serve as demonstration sites for other schools in the state (\$2.5 million in each year of the biennium).
- Provide grants to foster awareness of world-class standards and educational competition (\$500,000 in each year of the biennium).
- Conduct an annual assessment of the 11,000 student concentrators in career and technical education programs (\$465,000 in each year of the biennium).

Total amount proposed for Priority 3:

\$7.37 million in each year of the biennium

Budget Expansion Options 2007-2009 (continued)

Connecticut Technical High School System (CTHSS)

The State of Connecticut funds and operates the state's 17 diploma granting technical high schools and one technical education center. State law requires that school districts provide an appropriate learning environment for students, including instructional books, supplies, materials, equipment, staffing, facilities and technology; ensure an equitable allocation of resources among its schools and provide a safe school setting. To ensure compliance with these mandates and to compensate for the reduction in federal funds that have supported Title I, Title IIA and Title III grants, CTHSS requires additional funding. Funds will be used to support the following: necessary positions; trade supplies, textbooks and library/media equipment; the development of math/science technology centers, athletic officials and expenses related to competitions; testing for environmental health and safety; plant operations; and the development of a new adult education data system.

Total amount proposed for CTHSS: \$7,098,000 in 2007-08; \$7,633,000 in 2008-09

Total Proposed Options: \$79,563,894 in 2007-08; \$110,083,994 in 2008-09

The biennial budget options will be presented to the Office of Policy and Management for consideration during the development of the Governor's proposed budget.

RENEWAL OF CHARTER: INTEGRATED DAY CHARTER SCHOOL

The Board renewed the charter for the Integrated Day Charter School, in Norwich, for a five-year period ending June 30, 2012.

The Integrated Day Charter School serves 317 students in prekindergarten through Grade 8, most of whom reside in Norwich. The school uses an educational approach that focuses on the developmental needs of students and actively engages learners in the learning process. Connecticut College and Eastern Connecticut State University place student teachers at the charter school, while Sacred Heart University places interns at the school for a year-long period. Last December, Integrated Day Charter School received recognition as a Vanguard School as a result of dramatic improvement in its students' performance on the Connecticut Mastery Test.

The Commissioner's recommendation to the Board to approve the request for renewal was based on the results of a renewal team's assessment of the school's written application and a site visit.

RENEWAL OF CHARTER: SIDE BY SIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

The Board renewed the charter for The Side by Side Community School in Norwalk, for a five-year period ending June 30, 2012.

The Side by Side Community School opened in the fall of 1997. It now serves 235 students in prekindergarten through Grade 8; 80 percent of the students are from Norwalk, and 20 percent are from the outlying suburbs.

The diversity of the student environment (71 percent minority and 29 percent nonminority) reflects the school's mission: to create a multiracial learning environment for urban and suburban children and their families. Social studies serves as the core curriculum, promoting social justice and fostering responsible citizenship.

The Commissioner's recommendation to the Board to approve the request for renewal was based on the results of a renewal team's assessment of the school's written application and a site visit.

RENEWAL OF CHARTER: BRIDGE ACADEMY

The Board renewed the charter for Bridge Academy in Bridgeport, for a five-year period ending June 30, 2012.

Bridge Academy opened in the fall of 1997. It serves 250 students in Grades 7-12, mostly from Bridgeport. The School added Grades 7 and 8 this school year.

Bridge Academy provides a college preparatory curriculum for all students. Parents and business professionals from Bridgeport and area towns are actively involved in the school. The small school atmosphere, with a focus on reading, writing and mathematics, provides a unique option to students who would otherwise attend a large, comprehensive high school. Last year, more than 90 percent of Bridge Academy graduates entered either a two- or four-year college.

RECOGNITION OF OUTSTANDING EDUCATORS

On December 18, the State Board of Education hosted a reception in the Old Judiciary Room at the State Capitol Building to recognize several outstanding educators. Joining the Board in honoring these individuals were state senators and representatives, professional colleagues and family members. The following educators and schools were commended for their significant accomplishments:

- ❖ Ann Clark, Superintendent of Schools in Fairfield, was named Connecticut's 2007 Superintendent of the Year.
- ❖ Ron Bienkowski, Director of Business for the Newtown Public School System, was named 2006 School Business Official of the Year by the Connecticut Association of School Business Officials.
- ❖ Christopher Poulos, a world language teacher at Joel Barlow High School in Redding, was named 2007 Connecticut Teacher of the Year.
- ❖ Mark Thomas Danaher, a career education teacher at Manchester High School, was selected as a finalist in the 2007 Connecticut Teacher of the Year Program.
- ❖ Susan S. Matthews, a science teacher at the University High School of Science & Engineering in Hartford, was selected as a finalist in the 2007 Connecticut Teacher of the Year Program.
- ❖ Sandra G. Adams, an elementary school teacher at Ivy Drive Elementary School in Bristol, was selected as a finalist in the 2007 Connecticut Teacher of the Year Program.
- ❖ Hartford Magnet Middle School was selected as a 2006 Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education.
- ❖ Connecticut International Baccalaureate Academy was selected as a 2006 Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education.
- ❖ Loretta L. Rubin, Principal of Farm Hill School in Middletown, was chosen by her peers at the Connecticut Association of Schools as Connecticut's 2006 Elementary School Principal of the Year/National Distinguished Principal.
- ❖ Shellie Pierce, Principal of Granby Memorial Middle School, was chosen by her peers at the Connecticut Association of Schools as Connecticut's 2006 Middle School Principal of the Year.
- ❖ Anthony D. Carrano, Assistant Principal of Lyme-Old Lyme Middle School in Old Lyme, was chosen by his peers at the Connecticut Association of Schools as Connecticut's 2006 Middle School Assistant Principal of the Year.
- ❖ Robert G. Hale, Jr., Principal of Westbrook High School, was chosen by his peers at the Connecticut Association of Schools as Connecticut's 2006 High School Principal of the Year.
- ❖ Donna L. Hayward, Assistant Principal of Rocky Hill High School, was chosen by her peers at the Connecticut Association of Schools as Connecticut's 2006 High School Assistant Principal of the Year.
- ❖ Kathleen Greider, Lead Principal of Hartford Public Schools, was chosen by her peers at the Connecticut Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development as Connecticut's 2006 Educational Leader of the Year.
- ❖ Alexander Pesarik, Bio-Environmental Technology Teacher at Ella T. Grasso Technical High School in Groton, was named 2006-2007 Teacher of the Year for the Connecticut Technical High School System.
- ❖ Stephen Anderson, Principal of E.C. Goodwin Technical High School in New Britain, was named the 2006-2007 Principal of the Year for the Connecticut Technical High School System.
- ❖ Kerry Bell, Principal of Ella T. Grasso Technical High School in Groton, former Assistant Principal of Ella T. Grasso Technical High School, was named the 2006-2007 Assistant Principal of the Year for the Connecticut Technical High School System.

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

(effective July 1, 2006)

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The Board Report is published monthly and is posted on the Department's Internet site (<http://www.state.ct.us/sde>). It provides a summary of matters considered by the State Board of Education at its regular monthly meetings. The Department welcomes comments 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.