



# Commissioner's Update

What's new and important at the Connecticut Department of Education



Dear Connecticut Educator:

We have developed this section of the Department's Web page to provide information and perspective that may be helpful to educators and policy leaders in Connecticut. We invite you to visit this page for periodic updates.

[Update on Secondary School Reform](#) **NEW**  
[Information regarding MRSA in Schools](#)  
[CT MRSA Fact Sheet](#)  
[CT MRSA Fact Sheet \[Spanish\]](#)

▪ **Publication of the CMT Science Handbook**

The State Department of Education has developed a handbook that provides comprehensive information about the elementary and middle school Science CMTs to be administered to students in Grades 5 and 8 beginning in March 2008. In addition to describing the knowledge and abilities to be assessed and the test formats, the handbook includes effective instructional strategies and annotated examples of multiple-choice and open-ended test questions. The handbook can be found on the SDE website at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2618&q=320890> under State Science Assessments. If you have questions please contact Liz Buttner at [elizabeth.buttner@ct.gov](mailto:elizabeth.buttner@ct.gov) or 860-713-6849.

▪ **Reauthorization of No Child Left Behind**

Congress is in the midst of reauthorizing NCLB and is considering a number of changes to the law. It is unclear what changes will be included in the final legislation. In fact, there may be no changes to the law. Standards increase under the law in 2008.

▪ **High School Reform Committee**

The State Board of Education has formed a committee to take a close and comprehensive look at how this state should approach high school reform. Jay Voss and Janet Finneran of the State Board of Education have convened a committee of educators, business representatives and other state leaders to develop recommendations to the State Board and then to a state legislative task force created by legislation this year. The model will be presented to the State Board of Education in November and will also be presented to numerous groups for input.

[Secondary School Reform April Update](#) **NEW**  
[Summary of the Ad Hoc Committee's Proposal for Secondary School Reform](#)  
[Public Listening Forum Schedule](#) [PPT]  
[Secondary School Reform](#) [PPT] *January Update*  
[Secondary School Reform](#) [PPT] *December Update*  
[High School Reform Q&A](#)  
[Reform Proposal Update](#) *January 7 Letter*

▪ **State Accountability and NCLB**

State legislation this year granted new authority to the State Board of Education and the Commissioner to intervene in schools and districts that have been struggling to improve their students' performance. Twelve school districts have been identified under this legislation. The Department has been working with their superintendents and boards since summer to develop and refine improvement strategies. As part of this process, Cambridge Education Associates will be evaluating schools and districts and developing findings and recommendations to the Commissioner and a committee of the State Board of Education.

[State Education Department Working with 12 Districts to Close Achievement Gap](#)

## **Circular Letters - March**

[C-13 Continuation of HOUSSE Plans for Highly Qualifying Veteran Teachers](#)

[C-14 Transfer of Student Records](#)

### **Events of note:**

**State Board of Education meeting**

May 7, 2008  
State Office Building  
165 Capitol Avenue, Room 307A