

# Commissioner's Update

July 14, 2008

Dear Connecticut Educator:

I have two items for you in this update.

## **New Data on English Language Learners**

At the July 2 State Board of Education meeting, a report was presented about English language learners (ELLs) in Connecticut's public schools. Key findings in the report include:

- students in Connecticut speak 161 different languages;
- the percentage of students identified as ELLs has increased during the last five years; and
- the percentage of ELLs enrolled in bilingual education programs is decreasing.

To read the full report, please follow this link:

[http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/databulletins/db\\_ell\\_report\\_6-23-08.pdf](http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/databulletins/db_ell_report_6-23-08.pdf).

## **Guidelines Published on Use of Paraprofessionals**

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) has completed new guidelines for the appropriate use of paraprofessionals. This document, titled *Guidelines for Training and Support of Paraprofessionals Working with Students Birth to 21*, is available on the CSDE Web site at:

[http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Special/Guidelines\\_Paraprofessionals.pdf](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Special/Guidelines_Paraprofessionals.pdf). This document has also been sent to special education directors and paraprofessional contacts in each district.

The CSDE has endorsed these guidelines to inform and guide school district personnel in the many important factors to consider in the use of paraprofessionals, specifically their training and effective use in the instructional process. The document is designed to assist school districts as they work to hire, train, supervise and support paraprofessionals. The guidelines also clarify the role of the paraprofessional as it relates to instruction. Additionally, there is a focus on the need for training in the use of paraprofessionals as part of the education team. To that end, the supervisory responsibilities of teachers working with paraprofessionals and the procedures for administrators in the evaluation of paraprofessionals are addressed.

Please review this document and use it with your staff members as the foundation of additional training that you provide on the use of paraprofessionals. Please direct any questions to Iris White at 860-713-6564 or [iris.white@ct.gov](mailto:iris.white@ct.gov).

Sincerely,

Mark K. McQuillan  
Commissioner of Education