

**A SUPERIOR
EDUCATION FOR
CONNECTICUT'S
21ST CENTURY
LEARNERS**

**Connecticut State Board of Education
Five-Year Comprehensive Plan
2006-2011**

**DRAFT
FOR DISCUSSION ONLY**

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FOREWORD

Connecticut law requires the State Board of Education to develop a five-year comprehensive plan for education. Upon adoption by the Board, the plan is submitted to the Governor and the Education Committee of the General Assembly.

The plan details the priorities of the Board and the strategies it will use to meet the requirements set forth in Connecticut General Statutes, Section 10-4p:

“The State Board of Education shall develop a five-year implementation plan with appropriate goals and strategies to achieve resource equity and equality of opportunity, increase student achievement, reduce racial, ethnic and economic isolation, improve effective instruction, and encourage greater parental and community involvement in all public schools of the state.”

An advisory committee of individuals from all areas of public education in Connecticut developed the vision for this document. It will serve as an accountability tool for the State Department of Education’s work. The Department will report progress to the Board twice a year.

This plan emphasizes and reflects the Board’s policy directions and priorities for the next five years. The Board’s legislative and budget proposals will be guided and aligned to the comprehensive plan. The Department will align the work of its divisions and bureaus to implement the strategies outlined here. While building on the successes of previous five-year plans, the 2006-2011 plan proposes a few new, bold ways to improve the quality of public education in Connecticut. These include preschool and full-day kindergarten for all children; initiatives to better prepare educators to meet students’ needs and to recruit and retain a diverse workforce; initiatives to enhance accountability and maximize use of data; efforts to improve the literacy of adults; high school reform efforts; and expansion of the Vanguard Schools model.

These efforts support the theme of this plan, “a superior education for Connecticut’s 21st century learners.”

This plan acknowledges the opportunities and embraces the challenges of the 21st century: the rapid growth in technology; the changing demographics of Connecticut schools; greater demands for all citizens to master complex skills; the need for high school reform; and our continuing efforts to close the achievement, resources and opportunities gaps among groups of students.

The Board will work with the Governor, state legislators and all stakeholders to accomplish its objectives during the next five years. The Board will recognize and expand ongoing efforts to support continued success, encourage greater coordination among stakeholders, and align strategies so educators can work more efficiently together to achieve our common goals.

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STATEMENT OF VISION, MISSION AND CORE VALUES

Working with the education community, the State Board of Education has put forth a vision and a mission for public education in Connecticut, and has identified seven core values that reflect its beliefs and form the basis for an organizational structure and culture that will strengthen State Department of Education employees' interactions and relationships with all internal and external colleagues.

Vision:

A superior education for Connecticut's 21st century learners

Mission:

The Connecticut State Board of Education will provide leadership that promotes an educational system that supports all learners in reaching their full potential.

Core Values:

The seven core values listed below are embedded in the Board's vision and mission and will guide the entire education community as it works to achieve the Board's goals and objectives:

Collaboration: We work in meaningful partnerships to learn, to make decisions, and to share information, talents and energy to achieve our goals.

Diversity: We value, actively pursue and are strengthened by diverse perspectives. Our varied cultural backgrounds, beliefs and points of view are essential to achieve our mission.

Innovation: We generate and support new ideas and approaches that achieve individual and organizational excellence.

Integrity: We are honest, ethical and respectful.

Leadership: We advocate for and advance our vision. We inspire and empower our colleagues to achieve it.

Responsibility: We are dedicated to individual and organizational performance that builds and maintains public trust and confidence. We are accountable for fulfilling our commitments and expectations.

Responsiveness: We are timely, thorough and accurate.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND RESULTS

The following tables define the objectives the Board has for public education in Connecticut during the next five years, the strategies to be used to reach those objectives and the expected results. Asterisks (*) indicate terms that are defined further in the glossary.

GOAL I: Increase student achievement

What it means: Student achievement is directly related to high quality instruction. The student achievement gaps in Connecticut are unacceptable. There are gaps between genders, racial, ethnic and socioeconomic groups, as well as gaps in expectations for students from differing backgrounds. We must expect all students to achieve at high levels and make certain that expectations for students and rigor of curriculum are equal in urban, suburban and rural schools. We will increase student achievement by working with our state, federal and local partners. We must ensure in Connecticut that our definition of achievement extends beyond core subject areas so students can be successful in the 21st century.

<u>Objectives</u>	<u>Strategies</u>	<u>Results</u>
<p>1. Provide quality, standards-based, culturally responsive and relevant curriculum for all</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and provide model curriculum • Review curriculum in low performing districts for rigor and alignment to state standards; require state-approved revisions • Provide training on implementation of standards-based model curriculum and monitor implementation of curriculum in low-performing districts • Increase training for educators in curriculum and teaching strategies that emphasize contributions and perspectives of different ethnic and cultural groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant increase in number of students in low-performing districts scoring at or above proficiency and goal in reading, writing, math and science

Goal I: Increase student achievement

<u>Objectives</u>	<u>Strategies</u>	<u>Results</u>
<p>2. Ensure educators (teachers and administrators) provide relevant, meaningful and engaging instruction to meet needs of all students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase collaboration/communication with preparation programs to align preparation and pre-service training with research-based standards • Provide training on effective instruction to meet needs of all students, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with special needs • Provide training on the use of technology to meet the needs of all students • Develop partnerships with higher education and local entities to recruit and retain diverse educator workforce • Promote use of formative assessments as part of all instruction and course offerings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased proportion of students scoring at or above proficiency and goal on Connecticut Mastery Test and Connecticut Academic Performance Test; decreased gap between subgroup* performances • Decreased drop-out, expulsion and suspension rates among all subgroups of students • Increased graduation rates among all subgroups of students • Increased diversity in educator workforce
<p>3. Develop and support nontraditional pathways to meet anticipated educator shortages</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand alternative routes to certification • Explore use of technology to expand access to high quality educators • Accelerate recruitment of minority candidates into teaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More high quality teachers in every classroom • Sufficient number of educators to meet shortage areas • Increased diversity in educator workforce

Goal I: Increase student achievement

<u>Objectives</u>	<u>Strategies</u>	<u>Results</u>
4. Develop and implement statewide induction program to attract, support and retain high-quality administrators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene leadership committee with representative stakeholders to recommend design and content of program • Use data from pilot sites at Cooperative Educational Services (CES) and Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) to provide input for design and content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All new leaders have access to induction program
5. Develop and implement a formative assessment system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create repository of test items and electronic delivery and analysis system • Align test items with model curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All educators use formative assessments to evaluate student progress frequently throughout school year
6. Assist district and school personnel to collect and analyze data to inform decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a data warehouse* and tools for analysis • Provide technical assistance on analyzing data and using results to improve student achievement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All districts have access to and knowledge of resources to analyze formative and summative assessment* results and other data to improve instruction
7. Implement Vanguard School* improvement model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use State Education Resource Center to identify and publicize best practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All educators have access to repository of best practices • More Vanguard Schools

Asterisks (*) indicate terms that are defined in the glossary.

Goal I: Increase student achievement

<u>Objectives</u>	<u>Strategies</u>	<u>Results</u>
<p>8. Ensure students are well-prepared for higher education and the workforce</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaborate with higher education, high school credential programs and business to define PK-16 student competencies• Align Connecticut college placement tests with defined student competencies• Incorporate 21st century skills and content into curriculum and instruction in middle and high schools• Provide guidelines on modifying middle and high schools to meet needs of students, such as smaller learning communities, alternative schedules, access to online learning opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More students demonstrate competencies that enable them to successfully transition to higher education or work• More students taking science, technology, engineering, math, world language and advanced courses• Increased participation and successful completion of a higher education degree• Increased student achievement• Decreased drop-out rate

GOALS II AND III: Achieve resource equity and equality of opportunity; reduce racial, ethnic and economic isolation

What it means: These two goals are closely linked. They emphasize that all students should have the same opportunities and access to human, material, and fiscal resources regardless of where they attend school. In addition, each student should have the opportunity to learn from and connect with others of different racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds. To achieve these goals, the State Board of Education will facilitate greater access to resources and choices; address issues of over-identification of subgroups in special education; foster culturally responsive learning environments; continue magnet school, charter school and Open Choice programs; and seek expanded funding to fully support these initiatives.

<u>Objectives</u>	<u>Strategies</u>	<u>Results</u>
1. Provide full-day kindergarten to all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase resources to provide full-day kindergarten, and focus initial efforts to increase capacity in high-need districts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More high-quality, full-day kindergartens offered in state • Increased school readiness • Decreased suspension and expulsion rates
2. Provide quality preschool programs to all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus initial efforts to serve neediest 3- and 4-year-olds • Recruit, prepare and certify high-quality preschool teachers • Increase physical space to accommodate additional preschool programs • Expand existing student data collection system to include data for all students in public and private preschool programs • Develop kindergarten assessment to determine school readiness • Evaluate effectiveness of preschool programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More students attend preschool; all high-poverty students attend preschool • More certified/qualified teachers in preschool settings • Comprehensive student database used to track students from preschool through high school • More students ready for kindergarten • Kindergarten curriculum aligned to Connecticut preschool curriculum framework • Decreased preschool expulsion rates

Goals II and III: Achieve resource equity and equality of opportunity; reduce racial, ethnic and economic isolation

<u>Objectives</u>	<u>Strategies</u>	<u>Results</u>
<p>3. Extend opportunities for learning in PK-12 for students in high-needs districts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for extended school year and extended school day programs for students who need additional assistance • Advocate for before- and after-school programs where extended day programs not available • Advocate for summer programs that offer academic and cultural enrichment where extended year not available • Provide models for reducing “out-of-school” suspension programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More high-needs districts on extended-day and/or extended-year schedule • Increased enrollments in summer school programs where extended year not available • More students exposed to and engaged in new academic and cultural experiences • Increased graduation rates • Decreased drop-out, suspension and expulsion rates
<p>4. Explore alternatives to meet the needs of underperforming student groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use state-of-the-art technologies as part of all instruction and course offerings • Provide online learning opportunities • Provide teaching and learning opportunities through Connecticut Education Network* (CEN) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased achievement of <u>all</u> students • More teachers use effective strategies to meet needs of diverse student population • More diverse perspectives that represent multiple points of view emphasized in curriculum • Decreased number of black and Hispanic students identified as special education • Increased accommodation of students with diverse learning styles

Asterisks (*) indicate terms that are defined in the glossary.

Goals II and III: Achieve resource equity and equality of opportunity; reduce racial, ethnic and economic isolation

<u>Objectives</u>	<u>Strategies</u>	<u>Results</u>
<p>5. Provide physically safe and healthy learning environments for all</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide guidance and technical support to districts on components of physically safe and healthy learning environments• Promote implementation of Healthy and Balanced Living Curriculum Framework• Promote implementation of nutrition, health and behavioral guidelines• Provide guidance and technical support to districts on prevention of substance abuse, sexually transmitted diseases and related concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More school communities fully-informed about and protected from physical hazards and allergens• More school communities fully-informed about violence prevention (physical)• More school communities fully-informed about making healthy choices with respect to exercise, nutrition, and life choices about risky and healthy behaviors• More school communities fully-informed about strategies to diminish substance abuse and other related risky behaviors

Goals II and III: Achieve resource equity and equality of opportunity; reduce racial, ethnic and economic isolation

<u>Objectives</u>	<u>Strategies</u>	<u>Results</u>
<p>6. Provide emotionally/socially safe and healthy learning environments for all</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide guidance and technical support to districts on components of emotionally safe and healthy learning environments • Promote efforts to provide information and technical support on positive school climate to pre-service and in-service educators • Assist districts in increasing and fostering strong personal connections among school community members, especially between adults and students • Provide legal guidance to educators and students surrounding Connecticut anti-bullying and sexual harassment legislation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More school communities fully-informed and protected from all forms of peer cruelty (male and female bullying behaviors in verbal, emotional, social, physical and cyber arenas) and violence prevention • More training provided to educators for creating positive and respectful school culture and climate; comprehensive violence prevention and intervention • All students have at least one significant adult in school as their advocate • More school communities fully-informed about letter and spirit of anti-bullying and sexual harassment legislation • Reduction in incidences of bullying and sexual harassment
<p>7. Expand access to all forms of advanced course/program offerings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase number of courses offered and number of schools offering courses • Increase funding to pay fees associated with these programs • Increase awareness of opportunities for participation and funding • Increase program and course offerings, such as Advanced Placement, honors, dual/concurrent enrollment such as UConn, International Baccalaureate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased participation of needy students in various forms of advanced courses and programs • More students earn "3+" on Advanced Placement examinations

Goals II and III: Achieve resource equity and equality of opportunity; reduce racial, ethnic and economic isolation

<u>Objectives</u>	<u>Strategies</u>	<u>Results</u>
<p>8. Expand world language and international awareness education instruction across all Connecticut schools to begin in early elementary grades</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information, technical assistance, professional development • Develop relationships with other countries to increase teacher exchange programs • Integrate international awareness in subject areas and career development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More schools offer world languages • Increased enrollments in world languages • Increased sequence lengths in world languages • International competition integrated in career development design
<p>9. Expand magnet, charter and Open Choice programs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide resources through general funding of all educational programs (revised Education Cost Sharing* funding formula) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students in all districts have access to choice programs

Asterisks (*) indicate terms that are defined in the glossary.

GOAL IV: Encourage greater parental and community involvement in all public schools in the state

What it means: The State Board of Education recognizes that education is a shared responsibility throughout a student's life. Schools, families and communities all contribute to student success, and the best results come when all three work together. School-family-community partnerships are formed to support student success and help adults coordinate their efforts to promote learning. The State Board of Education will provide leadership in developing and promoting school-family-community partnership programs that contribute to success for all students. Partnerships must engage multiple community stakeholders and recognize, respect and address families' diverse interests, needs and talents, as well as economic and cultural differences.

<u>Objectives</u>	<u>Strategies</u>	<u>Results</u>
<p>1. Engage families and communities meaningfully in success of all students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align pre-service training with National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards on partnering with families and communities • Provide professional development to school and district staff in developing effective school-family-community partnerships based on the State Board of Education standards • Provide incentives to schools and districts to establish a permanent infrastructure to support Action Teams for Partnerships,* which include community organizations, business sector and faith-based groups • Provide training and technical assistance for development and implementation of district parent involvement policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School and district action teams trained for school-family-community partnerships with outcome-oriented action plans • Increased parent participation in the planning and improvement of school programs • Increased support to parents for supporting children's learning at home • Improved district policies and consistent implementation • Improved student attendance • Increased homework completion • Increased attendance at parent-teacher conferences

Goal IV: Encourage greater parental and community involvement in all public schools in the state

<u>Objectives</u>	<u>Strategies</u>	<u>Results</u>
<p>2. Develop literacy skills of parents; help parents support children's literacy development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disaggregate data in adult education reporting system to determine number of adult learners who are parents of school-age children and provide access to programs and services• Increase capacity of adult education system and Family Resource Centers to meet literacy needs of parents• Increase resources to establish parent reading clubs* in sites that receive School Readiness funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased number of parents of children in School Readiness programs that support children's learning and development• Increased number of parents with improved literacy skills and high school credentials

Asterisks (*) indicate terms that are defined in the glossary.

Conclusion

As we plan for public education in Connecticut during the next five years, we are faced with many opportunities and many challenges.

The 21st century world is complex and continually changing. Our mission as educators is to prepare 21st century learners to be a part of and respond successfully to this ever-changing world.

To that end, we are committed to focusing our efforts and resources on our goals to:

- increase student achievement;
- achieve resource equity and equality of opportunity, and reduce racial, ethnic and economic isolation; and
- encourage greater parental and community involvement in all public schools of the state.

Leadership at all levels will be required so all learners can reach their full potential.

We need every teacher to be a leader. With an aging workforce — about half of Connecticut's 50,000 educators will retire during the next decade — it is essential that we maintain and develop programs that recruit, train, support and retain high quality teachers.

Effective teaching is one of the most important and efficient steps in narrowing the gaps between high-performing and low-performing students. With an increasingly diverse student population at hand, we must promote learning environments and an educator workforce that are equally as diverse and reflective of our students and their needs. A longer school day and school year, universally available preschool, improving the literacy skills of parents, and safe and healthy learning environments that promote student growth are all necessary for underserved students if they are to meet the high standards we set for them.

To aid our students, we must embrace and infuse technology into the heart of the classroom. Technology resources should be integrated across the curriculum of all grades and all students should have equal access to technology as a learning tool.

For students to become critical thinkers, they must be exposed to:

- a rigorous curriculum;
- effective instruction;
- environments that value and respect them;
- expanded learning opportunities;
- quality preschool and kindergarten programs; and
- technology.

To achieve our goals, we will:

- standardize and strengthen curriculum;
- align instruction to the curriculum;
- align assessment to instruction and the curriculum;
- provide tools (e.g., test item banks, dissemination of best practices) to teachers to assess student progress during the school year and enhance teachers' instructional strategies; and
- ensure that each student has equal access to resources and opportunities.

We are committed to evaluating the programs and practices we put in place to ensure that they are effective to increase student achievement. We will use the data we collect about curriculum, instruction and leadership practices to inform our decisions. Together, we can meet our goals and live up to our shared responsibility to ensure that all of Connecticut's children reach their full potential.

Glossary

Action Teams for Partnerships – The Action Team takes responsibility for assessing present partnership practices, writing plans for family and community involvement that link to school and district goals, implementing activities, evaluating next steps, and continuing to improve and coordinate practices for all six types of involvement. Although the members of the ATP lead these activities, other teachers, parents, students, administrators and community members, assist them.

Connecticut Education Network – The Connecticut Education Network (CEN) provides Connecticut's schools, libraries and higher education institutions with high-speed access to the Internet, next generation Internet2, the Connecticut Digital Library and more. The CEN is America's first statewide K-12 and higher education network built exclusively using state-of-the-art fiber optic connections.

Data warehouse – A centralized, integrated repository of an organization's data used primarily for analyzing and reporting information.

Education Cost Sharing – The formula used by the General Assembly to determine education aid to cities and towns based on wealth and student need.

Educator Continuum Steering Committee – This committee was convened to issue a comprehensive series of recommendations for consideration by the State Board of Education about how to attract and retain high quality educators to Connecticut's public school districts. Such recommendations will address recruitment, preparation, certification, induction and ongoing professional development.

Formative and summative assessment – Formative assessment measures the ongoing performance of students and allows teachers to gain immediate information about students' understanding in order to modify instruction. Summative assessment looks at overall progress of student's performance at the end of a course of study to determine a grade.

Parent reading clubs – Clubs that will help parents become more skillful and confident in reading to their children; encourage daily reading aloud and regular family library visits; stimulate children's literacy development, helping them become successful readers and learners; help parents develop their own literacy skills; and evaluate parents' specific learning needs (English as a Second Language, high school diploma, etc.) and connect them with the adult education programs that can meet those needs.

Regional Educational Service Centers – The Connecticut Alliance of Regional Educational Service Centers is comprised of six individual centers, each of which serves a particular region of the state.

Subgroup – The No Child Left Behind Act separates students into the following groups: white, African American, Latino, Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian, socioeconomic status

(students who receive free or reduced priced meals), special education and English language learners.

Vanguard School – The Connecticut Vanguard Schools Initiative is a public/private partnership designed to focus on school reform efforts that have demonstrated success in improving educational performance for students of all backgrounds. The mission of the initiative is to identify and recognize schools where students’ performance is high and/or significantly improving, and to share their best practices with other schools to help them replicate effective practices.