

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Theodore S. Sergi, Commissioner of Education

SUBJECT: Implementation of New Legislation Regarding Local Graduation
Competency Requirements

Our panel discussion today will focus on the progress of three local school districts toward implementing new legislation, CGS Section 10-223a(b), regarding local graduation competency requirements.

(b) On or before September 1, 2002, each local and regional board of education shall specify the basic skills necessary for graduation for classes graduating in 2006, and for each graduating class thereafter, and include a process to assess a student's level of competency in such skills. The assessment criteria shall include, but shall not exclusively be based on, the results of the tenth grade mastery examination pursuant to section 10-14n. Each local and regional board of education shall identify a course of study for those students who have not successfully completed the assessment criteria to assist such students to reach a satisfactory level of competency prior to graduation.

The statute therefore requires that on or before September 1, 2002, each local and regional board of education must first identify the basic skills necessary for graduation which will apply to the graduating class of 2006 and thereafter.

For each basic skill area (as decided by the local board of education) districts must specify a "competency" and then identify how they will assess students' competencies and also determine the level or standard required to be met (assessment criteria) for graduation. For those students who do not successfully complete the assessment criteria, the district must provide specific courses geared to help students gain the competencies required for graduation.

The results of the 10th grade CAPT cannot be used as the sole basis for the graduation criteria but must be included as one alternative. For example, to meet a district's mathematics competency, the district might decide that a student meet a district determined score on the mathematics portion of CAPT, or satisfactorily complete a district performance task in mathematics, or achieve a minimum

grade in a specific course, or achieve a specified score on a national or other standardized exam or a local exam in mathematics.

While not explicit in the statute, the record of this statute's development supports students being provided sufficient and different options to meet the competency and be given multiple opportunities to do so.

The statute was written with both Wallingford's and Milford's pre-existing graduation requirements in mind. Dr. LeRoy Hay, Assistant Superintendent of Schools in Wallingford, will review Wallingford's requirements and explain to you how and why Wallingford instituted their graduation requirements prior to the passing of this statute (pages 3-18). He will give you a sense of the way in which Wallingford is modifying their local requirements based on the requirements of the new statute.

Mr. Art Sajecki, Principal of Tolland High School, will speak to you on the progress Tolland is making towards fulfilling the statute's requirements. He will give you a sense of how Tolland is approaching the statutory requirements in combination with the New England Association of Schools & Colleges' accreditation requirements (pages 19-24). In so doing, Tolland is an example of a district that is embracing a broad definition of basic skills.

Dr. Linda Van Wagenen, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment at Plainville High School, will highlight the process Plainville is using--including members of the business community and the higher education feeder institutions—to determine which basic skills will be identified for graduation in Plainville (pages 25-28).

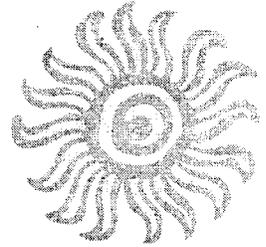
Finally, we will discuss implications of this legislation for potential future changes in the high school graduation legislation.

Prepared by,

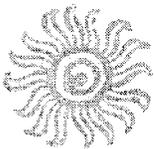
Betty J. Sternberg, Associate Commissioner
Division of Teaching and Learning

February 6, 2002

January 25, 2002



**AN OVERVIEW
OF
WALLINGFORD'S
PERFORMANCE
STANDARDS
FOR
GRADUATION**



DR. LEE HAY

**Assistant Superintendent
Wallingford (CT) Schools**

Wallingford Public Schools

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR GRADUATION

A Summary

To graduate from the Wallingford Public Schools a student must have earned not only a minimum credits and have met the credit distribution requirement, but also the student must satisfactorily demonstrated the district's performance standards English and mathematics. Performance standards in science and social studies will be added at a later date.

I. DEMONSTRATION OF PERFORMANCE STANDARDS: A student may demonstrate the performance standard in any subject by either of the following means:

A. Achieving the state goal on the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (Note: the state goal on the combined language arts score was used for English with the first generation of the CAPT. We have not decided at this time what score will be used for English with the second generation CAPT.)

or

B. Satisfactorily completing a district performance task.

II. DISTRICT PERFORMANCE TASKS

A. English: A student who has not met the C.A.P.T. goal shall, in the senior year, respond to a literature-based question in writing that is focused, organized, elaborated, and edited for standard English conventions. The questions are modeled after the C.A.P.T. response to literature question.

B. Mathematics: A student who has not met the C.A.P.T. goal shall satisfactorily complete two out of three multistep mathematical problems that require demonstration of basic math operations including fractions or decimals. The student will be provided with any required formulas and may use a calculator in completing the task. The student will explain in writing or in a pictorial, graphical, or algebraic representation either how he/she arrived at each answer or justify each answer.

III. SCORING OF THE DISTRICT PERFORMANCE TASKS

A. A committee of teachers from the subject area is currently determining satisfactory completion of the performance task, and teachers are released from classes to participate in the scoring. Each student response is reviewed independently by two teachers using a district rubric. Both scorers must accept as satisfactory the completed performance task from a student in order for the student's work to be considered as passing. If the two teachers disagree on the acceptability of the work, a third teacher will review it. The student's current teacher may not serve as one of these reviewers.

B. The district is currently piloting the use of an outside scoring service for the tasks. The scoring service is being asked to use the district-developed rubrics as the basis for the scoring.

(September 2001)

Frequently Asked Questions About
WALLINGFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS'
PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR GRADUATION

1. WHEN DID WE IMPLEMENT THIS GRADUATION REQUIREMENT?

- A. English – beginning with the Class of 1999
- B. Mathematics – beginning with the Class of 2000

2. WHY DID WE ESTABLISH THE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR GRADUATION?

Dr. Joseph Cirusuolo, Superintendent of Schools, has long believed that public education needed some criteria for graduation that would require students to demonstrate that they could apply basic learning skills. Since the *Nation at Risk Report* (1983), a large percentage of the American public has been led to believe that large numbers of students are graduating from all schools without control of those basic skills. Dr. Cirusuolo was convinced that this was not the case in our district, but saying it was so was not enough.

So he began pursuing a performance standard in the district. Dr. Cirusuolo uses the analogy of obtaining a driver's license to exemplify in simple terms why he sought a performance requirement. To obtain a driver's license, you must pass a written test, but you cannot obtain the license until you also demonstrate that you can actually drive the car.

A committee of teachers and administrators spent almost two years discussing potential "exit criteria" for graduation. They concluded that to establish and measure performance standards in all subjects would be a monumental task and probably not worth the investment of time that would be required to development and implement exit criteria.

When Dr. LeRoy Hay was hired as Assistant Superintendent for Instruction for the district, he was asked by the superintendent to continue exploring this issue. Dr. Hay worked with the district's Curriculum Department Head, Mrs. Alice Jackson and the district's Curriculum Council to try and establish performance standards and performance tasks that would allow students to demonstrate meeting those standards in a way that intruded on instruction as minimally as possible.

The result was the creation of district performance standards in English and mathematics and the performance tasks now administered in the district.

3. IS THIS A GUARANTEE TO THE PUBLIC THAT STUDENTS WITH A DIPLOMA WILL BE ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE THE SKILLS IDENTIFIED IN THE PERFORMANCE STANDARD ONCE THEY LEAVE SCHOOL?

The performance task is not a guarantee of future performance. What it does is reassure us that students are capable of performing to a certain standard when they really must do so.

4. DIDN'T WE REALLY ESTABLISH PERFORMANCE STANDARDS AS A WAY TO IMPROVE C.A.P.T. SCORES?

The original plan was to require all students to demonstrate the standards by completing the district's performance tasks. A group of teachers who were opposed to the concept of performance standards suggested that we simply use the C.A.P.T. results in some way instead of creating our own assessments.

We knew that the C.A.P.T. could not be used as a graduation requirement according to state law. However, this led us to the idea of accepting the achievement of the C.A.P.T. goal in lieu of demonstrating the performance standard(s) via the district performance task.

By doing so, we reduced significantly the number of students who had to be assessed with the district performance tasks, and, serendipitously, we added motivation for students to try and meet the state goal on the C.A.P.T. Students have learned that there is much less pressure in your senior year if you have already met the district's performance standards.

5. WHAT ARE WALLINGFORD'S PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The district presently has performance standards in English and mathematics as follows:

- **English:** The student must respond to a literature-based question in writing that is focused, organized, elaborated, and edited for standard English conventions. The question for the essay should require students to analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of a piece of literature and to relate the literature to their own lives. Students will read the piece of literature in advance but will not be given the question in advance. Students will write the response in one class period and then revise and edit the writing in the next class period.
- **Mathematics:** The student must satisfactorily complete two out of three multistep mathematical problems that require demonstration of basic math operations including fractions or decimals and conceptual understandings in mathematics. Both problems must be completed in one regular class period. The student will be provided with any required formulas and may use a calculator in completing the task. The student will explain in writing or in a pictorial, graphical, or algebraic representation either how he/she arrived at each answer or justify each answer.

The district expects to add performance standards in Science.

6. IF ALL STUDENTS, EXCEPT THOSE EXEMPTED, ARE MEETING THE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS, WHY DO WE NEED THEM ALL? ARE THE STANDARDS TOO EASY?

We do have students who struggle to meet the performance standards, but we thought all along that most, if not all, of our students would be able to demonstrate the standards when the possibility of not graduating became real to them. Our goal has always been to have all students, except for those exempted for valid reasons, leave our district in control of basic skills.

7. DO THE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS APPLY TO ALL STUDENTS?

- A. All students except for the severely mentally retarded attempt to meet the performance standards at least once.
- B. Students with identified learning disabilities that could militate against their meeting the standard may be exempted from one or more criteria on the rubric or exempted from this graduation requirement. This is determined by the Planning and Placement Team after the student has made at least one attempt to meet the standards.
- C. A student whose primary language is not English may be exempted from the district performance requirement or some aspect of that requirement in one or more subjects if the student has been in the United States for three or fewer years. The need for the exemption must be directly attributable to the language limitations of the student. Exemptions are to be granted by the building principal, and the principal's decision is final.

8. WHAT ARE THE PERFORMANCE TASKS LIKE AND WHO CREATES THEM?

Once we decided to accept achieving the state goal on the C.A.P.T. in lieu of the district performance task, we committed to using the format of the C.A.P.T. questions for our tasks. We refer to our tasks as being "C.A.P.T.-like."

- A. The English task is created by each classroom teacher. Sometime during the month designated for the task, the teacher must teach a short story (or other completed work of prose) and then assign a performance task requiring the students to respond to the piece of literature.

The district has developed criteria that establish appropriate literature for the task, and the response question must mirror the "Response to Literature" question on the C.A.P.T.

- B. The mathematics questions are now being developed during summer by a team of teachers led by the Mathematics Resource Teacher. Five sets of problems are developed for each administration of the performance task in the follow areas of mathematics: algebra, geometry, elements of mathematics (the basic level courses), business/consumer mathematics, and probability and statistics. The problems are based on conceptual understandings and essential questions in mathematics in each of those areas.

9. HOW ARE THE TASKS SCORED?

- A. Tasks are scored by district high school teachers on released time. All English and mathematics teachers are required to participate in the scoring at some time during the year. The scoring requires 2-4 days away from classes during the first round of the administration of the task each year. No teacher may score his/her own students.
- B. Scoring sessions begin with an "inter-rater reliability" process that is facilitated by the curriculum resource teacher in the area. The scoring sessions then are facilitated by the department head in the subject from one of the two high schools.
- C. Each student response is scored by two teachers and both must evaluate the response as a "pass" in order for the student to meet the performance standard. If one scorer rates a response as passing and another as failing, the third scorer rates the paper.

10. ARE WE CONCERNED ABOUT THE AMOUNT OF TIME AWAY FROM CLASSES THAT THE TEACHERS SPEND ON EVALUATING THE PERFORMANCE TASKS?

Yes, we are not pleased that teachers lose so much class time in scoring the tasks. Thus we have explored hiring an outside vendor to score the tasks. Our first attempt at this was not successful because the scores from the outside vendor and the scores on the same tasks evaluated by our teachers were not consistent enough. We plan to continue pursuing outside scoring.

11. WHAT UNEXPECTED PROBLEMS HAVE WE RUN INTO IN ADMINISTERING THE ASSESSMENTS?

- A. Duplicating assessment materials (e.g., multiple copies of each student's responses for the scorers), preparing letters for students and parents with the results of the assessment, and recording the results necessitated significant clerical assistance before the assessments as well as during and after the scoring sessions.
- B. Originally we were going to allow English teachers to assess their students using whatever piece of literature they were teaching at the time. We soon realized that the scorer would need to know the piece of literature, and we couldn't expect all scorers to have read and remembered all novels or full-length plays that might be taught in English classes. Thus we had to require the use of a short story or a chapter of a novel that can stand alone. The scorers now can read the piece of literature that the students are responding to before evaluating the responses.
- C. Someone has to oversee the entire process. Currently the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction and the language arts and mathematics resource teachers have the responsibility. This, however, has been an "add-on" to their responsibilities and is very time consuming throughout the year. The district has begun to consider the need for a test coordinator.

12. WHAT UNEXPECTED BENEFITS HAVE RESULTED FROM THE PROCESS?

Having our teachers discuss and debate the criteria for meeting our performance standards turned out to be excellent professional development! When they began to develop a rubric for scoring the performance tasks, they soon realized that they embraced a wide variety of standards and expectations relative to the standards. The English teachers, for example, spent many hours trying to come to agreement as to what criteria were most important in judging a written response to a piece of literature. The mathematics teachers did the same in deciding what students needed to demonstrate in solving problems besides getting the right answer.

The scoring sessions also increased the professional growth value of the performance assessments. Each time that a group of teachers comes together to score assessments, they first have to achieve inter-rater reliability. Scoring a set of papers as a group has proven to be an extremely beneficial activity. The teachers have to reach consensus on a professional issue that has clear and immediate importance. Such discussion has a very positive impact on instruction and thus student achievement.



For additional information contact:

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(September 2001)

INSTRUCTION

IKF

Graduation Requirements

To graduate from the Wallingford Public Schools a student must have earned a minimum of 23 credits and must have met the credit distribution requirement. In addition, the student must also have satisfactorily demonstrated the district's performance standard in English (beginning with the class of 1999) and mathematics (beginning with the class of 2000).

I. CREDIT DISTRIBUTION REQUIREMENT

- A. English - 4 credits, including English 1, 2, 3, and 4
- B. Mathematics - 3 credits
- C. Social studies - 3 credits, including Civics and United States History
- D. Science - 2 credits in laboratory courses
- E. Physical education - 2 credits (unless participation in physical education is medically contraindicated as certified in writing by a physician)
- F. Health education - ½ credit
- G. The arts or vocational education - 1 credit

All required courses must be passed.

II. DEMONSTRATION OF PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

A. Acceptable Means of Demonstrating Performance Standards: A student may demonstrate the performance standard in any subject by either of the following means:

1. Achieving the state goal on the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (Note: the state goal on the combined language arts score will be used for English)

or

2. Satisfactorily completing a district performance task.

B. District Performance Tasks:

1. The district performance tasks will be described in the regulations of this policy.

INSTRUCTION

IKF

Graduation Requirements

II. DEMONSTRATION OF PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

B. District Performance Tasks (continued)

2. Satisfactory completion of the performance task will be determined by a committee of teachers from the subject area. Each task will be reviewed independently by two teachers who must each accept as satisfactory the completed performance task from a student in order for the student's work to be considered as passing. If the two teachers disagree on the acceptability of the work, a third teacher will review it. The student's current teacher may not serve as one of these reviewers.
3. Assessments submitted by students which are judged to be not satisfactory will be kept on file after the review committee has evaluated them.

C. Mathematics in the Senior Year: Students who have not satisfactorily demonstrated the district's performance standard in mathematics after the administration of the district task in the junior year will be required to be enrolled in a full or half credit mathematics course in the senior year. Computer mathematics courses will not satisfy this requirement.

D. Notification

1. **Of Teachers:** At the beginning of the school year, teachers in subject areas with required performance tasks will be provided a list of all seniors who have not met the C.A.P.T. goal in one or more areas. Teachers will be notified of the junior C.A.P.T. scores upon their receipt at the school.
2. **Of Students:** Juniors who do not meet the C.A.P.T. goal will be reminded in writing of the performance standard requirements for graduation. At the beginning of the school year, each senior shall be notified in writing of his/her status relative to meeting the performance standards for graduation.
3. **Parents:** Parents of juniors who do not meet the C.A.P.T. goal in any subject area will be reminded in writing of the performance standard requirements for graduation. At the beginning of the school year, parents of seniors who have not met the district performance standard for graduation in any area and thus must pass one or more of the district performance tasks will be so notified in writing.

INSTRUCTION

IKF

Graduation Requirements

III. CREDITS EARNED IN PROGRAMS OUTSIDE THE DISTRICT

A. Requirements and Limitations: A student may earn up to three credits toward graduation requirements in programs affiliated with accredited schools or colleges outside the district within the limitations delineated in this section.

1. A student may earn a maximum of one-half of the credit distribution requirement in any subject area in such programs.
2. A senior who does not earn sufficient credits to graduate with his/her class and does not return to school to repeat the senior year may apply credits earned in programs outside the district toward satisfying the graduation requirements. However, the credits must be consistent with the requirements of this policy and must be earned within the school year following the year in which the student should have graduated.
3. A three-credit semester course at a college or university shall equate to one-half credit in the district. In all other circumstances, a credit shall require a minimum of 120 hours of school work.
4. Credit shall be granted only if the student earns a minimum grade of "C" or its equivalent in the program.
5. Grades earned in outside programs shall not be counted in the calculation of rank in class.
6. Students are not eligible to receive credits for participation in programs for which they received stipends for their participation.
7. Students must receive written permission from the building principal in advance to earn credit for participation in any such program.

B. Participation in the Educational Center for the Arts Program: Students who are accepted for participation in the Educational Center for the Arts (ECA) program may earn a maximum of two credits toward graduation per year of successful participation in the program. Quality points are assigned to credit earned for successful participation.

INSTRUCTION

IKF

Graduation Requirements

IV. EXCEPTION FOR TRANSFERS FROM OTHER DISTRICTS

- A. If a student transfers into the Wallingford Public Schools after completing at least three years in a high school in a district which requires less than 23 credits for graduation and if the student has a minimum of 15 credits to transfer, the student will be eligible to receive a Wallingford Public Schools diploma based on the graduation credit requirements of the previous district provided that the student earns at least 7 credits in Wallingford. Such student will be exempted from Wallingford's performance standards requirement for graduation.

- B. The superintendent shall be authorized to grant other exceptions to the graduation requirements for students transferring into the district during the junior year if unusual, extenuating circumstances would make it impossible for the student to graduate with his/her class.

Legal References: Connecticut General Statutes
10-18. Courses in United States history, government and duties and responsibilities of citizenship.
10-19. Teaching about alcohol, nicotine or tobacco, drugs and acquired immune deficiency syndrome.
10-220. Duties of boards of education.
10-221a. High school graduation requirements.

Policy Approved: 6/24/85

Policy Revised: 5/15/95, 6/17/96, 2/24/97, 11/10/97, 6/21/99, 12/18/00

INSTRUCTION

IKF-R

Graduation Requirements

I. ENGLISH: Literature, Writing, and Editing

A. The Performance Standard: A student who has not met the C.A.P.T. goal shall, in the senior year, respond to a literature-based question in writing that is focused, organized, elaborated, and edited for standard English conventions.

B. The Evaluation Process

1. The teacher in a senior English class in which there are one or more seniors who have not demonstrated the district performance standard in English will designate one assignment in each of three months as the performance task assignment and so notify the students in the class. The superintendent will designate the months.
2. The students will be given a question that springs naturally from the curriculum. The question will be literature-based, to equate with the C.A.P.T., and generated by the classroom teacher. The question for the essay should require students to analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of a piece of literature and to relate the literature to their own lives. Students will not be given the question in advance.
3. The students will be expected to write the response in class unless only three or fewer students in that class need to meet the requirement. In such cases, the teacher may make arrangements for the student(s) to write the response during another equivalent block of time, supervised by a staff member. The response is to be hand written. Students will have the opportunity to revise and edit the writing during the next meeting of the class. Those students who write the response in an alternative block of time will be given editing time within the next two school days.

II. MATHEMATICS

A. The Performance Standard: A student who has not met the C.A.P.T. goal shall, within the content of the course in which he/she is enrolled, satisfactorily complete two out of three multistep mathematical problems that require demonstration of basic math operations including fractions or decimals and conceptual understandings in mathematics. Both problems must be completed in one regular class period. The student will be provided with any required formulas and may use a calculator in completing the task. The student will explain in writing or in a pictorial, graphical, or algebraic representation either how he/she arrived at each answer or justify each answer.

B. The Evaluation Process

1. In each mathematics class in which there are three or fewer juniors who have not demonstrated the district performance standard in mathematics, a performance task assessment will be administered in each of two months. The superintendent will designate the months.

INSTRUCTION

IKF-R

Graduation Requirements

II. MATHEMATICS

B. The Evaluation Process (continued)

2. In each mathematics class in which there are three or fewer seniors who have not demonstrated the district performance standard in mathematics, a performance task assessment will be administered in each of three months. The superintendent shall designate the months.
3. Each performance task must consist of three mathematical problems that meet the guidelines established for such performance tasks. The student will be required to satisfactorily complete two of the three problems within the time allotted for the task.
4. The students will be expected to complete the problems in class unless only three or fewer students in that class need to meet the requirement. In such cases, the teacher may make arrangements for the student(s) to complete the problems during another equivalent block of time, supervised by a staff member.

III. SCIENCE

A. The Performance Standard: A student who has not met the C.A.P.T. goal will, within the content of the course in which he/she is enrolled, satisfactorily solve a problem using the steps of the scientific inquiry method which include:

1. The student analyzes the problem presented.
2. The student develops a procedure for a scientific experiment to solve the problem and conducts the experiment.
3. The students organizes and presents the data in writing and/or graphically.
4. The student draws a conclusion that is supported by the data and communicates that conclusion in writing.

INSTRUCTION

IKF-R

Graduation Requirements

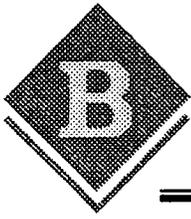
III. SCIENCE

B. The Evaluation Process

1. In each science class in which there are one or more juniors who have not demonstrated the district performance standard in science, the teacher will designate an in-class assignment in a month designated by the superintendent as the performance assessment task. Any junior who has met the standard who is not enrolled in a science course will be given an opportunity to take the performance assessment task.
2. In each science class in which there are one or more seniors who have not demonstrated the district performance standard in science, the teacher will designate one in-class assignment in each of three months as the performance assessment task. The superintendent will designate the months.
3. The students will be expected to complete the performance task in class unless only three or fewer students in that class need to meet the requirement. In such cases, the teacher may make arrangements for the student(s) to complete the performance task during another equivalent block of time, supervised by a staff member.

Regulation Approved: 6/17/96

Regulation Revised: 11/10/97, 11/16/98, 6/21/99, 7/30/01



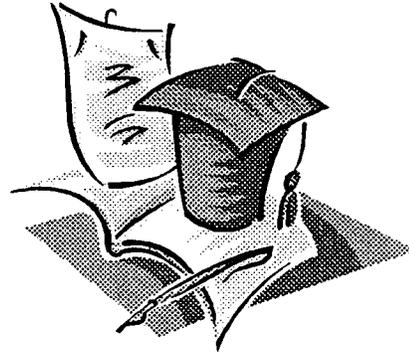
PA 01-166: An Act Concerning High School Graduation and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test

Update Mailing No. 4

July 15, 2001

This legislation requires boards of education, by September 1, 2002, to:

1. specify the basic skills students need to graduate,
2. include a process for assessing students in those skills using, as part of the criteria, the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) and other methods, and
3. identify a course of study for students who have not completed the assessments successfully to make sure they reach satisfactory levels before graduating.

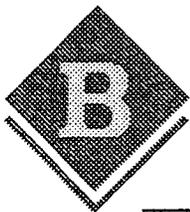


This new requirement is applicable to the graduating class of 2006.

The effective date of this legislation is October 1, 2001.

The above new requirements have been added to C.G.S. 10-223a enacted in 1999 necessitating new policy language, #5123, pertaining to reducing the incidence of social promotion. That law required boards of education, by July 1, 2000, to review their promotion and graduation policies to (1) include objective criteria; (2) measure students against the criteria and report the results to them and to their parents/guardians; (3) include alternatives to promotion, such as transition programs; and (4) provide supplemental services such as, but not limited to, summer school and tutoring. By law, the board may require students whose academic performance jeopardizes their promotion or graduation to attend remedial after-school, summer school and other programs.

This legislation does not require students to pass a test to graduate, nor does it call for uniform standards. Basically, the bill appears to be modeled after graduation standards already in place in Milford. The bill was presented as a more palatable alternative to a single high-stakes exit test, which is popular in some states. This legislation basically lets districts decide what a student needs to graduate, in addition to the required course credits. Districts, as stated previously, need to identify the specific skills students need to graduate, not just courses. The CAPT, given in the tenth grade, is to be only one of several measures districts could use to determine if students have the skills necessary to succeed. Local control is protected while providing that the CAPT has consequences and needs to be taken seriously by students.



PA 01-166: An Act Concerning High School Graduation and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (continued)

Update Mailing No. 4

July 15, 2001

In addition to specifying needed skills for graduation, districts have to identify a course of study for students who don't meet them. For example, a student who doesn't pass a writing standard might be compelled to take another writing course. Utilizing the CAPT as one of the assessment tools provides time, i.e. the junior and senior year, to do something about acquiring the needed skills.

As with the original requirements above, policy #5123, "Promotion/Acceleration/Retention" and policy #6146, "Graduation Requirements" necessitate revision. Policy #5123 has been revised and is included elsewhere in this Update mailing in the section pertaining to the "Act Concerning Revisions to the Education Statutes." (PA 01-173)

The Branford, Milford, Putnam and Wallingford school systems have enacted policies and/or administrative regulations which include, in addition to credit requirements for graduation, the meeting of performance standards in specific skill areas.

Legislators have pointed to Milford as the kind of system they would like to see emulated. Milford requires students to successfully write an essay and complete a math assessment to graduate, but allows exemptions for students who meet the goal on the CAPT.

To assist boards fulfill this mandate, the current graduation policies and administrative regulations from Milford, Putnam and Wallingford follow as models to consider and modify locally.



DRAFT

Tolland Graduation Requirements

A. Introduction

The Tolland High School graduate (beginning with the Class of 2006) must earn a minimum of 28 credits, meet the credit distribution requirements, and meet the district's performance standard in each of the following categories: literacy, problem solving, health, social responsibility and respect for others, the values of the arts, technology, and transition skills. Students must also meet the state requirement for drug and alcohol education.

B. Credit Distribution Requirements

Subject	Minimum Number of Credits
English	4
Mathematics	3
Social Studies	4
Must include: 1 credit in World History 1 credit in Modern US History 1 credit in Civics 1 social studies elective	
Science	3
Must include: 1 credit in Int. Science (gr. 9) 1 credit in Biology (gr. 10) 1 science elective	
Physical Education/Health	
Must include PE 9 & PE 10	2
Fine Arts	1
Includes any course in Art or Music	
Vocational Arts	1
Includes any course in Business, Family/Consumer Sciences, or Technology Education	
Electives	10
TOTAL CREDITS	28

C. Performance Requirements

The Tolland Graduate:

- **Is literate. Demonstrates the ability to read and write proficiently when accessing, processing, and communicating knowledge:**
 - I. by achieving in band three or four on the CAPT reading and on the CAPT writing assessment

or

 - by assembling a reading/writing project that receives an average score of 4 on a 1 to 6 point rubric.
- **Is a problem solver. Shows that he/she can utilize differing sources of information and apply multiple strategies in solving a variety of types of problems:**
 - II. by achieving in band three or four on the CAPT math assessment

or

 - by satisfactorily completing a benchmark assessment that requires demonstration of basic math operation, procedures and applications.
 - III. by achieving in band three or four on the CAPT science assessment

or

 - by completing a science research project involving data collection and analysis, and receiving a three or better on a 1 to 4 point rubric.
- **Shows an understanding of the basic tenets of good health:**
 - IV. by keeping a fitness activity record and designing a fitness program (that receives a three or better on a 1 to 4 point rubric) and
 - V. by designing a personal nutrition program (that receives a three or better on a 1 to 4 point rubric).

- **Demonstrates social responsibility and respect for others in a diverse world:**

- VI. by complying with the Tolland High School attendance policy.
- VII. by contributing to their school, local or global community as verified in writing by an adult supervisor.
- VIII. by showing their understanding of a diverse world by earning one credit in one of the following course: World Language, Native American History, Russian History or Chinese History

OR

by showing their understanding of social responsibility by earning one credit in one of the following courses:

- a. Independent Living
- b. Child Development
- c. Criminology
- d. Psychology
- e. Contemporary Social Problems
- f. Business Law
- g. Business Management
- h. Communication Media

- **Demonstrates an Understanding of the Value of the Arts**

- IX. by composing/performing music or producing visual art with a basic proficiency (four on a 1 to 6 point rubric)

OR

by completing a project on a composer/artist or a period of art/music that receives a four on a six point rubric.

- X. by demonstrating aesthetic judgement by producing a critique of their own work or the work of others (assessed as a four on a six point rubric).

- **Shows they can integrate and use technology to receive, access, organize, process, and transmit information by.**

XI. by earning one credit in one of the following areas:

- a. Business Education
- b. Computer Science
- c. Technology Education

XII. by satisfactorily completing a benchmark assessment of basic computer technology skills (assessed as a four on a six point rubric).

- **Demonstrates transition skills.**

XIII. by completing a career interest inventory.

XIV. by developing a resume of interests and activities.

XV. by developing a written plan for post-high school endeavors.

Implementation

- A. At least once each year, students will assess, with the graduation requirement coordinator, their progress toward meeting performance standards.
- B. Students who have not satisfactorily met performance standards during their junior year, will have opportunities for alternative assessment.

Notification

- A. Of teachers: At the beginning of the school year, the graduation requirement coordinator will provide to teachers (in subject areas with required performance tasks) a list of all seniors who have not met a performance goal in their areas. Teachers will be notified of the junior CAPT scores upon their receipt at the school.
- B. Of students: The graduation requirement coordinator will write to juniors who do not meet the CAPT goal and the parents of said juniors to remind them of the performance standard requirements for graduation. At the beginning of the school year, each senior shall be notified by his/her guidance counselor of his/her status relative to meeting the performance standards for graduation.
- C. Of parents: The graduation requirement coordinator will notify in writing the parents of seniors who have not met the performance standard goal in any area and thus must pass one or more of the district performance tasks.

Appeals

Options if Requirements are not met.

- A. Students who receive a score of 2 out of 4 points or three out of six points on any rubric based assessment will be allowed to appeal their score. Students will submit an appeal in writing to the principal within ten school days of receiving their score. Included in the appeal must be a statement, using the scoring rubric, demonstrating why the score is incorrect. Once the appeal is received, the principal will submit the student's work anonymously to a different teacher within the subject area for assessment.
- B. Students whose benchmark assessment is within 10% of the standard may appeal their score. Students will submit an appeal in writing to the principal within ten school days of receiving their score. Included in the appeal must be a statement, using the benchmark criteria, demonstrating why the score is incorrect.

Once the appeal is received, the principal will submit the student's work anonymously to a different teacher within the subject area for assessment.

C. The principal will communicate the results of the appeal in writing to the student and the parent/guardian within ten school days of receipt of the appeal.

D. If a student feels that the process description in these regulations was not followed, he/she may appeal to the superintendent. Such an appeal must be made in writing within ten school days of receipt of the original appeal decision. The superintendent will review the case to assure that all regulations were followed. If the superintendent finds the regulation were not followed, the superintendent will order a special assessment.

**Local Graduation Competency Requirements:
One District's Process**

Plainville High School

Rose Marie Cipriano, Principal
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Linda Van Wagenen, Director
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The Committee

Rose Marie Cipriano, Principal
Kathy Carter, Assistant Principal
Greg Ziogas, Assistant Principal
Holly Bergen, Instructional Leader Social Studies
Jeff Blanchette, Instructional Leader Music
Joanne Curley, Instructional Leader World Languages
Jan McGann, Instructional Leader Science
Deborah Mosebach, Instructional Leader Library Information
Anne Pingpank, Instructional Leader Art
Chuck Radda, Instructional Leader
Steve Slomski, Instructional Leader Unified Arts
Jeff Sorel, Instructional Leader Physical Education
William Spring, Instructional Leader Guidance
Ernest Zike, Instructional Leader Mathematics
Kristin Giannini, PHS Teacher
Steve Sargalski, PHS Teacher and Administrative Intern
Two PHS Student Representatives
Mary Kilray, Middle School of Plainville Teacher
Linda Van Wagenen, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
Kathleen Binkowski, Superintendent

Tony Rigazzio-Digilio, Facilitator
Graduate Student Note-Taker

Process

- Summer, 2001 Organizational Meetings – “High School of the Future”
Ben Tyson, Tony Rigazzio-Digilio (CCSU)
Kathleen Binkowski, Rose Marie Cipriano (Plainville)
Purpose: To develop a plan to approach the project
- September, 2001 Introductory Meeting with Committee
Overview of the Challenge: Superintendent
Distribution of Materials
Discussion
- October, 2001 The Business Community Expectations
Cara – From General Electric
- Leadership
 - Well-rounded individuals
 - Values and Integrity
 - Competitive Spirit
 - Strong work ethic
- Attorney Jason Famiglietti
- Communication skills
 - Maturity
 - Initiative
 - Computer skills
- Sue Dean – Plainville Chamber of Commerce
- Job seeker
 - Know where to look for jobs
 - Resume skills
 - Computer skills
 - Ease in conversation
 - Ability to respond to questions thoughtfully and carefully
- Suzanne – Mott Manufacturing
- Computer skills
 - Blueprint skills
 - Mathematics skills
 - Writing a business letter
 - Communication with colleagues
 - Team work
 - Understanding how to approach short term goals
 - Understanding how to approach long term goals
- Other Points made during discussion:
- E-mail etiquette
 - Database
 - Microsoft Access
 - Publisher software
 - Proofreading skills (in addition to “spell check”)
 - E-Commerce

Process

November, 2001

Post-Secondary Educational Institution Expectations
Zaira Santiago – UCONN

- 4 years of English
- 2 years of laboratory science
- 2 years of world language
- 2 years of social studies (one must be US History)
- 3 years of math (preferably pre-calculus)
- Strong writing skills – see this as a weakness
- Strong mathematics skills – again, a weakness

Dr. Rick Roth – Academic Dean CCSU

- 4 years English with emphasis on writing, literature and reading comprehension
- 2 years of science – 1 must be laboratory science
- 3 years of mathematics (Alg. I, Alg. II, Geometry)
- 2 years of world language
- 2 years of social studies
- Students take the "Accuplacer" for placement in math and English
- Weak areas for many students: writing, math

Kelly Pittman – Tunxis Community College

- Open Admissions – HS diploma or GED
- 50% of students need a developmental writing course

Other Points made during discussion:

- Students need a stronger math background
- Students need strong reading and writing skills
- Do not reduce the number of "credits" in English
- Recommend that students take math in senior year; prefer advanced math (pre-calculus or higher)
- The CAPT is not a predictor of how a freshman in college will do
- Students should keep portfolios – especially those interested in the arts
- Presentation skills are important
- Oral communication skills are important
- Important to get kids thinking about college and their future before they get to high school
- Encourage kids to try new areas of study

January, 2002

Work Session – Brainstorming Ideas

February, 2002

Work Session – Wrap Up Plan



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



SERIES 2001-2002

CIRCULAR LETTER: C-3

TO: Superintendents of Schools

FROM: Theodore S. Sergi
Commissioner of Education

DATE: August 17, 2001

SUBJECT: Local Graduation Competency Requirements, New Legislation

An Act concerning the Connecticut Academic Performance Test was amended in this year's legislative session. Section 10-223a was repealed and the following was substituted in lieu thereof:

Sec. 10-223a. Promotion and graduation policies. On or before July 1, 2000, each local and regional board of education shall review and revise its policies for promotion from grade to grade and for graduation in order to ensure that such policies foster student achievement, reduce the incidence of social promotion and meet the requirements of this section. On and after said date, such policies shall: (1) Include objective criteria for the promotion and graduation of students, (2) provide for the measuring of the progress of students against such criteria and the reporting of such information to parents and students, (3) include alternatives to promotion such as transition programs, and (4) provide for supplemental services, and such policies may require students who have substantial academic deficiencies that jeopardize their eligibility for promotion or graduation to attend after school programs, summer school or other programs offered by the school district that are designed to assist students in remedying such deficiencies.

(b) On or before September 1, 2002, each local and regional board of education shall specify the basic skills necessary for graduation for classes graduating in 2006, and for each graduating class thereafter, and include a process to assess a student's level of competency in such skills. The assessment criteria shall include, but shall not exclusively be based on, the results of the tenth grade mastery examination pursuant to section 10-14n. Each local and regional board of education shall identify a course of study for those students who have not successfully completed the assessment criteria to assist such students to reach a satisfactory level of competency prior to graduation.

As stated above, on or before September 1, 2002, each local and regional boards of education must first identify the basic skills necessary for graduation which will apply to the graduating class of 2006 and thereafter.

For each basic skill area (as decided by the local board of education) districts must specify a “competency” and then identify how they will assess students’ competencies and also determine the level or standard required to be met (assessment criteria) for graduation. For those students who do not successfully complete the assessment criteria, the district must provide specific courses geared to help students gain the competencies required for graduation.

The results of the 10th grade CAPT cannot be used as the sole basis for the graduation criteria but must be included as one alternative. For example, to meet a district’s mathematics competency, the district might decide that a student meet a district determined score on the mathematics portion of CAPT, or satisfactorily complete a district performance task in mathematics, or achieve a minimum grade in a specific course, or achieve a specified score on a national or other standardized exam or a local exam in mathematics.

While not explicit in the statute, the record of this statute’s development supports students being provided sufficient and different options to meet the competency and be given multiple opportunities to do so. Attached is a copy of Milford’s graduation requirements as one example.

Since this is a complex and challenging task, which must be completed by September 1, 2002, districts are urged to begin this process now. As you identify the basic skills for which you will assess the students’ level of competency, start with the fundamental core of basic skills graduates from your district’s system should be able to demonstrate. Examples of districts’ unique graduation requirements (Lebanon, Milford, Putnam and Wallingford) are posted on the state web page, www.state.ct.us/sde under Promising Practices.

If you have questions about the use of CAPT or other assessments, please contact Dr. Abigail L. Hughes via email at abigail.hughes@po.state.ct.us. If you have questions or need assistance with identifying graduation competencies, please contact Dr. Betty Sternberg via email at betty.sternberg@po.state.ct.us.

TSS/ahe

Attachment

Graduation Requirements

I. Introduction

To graduate from the Milford Public Schools a student must have earned a minimum of 22.3 credits and must have met the credit distribution requirement. Students must also meet three performance standards: Technology, writing and mathematics. The district's performance standard in writing shall take effect for the class of 2002. The class of 2003 must also meet the district's performance standard in mathematics. Beginning with the class of 2004, each student must earn 0.5 credit in Civics as part of the 3.0 credits in Social Studies.

II. Credit Distribution Requirement

The following courses must be passed:

- A. English – 4 credits
- B. Mathematics – 3 credits
- C. Social Studies – 3 credits including 1.0 in United States History and .5 in Global Studies
- D. Science – 3 credits
- E. Physical Education – 1.0 credit
- F. Health - 0.5 - credit
- G. Business, Technology Education, Family and Consumer Science, Art or Music – 1.5 Credits
- H. Technology Graduation Requirement – 0.1 credit
- I. Writing Performance Standard – 0.1 credit
- J. Math Performance Standard – 0.1 credit

III. District's Performance Standards

A. Writing and Mathematics Performance Standards

1. Definition

- a. Writing: Students shall, prior to the completion of their senior year, produce an essay that is focused, organized, elaborated, and edited for standard English conventions.
- b. Math: Within the content of the course in which the student is enrolled, he/she will satisfactorily complete multistep mathematical problems which require demonstration of basic math operations including fractions or decimals. The student will be provided with any required formulas and may use a calculator in completing the task. The student shall also explain in writing either how he/she arrived at each answer or justify each answer in writing.

2. Exemptions

- a. Students will be exempt from the district performance standard if they have:
 - 1) Achieved a score of 8 on a related section of the Connecticut Academic Performance Test – Response to Literature or Interdisciplinary Subjects
 - 2) Achieved a score equivalent to the national average on the SAT II in mathematics and/or writing
 - 3) Achieved an annually designated score on the mathematics section of the SAT

Graduation Requirements (continued)

- b. Transfers: If a student transfers into the Milford Public Schools after completing at least three years in a high school in another district, he/she may be exempted from Milford's performance standards requirement for graduation.
- c. Special Needs: Students with special needs may be exempt from district performance standards for graduation as described in this policy if so indicated in their Individual Education Plan

3. Implementation

- a. Students will have at least five opportunities over the course of their junior and senior year to complete the performance standard
- b. Students who have not satisfactorily demonstrated the district's performance standard in writing, or who do not qualify for an exemption, will be required to take a writing course in their senior year.
- c. Students who have not satisfactorily demonstrated the district's performance standard in mathematics, or who do not qualify for an exemption, will be required to take a mathematics course, other than a computer mathematics course in the senior year.

4. Notification

- a. Of teachers: At the beginning of the school year, the Guidance Department will provide to teachers (in subject areas with required performance tasks) a list of all seniors who have not met a standardized test goal in their areas. Teachers will be notified of the junior CAPT scores upon their receipt at the school.
- b. Of students: The Guidance Department will write to juniors who do not meet the CAPT goal and the parents of said juniors to remind them of the performance standard requirements for graduation. At the beginning of the school year, each senior shall be notified by his/her guidance counselor of his/her status relative to meeting the performance standards for graduation.
- c. Of parents: The Guidance Department will also notify in writing the parents of seniors who have not met the performance standard goal in any area and thus must pass one or more of the district performance tasks.

B. Technology Requirement

The goal of this requirement is to have a student independently design a solution to an authentic, complex problems. The student must select the appropriate technology (such as computers, advanced calculators, or computer-assisted machinery) and use the technology independently to solve the problems. Some examples of appropriate projects are the task of manufacturing a part, a small business simulation, a design problem in drafting or art, a communication/information task, etc. Guidelines for the technology requirement will be available in the Guidance Department. (0.1 credit)

Graduation Requirements (continued)

C. A student may count the credits for the passing the Math performance standard, the writing performance standard or the technology graduation requirement to a maximum of 0.3 credits of the 22.3 needed for graduation.

II. Options If Requirements are Not Met

Seniors who are not eligible for graduation with their class due to a failure to meet the district graduation requirement, as per policy, in one or more subjects as described above, may select one of the following options:

- A. Return in September as a fifth year student (*See Policy 6146.3*)
- B. Enroll in summer school and pass the requirement
- C. Enroll in courses to be designated through the Milford Adult Education Program and pass the assessment
- D. Make arrangements for re-testing to meet the performance standard

Legal References: Connecticut General Statutes

- 10-18 Courses in United States history, government and duties and responsibilities of citizenship
- 10-19 Teaching about alcohol, nicotine or tobacco, drugs and acquired immune deficiency syndrome
- 10-220 Duties of boards of education
- 10-220a High school graduation requirements

(cf. 5123 – Promotion and Retention)

Policy Proposed: April 14, 1998
 Revision Proposed: June 9, 1998
 Policy Approved: July 7, 1998
 2nd Revision Proposed: October 12, 1999
 2nd Revision Approved: October 12, 1999
 3rd Revision Proposed: March 13, 2001
 3rd Revision Approved: April 10, 2001

MILFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Milford, Connecticut

Graduation Requirement Regulations

I. Performance Objectives

A. The performance objectives in writing are:

1. The students will read an article or story and respond critically in writing to a question called a prompt.
2. Students will edit their writing to show their ability to use standard English conventions.

B. The performance objective in mathematics is:

1. The student will satisfactorily complete multi-step mathematical problems, which require demonstration of basic math operations including fractions or decimals. The student will be provided with any required formulas and may use a calculator in completing the task. The student shall also either explain in writing how he/she arrived at each answer or justify each answer in writing.

II. Administration of Assessment

A. Writing

1. English and Social studies teachers will administer the assessment at least five times over the course of a student's junior or senior years during regular class periods. It will be used as a classroom assignment for all students and will be graded by the teacher and counted as part of the student's work for the marking period.
2. Only the papers of students who scored below 8 out of 12 on the 10th grade CAPT writing assessments, i.e. Response to Literature and Interdisciplinary, will be scored by a committee, and that score will determine whether or not the student has met the writing graduation requirement. A score of 8 out of 12 is required to pass.
3. Papers will be scored without student names on the paper. Each paper will be scored by at least two (2) scorers from a team of three teachers using a rubric with a six-point scale. The team will be appointed by the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, or his/her designee, in consultation with the high school principals. The team will not score paper from within the school in which they teach. Each teacher who scores papers will pass a score reliability test. The rubric is a list of criteria needed for each score, which the students know in advance of the test. In the event of a discrepancy (two scores more than one number apart) the paper will be read by a third scorer who will resolve the discrepancy.

III. Notification of and Reporting of Parents – Writing and Mathematics

A. Preliminary notification

1. Students in grades 8 and 9 will be given a practice assessment and parents will be notified of their child's scores by the school.
2. Continuing current practice, parents of 10th graders are notified of their child's CAPT results in the fall of their junior year.

3. Parents of 11th and 12th graders will be notified of their child's score after each assessment that a student takes.
4. Each high school will notify parents by certified mail that their child has not passed one or more assessments by the end of the junior year.
5. All notifications will include a description of opportunities for additional help.

B. Notification of Successful Completion

1. When a student meets the graduation requirement it will be indicated on his/her transcript at the end of the next marking period.

IV. Appeals

A. Writing

1. Students whose score on the assessment is 6 or 7 points out of 12 will be allowed to appeal their score. Students must submit their request for an appeal to the principal within 20 school days of receiving their score. A student must submit a statement, using the scoring rubric, demonstrating why their score is incorrect. If an appeal is made, the paper will be submitted anonymously to a teacher trained in writing assessment scoring from outside the school.

B. Mathematics

1. Students whose score on the assessment is within 10% of the standard may appeal their score. Students must submit their request for an appeal to the principal within 20 school days of receiving their score. A student must submit a statement, using the criteria of the assessment, demonstrating why their score is incorrect. If an appeal is made, the paper will be submitted anonymously to a teacher trained in mathematics assessment scoring from outside the school.

C. The independent assessor will be selected by the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction or his/her designee.

D. The outcome of the independent review will be sent to the principal. The principal will communicate the result of the independent review to the student and parent(s)/guardian(s).

E. Any student may appeal the scoring of their paper in writing within 20 days of receiving score to the Superintendent if they believe the process described in these regulations was not followed. The Superintendent will review the case to assure that all regulations were followed. If the Superintendent finds the regulations were not followed, the Superintendent will order a special assessment.

Regulation Proposed: October 12, 1999
Regulations Approved: November 9, 1999
Revision Proposed: March 13, 2001
Revision Approved: April 10, 2001

MILFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Milford, Connecticut