

NEWS

Connecticut Department of Education

Dr. Mark K. McQuillan
Commissioner



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Connecticut Receives Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Grant Addresses the Health and Educational Outcomes For Children and Youth

(HARTFORD, CT) The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) in partnership with the Department of Public Health (DPH) has secured a grant of approximately \$3 million over the next five years to address health and educational issues in Connecticut public schools.

The Cooperative Agreement, *Improving the Health and Educational Outcomes for Young People*, is funded through a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Adolescent and School Health (CDC/DASH). It will support implementation of Coordinated School Health (CSH), Promotion of Physical Activity, Nutrition, and Tobacco-Use Prevention (PANT), HIV prevention education, and the Youth Risk Behavior Survey also known as the Connecticut School Health Survey (CSHS).

State Education Commissioner Mark K. McQuillan noted that this is the first time Connecticut has received federal support to implement Coordinated School Health, adding that only 22 states were awarded funding in the competitive national application process.

"This Cooperative Agreement will help to address prominent health concerns that are contributing factors to loss of instructional time including absenteeism, dropout rates, and chronic illness. Coordinated School Health addresses the needs of the whole child by effectively connecting health with education programs, policies and services at the local school level," said Commissioner McQuillan. "This coordinated approach provides the framework for families, communities, and schools to work together to improve students' health and capacity to learn."

Specifically, this funding will:

- Increase effectiveness of policies, practices, and services to promote physical activity, improve nutrition, reduce tobacco use, and increase health-enhancing behaviors among children and youth;
- Strengthen statewide partnerships to effectively implement CSH and prevention education programs in Connecticut;
- Administer the Connecticut School Health Survey, a health behavior surveillance system to students in Grades 9-12;

- Support the development of a leadership institute to work with 20 school districts demonstrating health and educational disparities; and
- Assist in aligning and enhancing existing local school district wellness policies and school improvement plans to address students' physical, social, emotional and behavioral health needs.

Reducing the disparities in educational, child, and adolescent health indicators remains one of the major challenges facing the education and public health communities in Connecticut. This Cooperative Agreement will assist Connecticut in addressing these challenges and opportunities.

For more information, please contact Paul Flinter, Chief, Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education at (860) 807-2050 or visit www.ct.gov/sde/healthyconneCTions.

For more information on the CDC/DASH national initiative, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/partners/funded/index.htm>.