

Series 2000-2001

Circular Letter C-15

TO: Superintendents of Schools

FROM: Theodore S. Sergi, Commissioner of Education

SUBJECT: 2000 Connecticut Mastery Test Data and Closing the Achievement Gaps

DATE: January 30, 2001

Today, CAFE, CAUS and the Department sponsored a conference on "Closing the Achievement Gap" for leadership teams from our urban districts. While this additional focus is vital to urban schools, every educator in Connecticut needs to take notice of gaps in achievement in every district and school throughout the state.

In mid-February, the State Department of Education will release district and statewide data on student performance on the new "Third Generation" Connecticut Mastery Test. This new generation CMT represents **a new baseline, with more comprehensive assessments of reading and writing, with more levels of achievement identified, with disaggregated data by subgroup and with more students included in the assessment.** New reports will include district, ERG and statewide performance by gender, racial and ethnic group, poverty level, limited English proficiency and disability. The data will give significant insight into the gaps in student performance, and should result in all of us using new methods to further reduce the gaps. Our gap analyses should not be limited to CMT only or to test scores only.

Information is the powerful beginning to all positive change. Only our acceptance of the past and inaction would keep us from doing better in the future.

One thing we do know is that **Connecticut schools have helped to begin closing these gaps.** As the attached data demonstrate, black and Hispanic students in Connecticut over the last seven years had increases in achievement that exceeded the increases of white students.

If you have anything on this topic that we can share with other districts, please send it to me. We would like to post it in the "Promising Practices" section of the SDE web page. Thank you.

TSS:fm
Attachment