

# **Position Statement on Measuring Student Success**

Adopted

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The State Board of Education defines successful students as those who can read, write, compute, analyze information, think critically and creatively, solve problems, communicate effectively and use technology. All students should also enjoy and perform in the arts and athletics, and understand history, science and other cultures and languages. Each student must share ample responsibility for his or her learning and behavior, be able to persevere at complex tasks, work well with and be helpful to others, and contribute to the community. All students must graduate from high school and be prepared to continue their education, become productive members of the workforce and function in the global economy. Ultimately, students must become engaged citizens and lifelong learners who lead healthy and productive lives.

Highly effective districts and schools are able to ensure success for all students, regardless of their backgrounds. The literature on effective schools suggests that establishing challenging standards for student performance and monitoring student progress toward achieving those standards are two of the essential characteristics of schools that produce successful students. As a state, we can meet our responsibility of providing educational experiences leading to success for all students only if we regularly and consistently assess students' progress and make the necessary changes in order to improve the academic, physical, social and emotional dimensions of our schools.

## **Setting Standards**

The critical responsibilities for the State Board of Education and local boards of education are to articulate clearly what success means; establish standards for performance that align with federal and international standards; measure performance against those standards regularly; make this information available to the public; and ensure that this information is used to make informed decisions that support student success. Defining standards for success and continually monitoring progress enables schools and districts to make data-based decisions about allocating resources, establishing curricular priorities and supporting new initiatives that will directly enhance the success of all students. Schools must constantly build on their accomplishments while also addressing areas that need to improve.

## **Measuring Success**

Because success is multifaceted, it must be assessed using multiple measures: academic achievement over an extended period of time; student achievements that are other than academic; local indicators that represent unique community priorities; and the extent to which the performance gaps between groups of students are being reduced. The responsibility of measuring success is one that local boards of education and the State Board of Education share.

There are several sources of data that a local board of education may use to measure the success of its students. The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) collects and publishes statewide, district and school-level data on the critical aspects of education that contribute to and measure student performance. These include student test scores; dropout rates; graduate follow-up data; suspension and expulsion rates; student participation in various courses and programs; expenditures; class size; and number of academic computers per student.

### **Cautions**

There are multiple ways to measure student success. Connecticut Mastery Test and Connecticut Academic Performance Test results provide important information about student performance on a selected set of skills and competencies in mathematics, reading and writing in Grades 3 through 8 and 10, and for science in Grades 5, 8 and 10. However, these results do not provide a comprehensive picture of student accomplishments. No one assessment — state or local — should be the sole basis for promotion, graduation or other important decisions in the education of a student.

### **Reporting Results**

The State Board of Education urges local boards of education to provide ongoing communication with families and the community on what schools need to provide in order for all students to realize success. This can include additional information about students, curriculum, staff, new initiatives and programs, and evaluations of a program's effectiveness. We encourage local boards of education to communicate frequently and openly with the communities they serve, using every effective means available. Each local board of education is required by law to annually hold a public discussion with the community on relevant student-related information from its Strategic School Profile.

### **Improving Instruction**

Defining standards, measuring success and reporting results are important steps in the process of improving education. However, what is most important is using this information to make good decisions about adjusting curricula, improving teaching, designing new programs and providing more specific and more effective instruction for each student.

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