

NEWS

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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149 CONNECTICUT SCHOOLS NEED TO MAKE MORE PROGRESS COMMISSIONER SEES PROCESS AS ‘OPPORTUNITY FOR CHANGE’

The State Department of Education today gave notice to 149 Connecticut schools in 34 districts that they **did not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in 2001-02 toward the goal of 100 percent of students scoring at proficient levels in reading and mathematics by 2013-14 as required by the new federal law, No Child Left Behind.** The identification is based on 2002 CMT scores attributed back to the school the student attended the previous year.

“I am confident that Connecticut will view this event as an opportunity for change and improvement,” said Commissioner Theodore S. Sergi. “In my view, all schools—even the best school in America—can find room for improvement.”

Aside from identification, there are no mandated federal or state consequences for these schools for 2003-04. The elementary and middle schools identified will need to improve student performance on the fall 2003 CMT to avoid designation in the summer of 2004 as “Schools in Need of Improvement,” which directs schools to make specific changes, including redirecting federal Title I funds to pay for public school choice programs. “I expect that every school and district will focus immediately on school improvement activities,” said Sergi.

“The goals of the federal law are first to identify problems and challenges in our schools and then to encourage improved instruction and support in our classrooms in order to help all children to succeed,” said Commissioner Sergi. “It would be inaccurate and wrong to label these schools as ‘failing,’ but it would be appropriate to say that these schools need to make some instructional changes. Some will be small, and some major.”

“Failure is taking the position that ‘there is nothing we can do’, or refusing to recognize that improvement is needed,” said Commissioner Sergi. “This is all about every school, every district, the State of Connecticut and the federal government taking responsibility for the success of every child.”

We all have a responsibility to our schools to support them as they work to address these issues and to restructure services to meet the educational needs of their students,” Sergi said. “Many of these schools have the toughest job, they serve the greatest percentages of students who live in poverty and who are from homes where English is not the first language. Of the 149 schools, 110 or 74 percent have been receiving federal Title I funds.

The 2002-03 state standards for AYP are as follows:

- 65% of students must be Proficient in Mathematics on CMT

- 57% of students must be Proficient in Reading on CMT
- 70% of students must be above Basic in Writing on CMT
- 95% of students must participate in testing

Under the new federal law, schools can be identified if their students do not meet the AYP standards:

- Whole school in mathematics and reading, achievement and/or participation
- Whole school in mathematics or reading, achievement and/or participation
- Subgroup(s) only in mathematics and/or reading, achievement and/or participation
- Whole school in writing, or
- Participation only on any state test

The percentage of students expected to achieve at proficient levels increases in August of 2005 and then every three years thereafter to reach 100 percent of students by 2014. Schools will be required to focus greater attention on assisting more children—including students with disabilities, minority and poor children—to achieve at higher levels.

Of the schools identified today (See Attachment II):

- **42** were identified because the overall school did not meet the achievement and/or participation standard in mathematics and reading;
- **48** were identified because the overall school did not meet the achievement and/or participation standard in mathematics or reading;
- **51** were identified because at least one subgroup did not meet the achievement and/or participation standard in mathematics or reading; and
- **8** were identified because the school did not meet participation standards only.

While not making AYP, 17 of the 149 schools identified were schools where there has been reasonable improvement in student achievement over the previous year. They are considered as having made “promising progress” because the percentage of students who were not proficient decreased measurably from the previous year. (These schools are identified by an asterisk (*) in Attachment I)

The 149 elementary and middle schools join eight Connecticut high schools identified in July 2003 as not making Adequate Yearly Progress. (For a list of these schools, see <http://www.state.ct.us/sde/der/CTAYP.pdf>.) **Therefore, statewide, a total of 157 schools—approximately 16 percent of schools with tested grades—have been identified as not making AYP for 2001-02.**

About one-third of the schools identified today are middle schools that are struggling with the achievement of some of their subgroups. “I think there is growing consensus that we have a lot of work to do in Connecticut’s middle schools. We need to improve curriculum and teaching in Grades 6-8 by being more rigorous and more engaging with this unique age group,” said Sergi.

“Yes, we need more targeted resources in our neediest communities, but we must not put on hold changes in our expectations and our teaching—while we wait for more dollars.”

“Connecticut has some outstanding schools serving high poverty students. These schools have shown that with focused instruction and leadership, high percentages of their poor and minority children can achieve,” said Commissioner Sergi. “Schools such as Hartford’s Simpson-Waverly School, Bridgeport’s Multicultural School, and Amistad Academy Charter School in New Haven—all have roughly three-fourths of their students eligible for free and reduced price lunch, but have also over three-fourths scoring above proficient level.”

It should be noted that the identification of schools is based primarily on student performance on state standardized tests of reading and mathematics. While these measures are important, the State Board of Education defines successful students as ‘those who read, write, compute, think creatively, solve problems, and use technology. All students should enjoy and perform in the arts and athletics and understand history, science, and other cultures and languages. Each student must be responsible for his or her learning and behavior, work well with and be helpful to others, and contribute to the community. Every student must graduate from high school and be prepared to move on to productive work and further study, and to function in a global economy. Ultimately, students must become active citizens and lifelong learners who lead healthy lives.’”

ATTACHMENT I	Schools that Did Not Make Adequate Yearly Progress for 2001-02 by District
ATTACHMENT II	Schools that Did Not Make Adequate Yearly Progress for 2001-02 by Category
ATTACHMENT III	Questions and Answers on Connecticut’s NCLB Accountability Plan
ATTACHMENT IV	Connecticut’s K-12 Statewide Accountability System
ATTACHMENT V	OP-ED Article on No Child Left Behind by Theodore Sergi

CONNECTICUT'S K-12 STATEWIDE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

Purposes of Connecticut's K-12 Statewide Accountability Plan

The purpose of the NCLB is "...to ensure that all children have a fair, equal and significant opportunity to obtain a high quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments."

Connecticut's purposes reflect those of NCLB, with a focus on continuously improving all student achievements, reducing achievement gaps and having every student reach proficiency on the CMT and CAPT.

Connecticut has been converting its statewide statutory accountability system (1999-02) to the NCLB requirements (2002-14) under Sec. 10-223e of the Connecticut General Statutes adopted August 12, 2002.

Sec.10-223e. State-wide education accountability plan. (a) In conformance with the No Child Left Behind Act, P.L. 107-110, the Commissioner of Education shall prepare a state-wide education accountability plan, consistent with federal law and regulation. Such plan shall identify the schools and districts in need of improvement, require the development and implementation of improvement plans and utilize rewards and consequences.

Acknowledging the requirements of the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) Act and the importance of its emphasis on student achievement in reading and mathematics, the State of Connecticut has and will continue to take a broader view of the term accountability.

In the largest sense, we all have a role in the growth and development of our state's children. Parents and family members have a role as first teacher and nurturer. Schools, local and state government, teachers and administrators, community groups, employers, unions, faith-based groups and others all have an important role, one that is unique and one that is complementary to others.

Connecticut schools are accountable for implementing the spirit and the letter of our state constitution and state statutes. Our state statutes require specific curriculum, certified teachers, special education, basic skills competencies for high school graduation and a number of other specific duties for local school boards, including an "equal opportunity to a suitable program of educational experiences." This broader accountability of 1,500 elected local school board members, thousands of local municipal officials, 50,000 teachers and administrators, and 3 million total residents is an important framework in which the NCLB Act can help Connecticut achieve its goals of reaching every child.

Please note the State Board of Education's definition of equal educational opportunity and successful student:

"The Board's definition of equal educational opportunity is student access to a level and quality of programs and experiences that provide each child with the means to achieve the standard of an educated citizen defined by Connecticut's Common Core of Learning. Evidence of equal educational

opportunity is the participation and achievement of each student in challenging educational programs, regardless of factors such as family income, race, gender or town of residence.”

The result of greater equality of educational opportunity in Connecticut will be that all public school graduates “can read, write, compute, think creatively, solve problems and use technology. All students should enjoy and perform in the arts and athletics, and understand history, science and other cultures and languages. Each student must be responsible for his or her learning or behavior, work well with and be helpful to others, and contribute to the community. Every student must graduate from high school and be prepared to move on to productive work and further study and to function in the global economy. Ultimately, students must become active citizens and lifelong learners who lead healthy lives.” [SBE Position Statement on Measuring Success/Defining a successful student – September 2000].

Adequate Yearly Progress

Connecticut's Statewide Consolidated Application for Elementary and Secondary Education Act, reauthorized as No Child Left Behind, 2001 was approved by the United States Department of Education on June 2003. This approval authorized Connecticut's receipt of \$191,625,723 in federal funds to support the five goals of No Child Left Behind, 2001.

The Connecticut State Board of Education adopted the K-12 Statewide Accountability Plan at its June 4, 2003 meeting which was approved by the United State Department of Education on June 9, 2003 and is compliant with the federal law No Child Left Behind, 2001 (NCLB).

Connecticut's plan for meeting the federal requirements for identifying persistently dangerous schools was submitted on June 16, 2003.

In addition, the United State Department of Education has issued a series of non-regulatory guidance and letters which clarifies certain aspects of NCLB.

As part of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB), each state is required to convert or integrate its accountability system to reflect the requirements in the federal new legislation. Connecticut has converted its statewide statutory accountability system (1999-02) to the NCLB requirements (2002-14) under Sec. 10-223e of the Connecticut General Statutes adopted August 12, 2002. As part of the transition from Connecticut's accountability system to NCLB, those schools identified under the state system were to be relabeled and be subject to the consequences identified in NCLB. Under Connecticut's 1999 Accountability System, 28 elementary and middle schools were identified as priority schools. Each local board of education was to determine by early 2003, which of these 28 schools had made sufficient progress and were no longer identified as priority schools. 20 schools made sufficient progress which left 8 schools that were labeled schools "in need of improvement" according to the federal NCLB requirements. The 8 schools were in year two of improvement and these were required to offer parents public school choice and supplemental services for the remainder of the 2002-03 year. These 8 schools will be in corrective action for 2003-04, maintaining the choice and supplemental services options and adding another action such as new staff, new curriculum, and extended school day. Connecticut was also required to identify high schools which did not make AYP based on the 2002 CAPT results, but using the state 1999 accountability criteria rather than the NCLB criteria. That analysis identified 8 high schools that did not make AYP for the 2001-02 school year. The next identification of schools (August, 2003) is based primarily on the results of the 2002 CMT

attributed back to the schools students attended the previous year, 2001-02. These new elementary and middle schools will be identified as not making AYP for the 2001-02 school year.

The single statewide accountability system is applied to all public elementary, middle and high schools and districts (local educational agencies). All public schools and districts are accountable for the performance of all students in the school and student subgroups – including major racial/ethnic subgroups, students with disabilities, English Language Learners (ELL), and economically disadvantaged students – through a determination of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), provided that each subgroup meet the minimum size requirement of 40. Both Title I and non-Title I schools and districts are part of the single statewide accountability system.

A major component for school, district and state accountability is establishing a standard based primarily on state test scores, upon which the AYP for each school, district and the state will be measured. The standard, as defined in the law, is the percentage of students who score at or above the *proficient* level in mathematics and reading on the state assessments, with the goal of having 100 percent of all students in Grades 3 through 8 and Grade 10 reaching the *proficient* level by school year 2013-14. Effective 2007-08, an assessment in science is also required in Grades 5, 8 and 10.

The reading and mathematics test scores from the 2002-03 Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and the 2001-02 Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) administrations were used to calculate the starting point for measuring whether AYP is made each subsequent year by all schools and all subgroups within the schools. As prescribed in NCLB, the starting point is “the percentage of students at the *proficient*¹ level who are in the school at the 20th percentile in the state, based on enrollment, among all the schools ranked by the percentage of students at the *proficient* level for elementary and middle schools and for high schools.”

All schools and subgroups are held to the same criteria in determining whether AYP has been made annually.

The specific criteria used to determine the AYP status of each school is:

Adequate Yearly Progress Criteria:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Whole school: | 65% Proficient in Mathematics
57% Proficient in Reading |
| 2. Each Subgroup with at least 40 students: | 65% Proficient in Mathematics
57% Proficient in Reading |
- White
 - Black
 - Hispanic
 - Students with Disabilities
 - English Language Learners
 - Economically Disadvantaged

¹ The State Board of Education adopted level 3 on the CMT and CAPT as the proficient level on June 12, 2002. In addition, a standard was established for an Advanced level, which is a subset of the existing Goal level. Connecticut’s assessments report student results in five performance categories: *Advanced, Goal, Proficient, Basic, and Below Basic*. The three cut scores defining four levels of performance (*Goal, Proficient, Basic and Below Basic*) were adopted by the State Board of Education in October 2000 for CMT and October 2001 for CAPT.

3. Additional Academic Indicator
Whole school: 70% basic or above in Writing or improvement from previous year
4. Participation in Standard Test, Out of Level or CMT/CAPT checklists in a school or subgroup with at least 40 students 95% of enrolled students
5. In addition, a confidence interval is applied to the test results, which accounts for the inherent measurement inaccuracies of any test and the judgment errors which can occur due to the fluctuation of the test takers from one year to the next. The resulting confidence interval is established at the 99 percent confidence level. Therefore, the final percent proficient used for AYP analysis was based on applying the confidence interval, (which varies across schools depending on the number of students in tested grades), to the actual percent of students proficient in mathematics and reading, thus producing an adjusted rate.
6. 2002 CMT results were attributed to the school of instruction during 2001-02. Students were removed from the analysis who had not attended the full 2001-02 school year. Participation rate was calculated based on data obtained from each students' test document. The number of students who took all sections of the standard CMT, Out of Level, or CMT/CAPT Skills Check List were divided by the number of all eligible test takers.

Schools "In Need of Improvement"

If a school does not make Adequate Yearly Progress for 2 consecutive years, it will be identified as a school "in need of improvement" by **August 1, 2004**. For those identified schools which receive Title I money, parents of the students in these schools will need to be offered the option of sending their children to a school within the district, which has made AYP; for the 2004-05 school year. All schools identified as "in need of improvement" regardless of Title I funding will be required to develop, within 90 days, a school improvement plan, submitted to this Department.

Q&A on NCLB

Overview of the Requirements of No Child Left Behind

What are the major components of No Child Left Behind?

- A.) Accountability System
- B.) Safe Schools
- C.) English Language Learners
- D.) Highly Qualified Teachers/Paraprofessionals
- E.) Parental Involvement

A.) ACCOUNTABILITY

What are the requirements of the NCLB Accountability System and how has Connecticut met these requirements?

All states must establish an accountability system, which includes:

- Standardized reading and mathematics assessments of all students in grades 3 through 8 and one high school grade by 2006. Science assessments will be added in 2007/08.
- The establishment of an Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) standard based on the percentages of students scoring at the Proficient level in mathematics and reading and at the Basic level in writing, with a 95 percent test participation rate. High schools must have a graduation rate of 70 percent instead of the writing standard.
- Annual identification of schools (and districts) that have not made AYP based on overall scores and based on the performance of subgroups.
- The identification of schools/districts "In Need of Improvement", which occurs when a school or district does not meet AYP for two consecutive years.
- A series of consequences for Title I schools "In Need of Improvement" beginning with public school choice options for parents (1st year), supplemental services such as after school tutoring (2nd year), and corrective action, such as replacing the staff or curriculum if a school remains In Need of Improvement (3rd year).

What grades will be tested? How will schools be identified?

Initially, Connecticut will use the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) in Grades 4, 6, and 8 and the 10th-grade Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) for determining the AYP status of schools. The state will introduce spring testing with a new generation CMT in the spring of 2006, and will expand the number of grades tested to include grades 3 through 8 inclusive. CAPT will continue to be used as the required high school assessment.

What is Connecticut's AYP standard and how is it applied?

Using the federal formula for setting AYP, Connecticut has established the following AYP standards for 2002 – 2003 testing:

<u>CMT</u>		<u>CAPT</u>
65%	Proficient Level in Mathematics	59%
57%	Proficient Level in Reading	62%
95%	Participation in Testing	95%
70%	Basic in Level in Writing*	Graduation Rate of 70%*

Does the standard rise each year?

No, the AYP standards in reading and mathematics will increase in two years, and every three years thereafter to reach 100% of students scoring at or above proficient by 2014.

The Target: By 2013-14: All students proficient in mathematics & reading

** Or improvement over previous year (The Writing and Graduation Rate requirements do not change over time.)*

What constitutes a subgroup in a school?

Connecticut's NCLB Plan identifies the following subgroups and requires reporting and AYP determination of a subgroup's performance if at least 40 students from the group participate in the assessments school-wide:

White Students, Black Students, Hispanic Students, English Language Learners (ELL), Economically Disadvantaged Students, and Students with Disabilities

Can a school or district be identified as not making AYP if the school or district as a whole meets the AYP standard?

Yes, a school can be identified in any of four ways:

- when the whole school does not meet the AYP standard in reading and or/ mathematics, or
- when any subgroup does not meet the AYP standard in reading and/or mathematics, or
- when the participation rate of the school or any subgroup is less than 95 percent, or
- when the writing standard has not been met at the whole school level.

What are the consequences of not making AYP?

Year One: Public Identification

Year Two: Schools/districts not meeting AYP for two consecutive years are designated "In Need of Improvement"

What are the consequences of being designated "In Need of Improvement? (Title I Schools/Districts Only)

-Each year's consequences include those of the prior years-

Year One: Public School Choice Option for Parents

Year Two: Supplemental Services must be made available from state approved list

Year Three: Corrective Action

Year Four: Develop Restructuring Plan

Year Five: Alternative Governance

(All schools identified--regardless of Title I status--must develop and implement a school improvement plan, as adopted by the Connecticut State Board of Education on June 4, 2003 and approved by the USED on June 9,2003)

Should the AYP or In Need of Improvement Schools be considered "Failing"?

No, according to U.S. Secretary of Education Roderick Paige: "It is important to note the law does not use the term "failing" schools, because in some cases, schools identified as "in need of improvement" may, in fact, be succeeding in some measures. What's important is that we know these schools are capable of getting better results for all their students. By identifying schools as "in need of improvement" you are indicating your commitment to help them reach their potential as soon as possible."

"Such actions reinforce the message that No Child Left Behind is a constructive law and its reforms flow from a bipartisan spirit and belief that every child can learn. Simply put, a school identified as "in need of improvement" is a school that the President, the leaders in Congress, and American people believe can improve." (From his letter to chief state school officers Oct. 2002)

For further information: <http://www.state.ct.us/sde> or call 860.713.6800

ATTACHMENT V
NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND: CHALLENGE, CHANGE, REWARDS

Theodore S. Sergi
Commissioner of Education

The implementation of the new federal law No Child Left Behind (NCLB) brings all Connecticut educators face-to-face with their reasons for becoming a teacher. While the debate and tension will continue over the issue of federal vs. state and local rights to prescribe education policy and practice, the families and children of our state are anxious for us to improve our system of public education, and the prosperity of our future depends on it.

The NCLB Act requires each state to identify schools and districts “in need of improvement” every year — based on making “adequate yearly progress” on state exams toward the goal of 100 percent of students scoring at the proficient level on the state tests by 2013-14. Schools and districts are evaluated by the overall achievement of their students, as well as the achievement of the subgroups of poor and minority students, students with disabilities and English language learners.

The initial implementation of NCLB could yield as many as 25 percent (or 250) of Connecticut schools “in need of improvement” for 2004-05; as many as one-half of our school districts and the state as a whole “in need of improvement;” and an increasing number of schools and districts each year.

If we are willing to accept the past as a predictor of the future, then labeling schools and districts as “in need of improvement” should result in three things:

- they will reexamine and improve their curriculum and teaching;
- we will reallocate and add resources to these schools with the greatest needs; and
- most important, statewide more students will achieve at a higher level.

We All Need Improvement

Every student, every teacher, every school, every district **and each of us is “in need of improvement,”** and that should be the spirit with which we embrace the term and acknowledge our greatest needs in public education. We know we have not been as successful as we can be with every student, and particularly our students from families below the poverty level, families whose home language is other than English and students who are black and Hispanic.

Connecticut’s schools have a right to expect support and understanding from our citizens and the media as we go through this process. Publicly identifying schools as “in need of improvement” leaves educators, students and parents vulnerable to the label of “failing.” This term is both unfair and inaccurate, and it will not motivate schools to improve. Schools will embrace change more if they have the support of community and business leaders, parents and families.

The term “failure” should be reserved for those who accept failure and the status quo; for those who declare victory — when there is none; for those who do not expect all students to achieve; and for

those who say we can only improve with more resources. Of course, I believe we need more federal, state, local and private resources to help our public schools reach every child. But, to demand more resources without simultaneously admitting the need to change and the need to reallocate resources is not responsible.

‘Needing Improvement’ is an Opportunity

The designation of “in need of improvement” must be seen as an opportunity to improve and to receive additional help and resources. In Connecticut, since 1984 it has been understood that to be labeled a “priority school district” reflects true and relative need and results in added state funds targeted at student achievement.

Every school and district we have identified as a “priority” or “needing improvement” or the “lowest achieving” has also been one with a high poverty rate. These are clearly those with the toughest job. No one can deny the stark differences between the two Connecticuts — one very privileged and the other very, very poor. Neither can anyone deny that there are some schools with high poverty which break the mold and have their students achieving at high levels. These “vanguard” schools have high expectations and act on those expectations. Implementing NCLB should help export this success to many other schools.

Change is Critical

We must not accept low educational achievement for any number of years — without consequences. The word “consequences” to me means **we owe it to the children in these schools to change a structure of instruction that is not working.** We must implement changes driven by what each student needs to achieve the essential skills for further success.

There are provisions of NCLB that should be changed, and I am optimistic that the Congress and the President will see the wisdom of such changes. At the same time, as we get more accustomed to being “in need of improvement,” many of us will continue to advocate for more resources, for greater expectations, for improved instruction, for continuous improvement in all student achievements — including good character and personal responsibility — and for closing Connecticut’s achievement gaps.

Every school in Connecticut can do better. They will — if we expect them to, if we help them to change, and if we act first in the interests of the students.

WHAT WORKS TO HELP STUDENTS

Closing Connecticut's achievement gaps requires a strong commitment to high expectations and specific, student-oriented actions. We know what works to improve student achievement — we know how to help every student succeed:

- provide universal preschool and full-day kindergarten;
 - ensure that every first grader becomes a confident reader;
 - provide world language instruction starting in kindergarten/first grade;
 - teach good character and personal responsibility;
 - teach the basic concepts of algebra and geometry beginning in the third grade;
 - provide one-on-one tutoring and mentoring;
 - use a more hands-on, active and personal approach in middle school;
 - in high school, provide more academic rigor, college credit, independent study, community service, and transitions to higher education and work;
 - keep school buildings open year-round, and make more time for learning;
 - ensure more and better use of technology;
 - reduce student isolation and integrate global studies;
 - develop staff training and school improvement plans that focus on student achievements and are guided by results; and
 - offer more choice of schools and programs, and engage parents/families, volunteers and others in student learning.
-