



DR. DIANNA R. WENTZELL, COMMISSIONER

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COMMISSIONER WENTZELL TOURS BRIDGEPORT AQUACULTURE SCHOOL, ANNOUNCES NEW SCIENCE STANDARDS

More focus on STEM education means preparing students for the jobs of the future and setting Connecticut up for long-term economic growth

(Bridgeport, CT)—State Commissioner of Education Dianna R. Wentzell joined Bridgeport Superintendent of Schools Frances Rabinowitz for a tour of two innovative Bridgeport schools that succeed in making Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) education come alive for students. Commissioner Wentzell and Superintendent Rabinowitz toured the Bridgeport Regional Vocational Aquaculture School and three STEM academies at Fairchild Wheeler Magnet School.

As part of the visit, Commissioner Wentzell announced new, more rigorous and real world-based science standards, called the Next Generation Science Standards. The state Board of Education on Wednesday voted unanimously to adopt the new science standards. The renewed focus on STEM education aims to prepare students for the jobs of the future and set Connecticut up for long-term economic growth in high-tech STEM-based industries.

“Connecticut students are getting a top-notch science education that is arming them with the skills, knowledge and experience they need to compete for the best, most cutting edge jobs in science, technology and engineering,” said Commissioner Wentzell. “Schools like the Bridgeport Regional Aquaculture School and Fairchild Wheeler Magnet School use inquiry-based real-world science and technology instruction to ignite a passion in students for learning. With new science standards and a renewed focus on STEM careers, we not only set students on a path to success, we set up Connecticut for long-term economic growth.”

Connecticut’s current state science standards were published 11 years ago. Science and technology have advanced dramatically during this decade, and much has been learned about how students best learn science. Connecticut’s new science standards build on the old standards by creating a stronger emphasis on scientific inquiry and how science applies to real world issues and technologies. Our state is providing professional development and resources to schools to support the transition to the new standards. The new standards no longer emphasize memorization of facts, but focus more on the application of science and connect it to core curriculum of reading, writing and math.

A major component of the renewed focus on STEM education is an emphasis on Career and Technology Education (CTE), which prepare students to be college and career ready by providing core academic skills, employability skills and technical, job –specific skills.

In Connecticut, more than 125,000 students take Career and Technical Education courses each year in the following pathways: Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources; Architecture & Construction; A/V Technology & Communications; Business Management & Administration; Education & Training; Finance; Health Science; Hospitality & Tourism; Information Technology; Manufacturing; Marketing Science; Technology; Engineering & Mathematic; and Transportation, Distribution & Logistics.

The Next Generation Science Standards were developed by 26 states based on recommendations by the National Academy of Science. Their goal is to get more students interested in science and engineering by emphasizing their connections to understanding our world and to solving human challenges. The NGSS development effort was inclusive and transparent. Hundreds of expert scientists and science educators participated in the development effort. CT educators reviewed several drafts and gave feedback that was evident in the final publication.

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