



BUREAU BLOG

November 27, 2007

SY 07-08 B-02

*From
Barbara S. O'Brien
Administrative
Assistant and
Blogger*

Personnel News:

As of November 2, 2007, Brian Cunnane, who served as the Acting Bureau Chief of Special Education, returned to his previous position in the Bureau of Special Education. Correspondence that would normally go to the Bureau Chief should now be sent to Associate Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker at 25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown, CT 06457.

Art Carey retired at the end of September after 30 years with the Department of Education. He did an exemplary job working with the Approved Private Schools in the State.

Reminders From Student Assessment

CMT/CAPT Skills Checklist

Special education teachers who will be administering the CMT or CAPT Skills Checklists in March of 2008 must have participated in CSDE training during the 2006-2007 school year. **If you have not participated in CSDE training or were trained prior to the 2006-2007 school year, you must attend one of the appropriate sessions below.** These are the only sessions being offered during the 2007-2008 school year for Skills Checklist training.

Certified Rater Training (Full day)

January 8, January 17, or February 1, 2008

This full day session is intended for experienced special education teachers that have administered the CMT/CAPT Skills Checklist and would like to develop a greater depth of understanding of the Skills Checklist. Participants will receive certification attesting to their ability to act as a resource person for the Skills Checklist in their district. They will also receive materials allowing them to conduct informative workshops in their district.

Accommodations Training

November 27 or November 30, 2007 (AM session only)

This half day session is intended for anyone working with special education students. Information shared will guide participants to a greater understanding of accommodations and their use related to the CMT and CAPT assessments. This session will also highlight the use of assistive technology. Watch for further information distributed by SERC. If you have any questions please contact:

Janet Stuck
(860) 713-6837
janet.stuck@ct.gov

Joe Amenta
(860) 713-6855
joseph.amenta@ct.gov

Earn a Special Education Cross-Endorsement

The Advanced Alternate Route to Certification (AARC) for Special Education is an exciting and innovative program that provides training and practical experience based on national and state competencies for special education. The purpose of the AARC is to help alleviate the shortage of special educators in Connecticut's public schools and to provide high quality training to AARC candidates. This flexible program is designed to provide for working educators with a current certification, an opportunity to earn a

Mary Jean Schierberl, Education Consultant, will be coordinating the Bureau's Approved Private Special Education Program activities until Art's replacement is hired. Please call her at (860) 713-6943 with questions.

Jacqueline Kelleher, who earned her MA in Education and her Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from UCONN, has joined the staff of the Bureau of Special Education as Education Consultant for General Supervision and Autism. She came to us from New York City, NY, where she worked with the Beginning with Children Foundation.

She has worked as an administrator in higher education as well as teaching Special Education and English Language Arts at the secondary level.

She is currently also an assistant professor and instructor in psychology, instrument design, behavior management, classroom assessment and program evaluation.

cross-endorsement in comprehensive special education, K-12 within a year's time. As of October 2007, CREC initiated a "rolling" admission where interested teachers can enroll and begin the process during the school year. Certification can be achieved after all the requirements to the program have been satisfied, including: competency based portfolio assignments; flexible field work and clinical options; Saturday, summer, and online class sessions; and passing the Praxis II in special education. For more information, an application or program details, please visit:

<http://www.crec.org/tabs/index.php>.

District Annual Performance Reports (APRs)

In early September, the Department issued each district's Annual Performance Report based on the Connecticut State Performance Plan (SPP) indicators around IDEA Part B for 2005-06 data. District specific data was publicly disseminated. A determination was made based on that data, in which districts were assigned to one of four categories: Meets Requirements, Needs Assistance, Needs Intervention, and Needs Substantial Intervention. Each district's APR can be found on the Department's website at: http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/cedar/apr/apr_reports/2005-06/index.htm.

Further information regarding Connecticut's SPP and the determinations process can also be found on the Department's website at:

<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=322094>. Connecticut will be submitting the updated state level Annual Performance Report to the United States Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) by February 1, 2008. Subsequent to the state submission, the Department will be issuing updated district APRs and determinations based on 2006-07 data.

PJ Settlement Agreement Data Submission

All districts in the state have begun submitting data on all special education students as of November 15 into Special Education Data Application and Collection (SEDAC). This submission fulfilled those districts' obligation to submit PJ specific data by October 1. **There is no additional submission, disk completion, etc., necessary at this time.**

Selected districts that received PJ Settlement Agreement Summative Evaluation reports recently (these are the 43 districts that have been identified for the past several years for closer scrutiny under the PJ Settlement Agreement) may be required to submit further data later this year (refer to the Summative Evaluation Report dated September 20, 2007, to determine if your district is one that needs to provide data in the future). These districts will be given sufficient notice to update their SEDAC data prior to the date of the next submission slated for March 1, 2008. The State plans to have districts utilize SEDAC for future PJ Settlement Agreement submissions and does not anticipate utilizing data disks any further.

If you have any questions about the current submission or updating of PJ Settlement Agreement data, please contact **Dr. Lynn Toper** at (860) 713-6941 or **Anne Louise Thompson** at (860) 713-6936.

Dr. Kelleher is the proud parent of four, including identical twins on the autism spectrum.



For professional development and technical assistance offerings contact State Education Resource Center (SERC)
 25 Industrial Park Road
 Middletown, CT 06457
 (800) 842-8678
 (860) 632-1485
 Fax: (860) 632-8870
www.ctserc.org



P.J. et al. v. State of Connecticut, Board of Education, et al. Settlement Agreement

The *P.J. et al. v. State of Connecticut, Board of Education, et al.* Settlement Agreement has reached the end of the five years of court jurisdiction stipulated in the agreement. For an additional three more years until August 13, 2010, the Court has jurisdiction to entertain plaintiffs' motions for the state's substantial noncompliance with the agreement.

For the past five years, an Expert Advisory Panel (EAP) has advised the Department and the court regarding the implementation of the Agreement, setting benchmarks and targets for each school district and the state. The final report of this panel to the Court in February 2007 makes recommendations particularly regarding those districts that have not attended to the agreement, the critical role of general education leadership in addressing the agreement, expectations of the state for monitoring and implementing sanctions for specific districts, as well as continued training and technical assistance to support districts with implementation of effective practices. The state's and EAP's reports are located on the SDE website at:

<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=320792>. Please refer to these for specific information contained therein regarding specific districts. While many districts need to make progress, others should be recognized for the significant work to date, resulting in positive outcomes for students! Continued vigilance is critical to sustaining these successes.

Statewide - LRE Goals 1, 3, 4, and 5 from 1998-2006 (CT data)

| GOAL | | 1998 | 2002 | 2006 |
|------|---|---------|-------|-------|
| 1 | % of CT K-12 students with ID/MR* in Regular Class | 9.1% | 11.5% | 44.7% |
| 3 | Mean % of time CT K-12 students with ID/MR* spend with non-disabled peers | 30.7% | 37.5% | 67.7% |
| 3 | Median % of time CT K-12 students with ID/MR* spend with non-disabled peers | 21.5% | 34.8% | 76.0% |
| 4 | Home School Enrollment for CT K-12 students with ID/MR* | No data | 71.3% | 79.8% |
| 5 | % of CT K-12 students with ID/MR* participating in Extracurricular activities | No data | 20.2% | 47.2% |

*Intellectual Disability/Mental Retardation

Goal 1- Comparison to the Nation (1997 comparison to 2005)

| 1997-98 | 2005-06 |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| CT-10% Regular Class | CT-32% Regular Class |
| US-13% Regular Class | US-14% Regular Class |
| CT = 25 th in the nation | CT = 7 th in the nation |
| 16 states are 2x CT % | 0 states are 2x CT % |

Based on federal data tables which are similar but not identical to CT data above

Additional Resources:

Parent Training and Information center

(PTI)

CPAC

1-800-445-2722

Fax: (860) 739-7460

(860) 739-3089

V/TDD

www.cpacinc.org

Tenth Annual Youth Leadership Forum For Students With Disabilities (YLF 2008)

The Tenth Annual Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) 2008 will be held from July 21 - July 24, 2008, at the University of Connecticut in Storrs. Forty (40) high school sophomores and juniors with disabilities, who represent the state in terms of geographic region, gender, ethnic background and disability, will be selected to attend the forum. The goal of YLF is to offer high school students with disabilities in Connecticut, an educational and motivational forum where they can explore and develop their leadership potential in an atmosphere of

Goal 2- Disparate Representation from 2002-2005

(Federal and 2006 state data will not be available until 2007-08).

ID Black

- Six districts and the State of Connecticut have had overrepresentation for students who are black and identified as having an Intellectual Disability (ID) in at least one year since 2002-03.
- For 2005-06, only one district and the State had an overrepresentation of black students identified as ID.

ID Hispanic

- Two districts and the State of Connecticut have had overrepresentation for students who are Hispanic and identified as having an Intellectual Disability (ID) in at least one year since 2002-03.
- For 2005-06, only the State of Connecticut had an overrepresentation of Hispanic students identified as ID.

Other Requirements of Settlement Agreement

- Additionally, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) needed to provide monitoring that addresses the implementation of students' Individual Education Plans (IEPs), and use of promising practices for students to access the general curriculum and be educated in general education classes. Most recently, the CSDE has conducted observations of IEP implementation in general education classes and other school and community settings to examine this. Following is information gathered from these observations of practices over the past 18 months:
- Observations were held in approximately 125 school districts.
- Approximately 650 observations took place in general education classes and 90 in other school/community environments.
- Districts were provided with limited advanced notice of visits.
- Each observation lasted approximately 15-20 minutes with the state consultant using a scoring rubric.
- Scoring Rubric Indicators (% of statewide observations acceptable for this indicator):
 1. Student seated with the class (84%);
 2. General education teacher provider of instruction (82%);
 3. Student engaged in same activity as others (84%);
 4. General education teacher checks for student's understanding of lesson (80%);
 5. Peer assistance occurring like for other students (34%);
 6. Peer interactions comparable to other students (57%);

support and encouragement.

The YLF application can be downloaded by going to www.ctylp.org. Please forward this information to appropriate staff at your high school(s). If you have additional questions, please contact Karen Halliday at KarenH1203@aol.com

Back To School Event in Podcast

Audio recordings of the **Fourth Annual CSDE Back to School Meeting**, held September 19, 2007, at the Crowne Plaza in Cromwell, are now available at: <http://ctserc.org/podcasts>. Each of the five segments can be streamed directly from the site or downloaded as an MP3 file.

Corresponding PowerPoint presentations are also available where applicable. The entire event is approximately three hours long, with an hour-long segment that was provided to answer the questions raised at the meeting. Please share this information with your colleagues. If you have questions

7. Actively engaged in activity and understands concept/skill (99%);
8. IEP goals and objectives incorporated into lesson and instruction (89%);
9. IEP supports, services, accommodations, modifications evident in activity (96%); and
10. Paraprofessional assists without interfering with peer interaction or fostering an over reliance on his/her assistance (58%).

- 7/10 indicators occurred at acceptable levels in 80% or more of the cases.
- Substantially lower acceptable levels were found with indicators regarding peer interactions (#5 and #6) and the role of the paraprofessional (#10).

Future Expectations

- We need to have **continued vigilance** during the next three years during which plaintiffs can file for noncompliance. We want **to assure sustainability** of the hard work to date through on-going monitoring, parent support, technical assistance to schools, and data analysis to guide these activities.
- For **the numerous districts that have not attended to this lawsuit**, the state will be monitoring districts through the federal State Performance Plan accountability system through which **districts received a report in early September indicating their district's status with the Settlement Agreement and requirements for improvement**. This is part of our plans for state sustainability and continuous improvement of districts still in need of improvement.
- Tremendous positive changes have occurred in our schools in response to this Settlement Agreement with **instructional practices and staff deployment allowing for a wider range of student learners to be effectively educated** using: cooperative learning strategies; co-teaching or collaborative teaching arrangements; data driven instructional decisions; and heightened use of technology to aid instruction.

Recent Plaintiffs' and Defendants' Activities

- Plaintiffs' are currently undergoing discovery. Through court action in the spring of 2007 the plaintiffs' had 25 national experts in five teams observe approximately 100 students, review files and interview staff in 23 school districts.
- Over the past six months the plaintiffs have filed multiple requests through freedom of information and court motions for purposes of discovery of information to determine if the state is in substantial noncompliance. What amounts to over six file cabinets of material have already been provided in the past year with additional material currently being collected.
- CSDE anticipates extensive requests for data from the plaintiffs in the next three years and currently is attempting to respond to immediate requests still requiring completion.
- CSDE continues to conduct its own data analysis, monitoring and technical

regarding the content of the meeting, please feel free to call the consultant associated with the topic of your question or Perri Murdica at (860) 713-6942 or perri.murdica@ct.gov. If you have technical questions, please contact Greg Glidden at (860) 632-1485, ext. 372 or glidden@ctserc.org.



Connecticut Birth to Three System
460 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106
1-800-505-7000
Fax: (860) 571-6853
www.birth23.org



assistance to assure continued compliance with the agreement.

- The agreement requires the CSDE to cooperate in providing data requested by the plaintiffs' as allowed under state and federal law. The CSDE has received numerous requests this spring and summer requiring extensive, unanticipated amounts of staff's work redirected to complete these activities. Most of these requests from the plaintiffs' (noted above) have statutory timelines for providing the material, creating work stoppage in daily job expectations. Additional support to CSDE staff is being added to assist in responding to these court responses and Settlement Agreement data production requirements as requested by the plaintiffs.

Early Childhood Special Education Update

Maria Synodi, Coordinator

As many school districts know, a re-organization of the Connecticut State Department of Education took place this school year under the leadership of Commissioner Mark McQuillan, the Department's new Commissioner as of April 2007. Many of the changes were driven by the need for greater accountability with a focus on school improvement. Among all the changes, there are a number that involve early childhood and early childhood special education. These changes include:

- Paul Flinter, formerly Chief of the Bureau of Early Childhood, Career and Adult Education is now the Chief of the Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education.
- There is a new stand alone Bureau of Early Childhood at the State Department of Education. This new Bureau of Early Childhood has been established to work directly under the Deputy Commissioner's Office. George Coleman is serving as the Department's Deputy Commissioner.
- Harriet Feldlaufer has been officially appointed as the Chief of the new Bureau of Early Childhood.
- The new Bureau of Early Childhood has been moved from the Department's office in Middletown to the third floor of the Department's central administrative office at 165 Capitol Avenue, Room 300, Hartford, Connecticut.
- Consultants in the Bureau of Early Childhood include Deb Adams, Program Manager for the School Readiness Grant Program for the Priority School Districts and Gerri Rowell, Program Manager for the Competitive School Readiness Grant Program.
- Joyce Staples, formerly the Program Manager for the School Readiness Grant Program for the Priority School Districts, has assumed a new position and is now serving as staff in the Office of Early Childhood Education Cabinet.
- Yemi Oniboku continues her work as Program Manager for the state's Head Start Grant Program and the state's Lab School Grant Program. Yemi is now located in the Bureau of Curriculum and Instruction. Yemi will assist in ensuring that the work of the Bureau of Curriculum and Instruction includes a preschool through Grade 12 focus.

Connecticut State
Department of
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Bureau of Early
Childhood

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BESB

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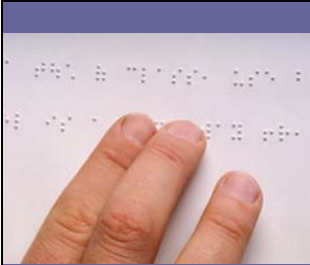
- Michelle Levy has joined the Bureau of Early Childhood this year. Michelle will be working on activities related to ensuring the least restrictive environment (LRE) for preschool children receiving special education and related services and the inclusion of children with disabilities and special needs in early childhood programs. Michelle's work will include three early childhood special education initiatives focused on early childhood programs: (1) National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation for programs that serve preschool children with an IEP; (2) Recognition and Response, an RtI model for preschool; and (3) a positive behavioral support project in partnership with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) with a statewide network called the Early Childhood Consultation Partnership.
- Maria Synodi continues to be responsible for the IDEA Early Childhood Special Education Program. Her primary responsibilities include the early childhood indicators on the State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR). She will continue the work related to the Early Childhood Outcome (ECO) data collection and reporting using the Brigance IED-II as well as matters relating to the transition of children from the Connecticut Birth to Three System. Maria now sits in the Bureau of School and District Improvement and has assumed some responsibilities in that Bureau in addition to her early childhood special education work. Some of the new responsibilities include district assessment and improvement activities for those low-performing school districts identified under No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

Preschool Special Education and Board of Education Services for the Blind

The Board of Education Services for the Blind (BESB) and the State Department of Education have worked together to ensure that those children who are blind or visually impaired and eligible for BESB services, have access to those services and supports even if the preschool child does not qualify for special education and related services. BESB's updated policies and procedures for preschool-age children reflect the following:

The Preschool Education Consultants from BESB will remain involved in the provision of vision related educational and consultation services (e.g., from early intervention through the Connecticut Birth to Three System) until the child is enrolled in kindergarten in the school district, unless the school district opts to serve the child directly when the child becomes three years of age (as confirmed through the development of an Individualized Education Program). At the time of school enrollment (or upon the third birthday if applicable), the involvement of BESB-provided Education Consultants is determined by the preference of the school district in which the child is being served.

BESB eligible preschool children who turn three, and who are not eligible for an IEP, may continue to receive consultation services from a BESB-provided preschool consultant, with supervisory approval. Low vision services and aids to maintain normal development will also be provided. These children may participate in BESB sponsored events to address the expanded core curriculum.



aces

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Haven, CT 06473

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www.aces.k12.ct.us



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Capitol Region
Education Council

111 Charter Oak Ave.
Hartford, CT 06106

(860) 247-2732
www.crec.org



Servicing Northeast
Connecticut

376 Hartford Tnpk.
Hampton, CT 06247

(860) 455-0707
www.eastconn.org

BESB is able to cover the costs of eligible vision related services and items as noted in the Individual Family Service Plan (Birth to age three), Individualized Education Program (age three, four and five) or Individualized Service Plan (Section 504 children), consistent with state fee schedules from approved vendors. Services and items that are not directly related to the visual development of a child may be covered by another public or private agency that has been assigned case coordination responsibilities under the Statewide Birth to Three Program. Parents who desire services and items that are determined by the BESB Education Consultant to not be directly related to the visual development of the child, shall be instructed to contact the case coordinating agency to request those services and items through them. Services provided by BESB to preschool children who are visually impaired or legally blind shall be pre-authorized through the issuance of purchase of service commitments by this agency, and are not directly reimbursable to the school district.

School districts are reminded that a “504 plan”, which provides reasonable modifications and accommodations that allow an individual child with disabilities to participate in a program or service offered to the general population, is not required for preschool-age children who are not receiving a regular education opportunity through their public school system. There are instances in which a preschool-age child is enrolled in a regular education public school preschool program or a regular education public school sponsored program and in such instances youngsters with special needs and/or disabilities eligible under the provisions of section 504 may be entitled to a “504 plan” that provides the accommodations necessary to allow a child to benefit from the program or service offered by the school district.

I hope this information is helpful. If you have any questions, please contact Maria Synodi, State Department of Education at maria.synodi@ct.gov or Jeanette Haines, Board of Education Services for the Blind at jeanette.haines@po.state.ct.us.

Reporting Requirements for Seclusion/Physical Restraint Injuries for RESCs and APSEPs:

Please be reminded that each Regional Education Service Center (RESC), and each Approved Private Special Education Program (APSEP), facility or institution which provides special education services on behalf of a local or regional board of education, must report to the State Department of Education any incident in which the use of physical restraint or seclusion results in physical injury to a student. This written report must include:

1. The name of the student;
2. The nature of the emergency that necessitated the use of the restraint or seclusion;
3. A description of the restraint or seclusion; and
4. A description of the injury to the student.

The report should be forwarded, within two business days of the incident, to **Patricia Staszko-Kozik**, Education Consultant, in the Bureau of Special Education at patricia.staszko-kozik@ct.gov or mailed to her at P.O. Box 2219, Room 369, Hartford, CT 06145-2219.



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Please note that in the event that a report contains information regarding a serious injury or death, the Bureau will share the information with the Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities and, if appropriate, with the Office of the Child Advocate. In the event that a report does not contain all required information, the Bureau will share the incomplete report with the Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities rather than inadvertently delay the work of that agency.

With regard to a definition of “serious injury,” the Department is using the same definition that is currently being used by the Department of Children and Families. Specifically, “serious injury shall mean any physical harm, injury, or damage requiring the intervention of a physician or licensed medical professional, utilizing medical procedures more intensive than first aid treatment, including but not limited to: treatment in an emergency room; sutures; fractures; head traumas of a concussion level or greater; or admission to a general hospital for the treatment of a serious injury. This would also include severe, multiple contusions; bruises and abrasions; and a loss of consciousness requiring examination by a licensed medical practitioner. It would also apply to injuries as a result of the use of seclusion or restraints or while a person is going into or out of seclusion or restraint.”

Please call [Ms. Staszko-Kozik](mailto:Ms.Staszko-Kozik) at (860) 713-6917 if you have any questions regarding this matter.

Transition Updates

1. On-Site Secondary Transition Training

Over the past two years, the Department has collected information regarding the number of students age 16 and older who have secondary transition goals and objectives. This information, otherwise known as Indicator #13, is a compliance requirement for the State Performance Plan and the target goal is 100%. The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has requested that in addition to this data, states review Individual Education Plan (IEP) transition goals and objectives to ensure that they are assisting students to reach their postsecondary goals. To this end, the Bureau of Special Education has designed an on-site training on secondary transition that was launched with selected districts during the fall of the 2007-08 school year.

A secondary transition team, including but not limited to the State Transition Coordinator, SERC consultants, and Transition Task Force Members, will: schedule a one-day visit in selected districts to review a sampling of transition student IEPs, interview students, explore the continuum of available transition services, and discuss related professional development. A team of district personnel (e.g., special education director, transition specialist, special education teacher(s), guidance counselor, building administrator, school psychologist) will work together with the secondary transition team to review the comprehensiveness of the transition goals, objectives, and services in each student’s IEP. If you would like to volunteer to have this on-site training regarding secondary transition in your district or if you have additional questions, please contact Dr. Patricia Anderson at (860) 713-6923 or patricia.anderson@ct.gov.



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Servicing Northwest
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355 Goshen Road
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(860) 567-0863

www.educationconnection.k12.ct.us

**Connecticut State
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Visit us on the web
at:

www.state.ct.gov/sde

2. **Connecticut Launches Ground-Breaking Employment Initiative for People with Disabilities**

Hundreds of employers, workers and advocates from government and business witnessed the launch of the state's innovative new **Connect-Ability** initiative — aimed at opening employment opportunities for people with disabilities. The initiative debuted at the second annual Employment Summit, held at the Connecticut Convention Center in June. One of the first initiatives of its kind in the nation, **Connect-Ability** focuses on ability, not disability and strives to connect employers and able employees who have disabilities, through a statewide education and media campaign, comprehensive online resources at <http://www.connect-ability.com/>, and a host of community-based initiatives. **Connect-Ability** is funded through a Medicaid Infrastructure Grant to the Department of Social Services, Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) that created the campaign with Mintz & Hoke Communications Group and various community partners.

The **Connect-Ability** website features professionally filmed vignettes featuring six Connecticut workers and how they are thriving in the careers of their choice. Additional sections include: *Career Center*, *Transportation*, *For Employers*, *For Youth* and *For Parents*. A second “launch” with new information and features is scheduled for January 2008. Further collaboration between CT Public TV and **Connect-Ability** has resulted in five additional episodes of Able Lives (now called *Able Lives, Inc.*) focusing on employment of persons with disabilities. For more information, go to: <http://www.ablelives.org/alinc/ep/1>.

Connect-Ability also includes a grant component to assist local communities to develop their own plan to increase employment opportunities and work experiences for persons with disabilities and/or students who receive special education services and are preparing to transition into a competitive employment setting (also may include postsecondary education or training). **Local school districts will be a required partner in any of these initiatives.** Information regarding the Request for Proposals for developing this local initiative will be available soon. For more information, contact Dr. Patricia Anderson at (860) 713-6923 or patricia.anderson@ct.gov.