

NEWS

Connecticut Department of Education

George A. Coleman
Contact: Communications Office
(860) 713-6548

EMBARGOED UNTIL 9 A.M., AUGUST 24, 2006

State Department of Education Reports 2005-06 ‘Adequate Yearly Progress’ under NCLB

HARTFORD – More than half of Connecticut’s elementary and middle schools met new, more rigorous standards mandated under the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, according to results of the 2006 Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT).

The 2006 CMT marked the first time that Grades 3-8 were tested. In addition to assessing more students, schools also had to meet the following standards, which include an increase over previous years in the percentage of students who must be proficient in mathematics and reading:

- 74 percent of students must be proficient in mathematics on the CMT.
- 68 percent must be proficient in reading.
- 70 percent must be at or above the basic performance in writing.
- 95 percent must participate in the CMT testing.

Under these standards, for a school to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP), standards must be met by the whole school and by each subgroup of 40 or more students, including white, black, Hispanic, American Indian and Asian students; students with disabilities; English language learners; and economically disadvantaged students. If a school or subgroup does not achieve AYP in the same content area for two consecutive years, the school is identified as “in need of improvement.”

Of 806 elementary and middle schools, 290 did not make AYP.

Last year 145 schools did not make AYP. This year 34 of those schools made AYP. Of those 34 schools, 18 were identified as “in need of improvement” last year. Further

sanctions for these schools are on hold pending next year's AYP results. If they continue to make AYP next year, they will no longer be designated as "in need of improvement."

This year, only Clara T. O'Connell School in Bristol made AYP for the second consecutive year and therefore is no longer considered a school in need of improvement.

Of the 290 schools that were identified as not making AYP, 125 have not made AYP for the first time.

Of the 290 schools, there are 121 schools that were identified in the past as not making AYP again this year and are therefore "in need of improvement." This means that these 121 schools have not made AYP for at least two consecutive years in the same content area.

The results for the 121 schools also indicate the following:

- 26 are in Year 1 of school improvement;
- 22 are in Year 2 of school improvement;
- 65 are in Year 3 of school improvement;
- 2 are in Year 5 of school improvement; and
- 6 are in Year 6 of school improvement.

Of the 121 schools identified as "in need of improvement," 97 are Title 1 schools. Title 1 schools are identified by the district based on poverty, educational need and the availability of funds.

The two schools in Year 5 of school improvement and the six schools in Year 6 of school improvement were previously identified under Connecticut's prior accountability system. The remaining 113 schools "in need of improvement" have been identified under the NCLB accountability system within the last four years.

All schools in Year 1 of school improvement must implement a school improvement plan:

- Schools in Year 1 of school improvement must develop a two-year school improvement plan in consultation with parents and school district staff members within 90 days of identification. The plan must target the school's areas of academic deficiency.
- Title I schools in Year 1 of school improvement, in addition to creating a school improvement plan, must also provide the opportunity for all students in the school to transfer to another public school within the district that has not been identified as "in need of improvement."

Title I schools that are identified as "in need of improvement" face the following additional consequences:

- Schools in Year 2 of school improvement must continue to implement the Year 1 consequences, but must also begin to offer supplemental educational services.
- Schools in Year 3 of school improvement must continue to implement the Year 1 and Year 2 consequences, but must also take corrective action measures such as instituting a new curriculum or appointing an outside expert to advise the school.
- Schools in Year 5 of school improvement must implement the restructuring plan they developed over the course of the last year. The restructuring plan must reflect major reforms, such as significant changes in staffing, leadership, structure and governance.
- Schools in Year 6 must continue with all prior consequences, as well continue to implement its restructuring plan.

To support schools in need of improvement, the State Department of Education has implemented Connecticut’s Accountability for Learning Initiative (CALI). The program is designed to provide teacher training and district-level leadership development to establish high standards for all students. Educators use research-based teaching strategies, monitor student progress frequently, and provide effective and immediate interventions for students who are not performing at high levels.

Reasons schools did not make AYP:	
Whole school math and reading achievement	118
Whole school math academic achievement	12
Whole school reading academic achievement	26
Subgroup math and reading academic achievement	96
Subgroup math academic achievement	13
Subgroup reading academic achievement	25

Results also indicate that no schools were identified as failing to make adequate yearly progress for not reaching 95 percent participation, either by the whole school or by any subgroup.

“These results point out the hard work that has to be done,” said interim Commissioner of Education George A. Coleman. “We have to focus on more effective strategies, a more surgical approach, more targeted to the unique learning needs of students.

“Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport and Waterbury schools represent more than 30 percent of the schools not making AYP,” Coleman said. “We need focused,

individualized instruction for our lowest performing students. These students are mostly in our urban centers. We need to bring every asset we can to this struggle. Every student and their performance must be valued and every effort made to have each student at school meaningfully engaged in the curriculum every day. We need to provide teachers with better tools and resources to educate the kids in these schools. We need families and communities to be more involved. We need everyone to be involved and committed to solving these unique problems.”

###

Editor’s note: More detailed information about schools that did not make AYP is available at http://www.state.ct.us/sde/PressRoom/press_releases_2006.htm.