

# NEWS

## Connecticut Department of Education



Dr. Mark K. McQuillan  
Commissioner

### **For Immediate Release:**

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Thursday, January 10, 2008

## State to Conduct Public Forums on High School Reform

State Education Commissioner Mark K. McQuillan will host a series of public forums around the state to share the details of a proposal to improve the high school experience for students and to raise standards of performance. The sessions are part of the Commissioner's state wide "Listening Tour" for educators, parents, students, business and community leaders and interested citizens in Connecticut to hear about and comment on the proposal.

The State Board of Education has adopted a broad outline of legislative recommendations for secondary school reform and has authorized the public participation process to refine and shape its final proposal to the Connecticut General Assembly.

The sessions will include information on how Connecticut students are performing today compared with those in other states and nations and how the proposed changes will address the need for students to be better prepared for success in college and in the workplace. Each session will include a question-and-answer period to gauge public interest in, and take input on, the secondary school reform proposal.

The proposal is based on the recommendations of the State Board of Education's *Ad Hoc* Committee on Secondary School Redesign and recommends new state requirements for high school graduation including:

- an increase in minimum diploma credits to 24;
- a core curriculum of required courses,
- the embedding of 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning skills such as communication and teamwork skills into model curricula;
- state-administered end-of-course examinations;
- locally administered end-of-course performance tasks,
- student success plans with career path options; and
- a senior year demonstration project.

Elements of the plan have implications for Connecticut's middle schools as well.

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“Connecticut has joined a growing number of states that are taking steps to bring the high school experience into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Higher education, government and business leaders have been calling for more rigor and more engaging programming at the high school level to assure that our students develop the skills necessary to compete on the college campus and in the international workplace. However, these changes must be informed by many perspectives and planned with great care. This is why we are traveling throughout the state for input from educators, parents, students and community leaders,” said Commissioner McQuillan.

The dates, locations and times of the forums are:

<b>PUBLIC FORUMS</b>			
<b>TOWN</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>TIME</b>
<b>Westport</b>	<b>Bedford Middle School</b> 88 North Ave. (203)341-1510	1/14/08	7:00 - 9:00 p.m.
<b>Storrs</b>	<b>E.O. Smith High School</b> 1235 Storrs Rd. (860) 487-0877	1/16/08	7:00 - 9:00 p.m.
<b>Montville</b>	<b>Montville High School</b> Old Colchester Rd (860) 848-9208	1/22/08	7:00 - 9:00 p.m.
<b>Plainfield</b>	<b>Plainfield High School</b> 105 Putnam Rd. (860) 564-6422	1/30/08	7:00 - 9:00 p.m.
<b>North Branford</b>	<b>North Branford High School</b> 49 Caputo Road (203) 484-1465	2/7/08	6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
<b>Torrington</b>	<b>Torrington High School</b> 50 Major Besse Drive (860) 489-2294	2/11/08	6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
<b>Hartford</b>	<b>CREC Central Office</b> 111 Charter Oak Ave. (860) 524-4063	2/13/08	6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
<b>Newtown</b>	<b>Newtown High School</b> 12 Berkshire Road (203) 426-7646	2/14/08	6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Input from parents, students, educators, board members and business and community leaders will help to inform the Commissioner and State Board as they make final recommendations to the legislature. It is anticipated that the Board will first ask the General Assembly in its 2008 session to fund a feasibility study to determine the costs – both to the state and to local and regional school districts -- for the new graduation requirements. It is expected that the Board will make its recommendations including cost considerations to the 2009 session of the General Assembly. If the proposal is enacted by the legislature and signed by the Governor, the new requirements would affect public school students entering high school in 2011 and graduating in 2015.

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