

NEWS

Connecticut Department of Education

EMBARGOED

Dr. Mark K. McQuillan
Commissioner



EMBARGOED UNTIL:

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State Department of Education Reports on 'Adequate Yearly Progress' of Connecticut Schools and Districts under NCLB

Reading is the Issue in Elementary and Middle Schools; Math is the Challenge in High Schools

(HARTFORD, CONN.) – About 60 percent of Connecticut's schools met this year's performance standards required under the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001. The results are based on student performance in reading and mathematics on the 2009 Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT). More than 290,000 students participated in the assessments.

"A total of 406 schools did not meet the NCLB standard — Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) — this year," said state education Commissioner Mark K. McQuillan in announcing the findings. "This represents about 40 percent of our schools, which is virtually unchanged from last year's 408 schools." Under NCLB, the standards were increased last year to require that roughly 8 in 10 students achieve at or above proficient level on state-administered math and reading tests in order to meet AYP. This year's standards remained the same as last year. The standards will rise in 2010 to require that about 9 in 10 students meet the proficiency standards in math and reading, and rise again to 100 percent of students by 2013-14.

The Commissioner said, "Teaching reading skills to students in elementary and middle schools continues to be the challenge in our state; this year's data once again show that in the vast majority of elementary schools that did not make AYP it was because of their 'reading' or 'reading and math scores.'"

"At the high school level," Commissioner McQuillan pointed out, "mathematics is the greater issue. One quarter of the high schools that did not make AYP did so solely because of their math scores. This underscores why we are proposing a greater emphasis on math and science in our secondary school reform proposals which we plan to send to the 2010 General Assembly."

This is the fourth year that Connecticut tested public school students in Grades 3 - 8 as required by federal law to determine AYP in elementary and middle schools. The Grade 10 CAPT is used to determine AYP in high schools. In addition to assessing more students, schools had to meet high standards as required by federal law:

- **Mathematics:** The CMT math standard requires 82 percent of students to score at or above proficient, while the CAPT math standard requires 80 percent;
- **Reading:** Among CMT reading, 79 percent of students are required to score at or above proficient; CAPT reading requires 81 percent;
- **Test Participation:** 95 percent of students enrolled in the tested grades must participate in CMT and CAPT Testing; and
- **Other:** 70 percent must be at or above the basic performance in **writing** on the CMT, and 70 percent of high school students must **graduate**.

Under these standards, for a school to achieve adequate yearly progress, 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."

AYP Status for 2009

- Of 804 elementary and middle schools, 334 did not make AYP – a decrease of 15 over last year's 349.
- Of Connecticut's 187 public high schools, 72 did not make AYP – 13 more than last year.
- Of the state's 172 school districts, 55 did not make AYP – 11 more than last year.

"We are working directly with 15 of Connecticut's largest districts — identified under State accountability legislation — to help them turn around schools that have been struggling for years. It is very difficult to overcome the effects of poverty with limited school resources, but it is essential that we employ effective strategies that help close the gaps in student performance," said Commissioner McQuillan.

In Need of Improvement Elementary and Middle (CMT)

- There are 296 elementary and middle schools identified as "in need of improvement," an increase of 57 schools from last year (see attached list of all schools). *Note: Of these schools, 40 made AYP this year, so they are "on hold" pending next year's AYP determination; if they make AYP next year, they will be removed from "needs improvement."*
- Of the 296 elementary and middle schools in need of improvement:
 - 87 are in Year 1
 - 59 are in Year 2
 - 41 are in Year 3
 - 22 are in Year 4
 - 34 are in Year 5
 - 46 are in Year 6
 - 3 are in Year 8
 - 4 are in Year 9
- A total of 150 elementary and middle schools are in "corrective action" (see attached list for schools that have been "in need of improvement" for three or more years).

Reasons for failing AYP among elementary and middle schools (in number of schools):

Whole school math and reading achievement	161
Whole school math achievement	7
Whole school reading achievement	66
Subgroup math and reading achievement	82
Subgroup math achievement	1
Subgroup reading achievement	17

CMT Schools removed from In Need of Improvement Status:

Ellington School District:	Windermere School
Middletown School District:	Lawrence School
New Haven School District:	King/Robinson Magnet School
New Haven School District:	Sheridan Communications and Technology Magnet School
Plainfield School District:	Plainfield Central Middle School
Stratford School District:	Eli Whitney School
Thompson Middle School:	Thompson Middle School
Waterbury School District:	Hopeville School
Windham School District:	W. B. Sweeney School

In Need of Improvement High School (CAPT)

- There are 56 high schools identified as “in need of improvement,” an increase of 12 schools over last year (see attached list). *Note: Of these schools, four made AYP this year, so they are “on hold” pending next year’s AYP determination; if they make AYP next year, they will be removed from “needs improvement.”*
- Of the 56 high schools in need of improvement:
 - 10 are in Year 1
 - 4 are in Year 2
 - 9 are in Year 3
 - 6 are in Year 4
 - 3 are in Year 5
 - 21 are in Year 6
 - 3 are in Year 7

A total of 42 high schools are in “corrective action”

High School removed from In Need of Improvement Status:

Common Ground High School

Reasons for not making AYP among high schools (in number of schools):

Whole school math and reading achievement	37
Whole school math achievement	16
Whole school reading achievement	3
Subgroup math and reading achievement	11
Subgroup math achievement	2
Subgroup reading achievement	3

In Need of Improvement District Level

- There are 37 districts identified as “in need of improvement,” an increase of 16 districts from last year (see attached list). *Note: None of these districts made AYP this year and, as a result, are not “on hold” pending next year’s AYP determination.*

Of the 37 districts in need of improvement:

10 are in Year 1
1 is in Year 2
1 is in Year 3
2 are in Year 4
9 are in Year 5
14 are in Year 6

A total of 26 are in “corrective action.”

Reasons for not meeting AYP standard among districts (in number of districts):

Whole District math and reading achievement	24
Whole District math achievement	3
Whole District reading achievement	6
Subgroup math and reading achievement	16
Subgroup math achievement	1
Subgroup reading achievement	5

Of the 352 schools identified as “in need of improvement,” 236 were Title I schools in the 2008-09 school year. Title I schools are identified by the district based on poverty, educational need and the availability of funds.

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 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 sanctions:

- **Schools in Year 2** of school improvement must continue to implement the Year 1 sanctions, 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 sanctions, 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 4** of school improvement must continue corrective action, but must also begin planning for restructuring.
- **Schools in Year 5** of school improvement must implement the restructuring plan they developed during 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 sanctions, as well as continue to implement the restructuring plan.

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

Accountability Legislation Requires State Department of Education Intervention

In response to state legislation enacted in 2007 — Section 32 of P.A. 07-3 of the June Special Session, An Act Implementing the Provisions of the Budget Concerning Education consistent with the Connecticut State Board of Education’s Five Year Comprehensive Plan for Education 2006-2011 — the Department has reorganized its administrative structure in July 2009 **to work directly with districts that have been identified as “in corrective action.”**

The reorganization established a Bureau of Accountability and Improvement. This bureau is working with all districts to provide data on student and district outcomes, processes to analyze data, methods of developing improvement activities, and training through the Connecticut Accountability for Learning Initiative (CALI). Fifteen districts underwent district status assessments performed by Cambridge Education Associates that will assist with strategically aligning school and district improvement efforts to training, technical assistance and leadership coaching. Each district has presented its school improvement and district improvement plans to the Commissioner and State Board of Education for review and comment. Department teams have been assigned to work in each of the identified districts to assist in implementation of the plans and to provide technical assistance.

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

