



State of Connecticut
Department of Higher Education

CONTACT: **CONNIE FRASER** • 860/947-1801 (W)
860/986-3508 (CELL)
CFRASER@CTDHE.ORG

News

Education Officials Concerned about College Readiness Gap *Call for Stronger School/College Collaboration and Information Systems*

HARTFORD, October 27 – The majority of Connecticut’s high school graduates who attend public colleges in state must take remedial or developmental courses after they enroll, according to data compiled for the state’s P20 Council, a 44-member group of education, business and philanthropic leaders led by Higher Education Commissioner Michael Meotti and State Education Commissioner Mark K. McQuillan.

The Council is analyzing data on the success of recent Connecticut high school graduates in higher education. The figures show that only a little more than half (54%) of Connecticut high school graduates who enter postsecondary education directly out of high school will earn a postsecondary certificate or degree. One of the key challenges to college success is the academic readiness of freshmen. At least 72 percent of those attending community colleges test as requiring remedial or developmental math or English, as do 65 percent attending one of the Connecticut State Universities.

“Connecticut has a significant college readiness gap that is threatening our ability to replenish our workforce,” stated Higher Education Commissioner Meotti. “We are fortunate that with 3 out of 4 high school graduates going onto college, we have one of the highest college-going rates in the country. But now we are finding that many of these students are not college ready. The consequences to our students, colleges, taxpayers and our economy cannot be overstated.”

State Education Commissioner McQuillan noted, “We need to bring our public high schools into the 21st century with higher standards, greater rigor and more support systems for student success both during and after high school. The reality is, too many poor and minority students are dropping out of school and too many of our high school graduates need remedial courses when they arrive for their first year of college. Secondary school reform as outlined in P.A. 10-111 is a vital step in reversing these trends. We expect that every high school will introduce these reforms no later than 2014 and many have already brought them about. It is a critical economic issue facing our state.”

Commenting on the data collection efforts, Joseph J. Cirusuolo, executive director of the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS), said, “Our organization welcomes the acquisition and publication of student success data so that educators and citizens will know how our public high school graduates perform once they enter college. A key goal of the P20 Council is to have information on student success available to all high schools and districts to spark deeper conversations between schools, colleges and business on what needs to be done together to improve student learning. We need active partnerships between schools and local colleges.”

Robert Rader, executive director of the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE), added, “These figures may surprise some community leaders, but our schools and school board members are working hard to address the challenge of college readiness. Having better data will enable school boards to help students realize their aspirations and fulfill their life plans. We look forward to continuing conversations and collaborating to make Connecticut the best state in the nation for ensuring smooth transitions from PreK-12 to higher education and workforce.”

Created in January 2009, the P20 Council's mission is to improve coordination among early childhood, K-12 and postsecondary education and workforce training. Meeting quarterly as a whole or in work groups, the Council is focusing on three areas:

- building partnerships between school districts and higher education institutions;
- linking data across early childhood, K-12, postsecondary education, labor; and
- strengthening the preparation and professional development of teachers and principals.

The P20 Council has formed two workgroups which are focusing on college and workforce readiness. The Data Systems Workgroup is working on ways to link data from early childhood through postsecondary education and beyond. The Educator Effectiveness Workgroup is developing policy recommendations for the better preparation and support of teachers and principals.

For more information on the P20 Council, please visit <http://www.ctdhe.org/P20/default.htm>

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Note to Editors: Please see the attached Fact Sheet on Postsecondary Readiness and Success of Connecticut High School Graduates.