



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



TO: Superintendents of Schools

FROM: Mark K. McQuillan, Commissioner of Education *Mark K. McQuillan*

DATE: February 1, 2010

SUBJECT: State Board of Education Resolution Regarding Tracking

The State Board of Education adopted the attached resolution to express its views, as well as its expectations of school districts, concerning the negative impact tracking has on student achievement – particularly for low-income and minority students.

The Board defines tracking as the practice of permanently assigning students for instructional purposes to an instructional group that denies voluntary association and instruction with higher achieving students, based on assessed or perceived readiness.

The statement supports the Board's priorities described in its Five-year Comprehensive Plan for Education: A Superior Education for Connecticut's 21st Century Learners (January 2007). The Plan states, in part,

High academic achievement will result only if *all* students are expected to achieve at high levels and have equal access to challenging curriculum and instruction, and adequate and equitable resources; and are taught by excellent educators who believe that all students, regardless of race, gender, ethnicity or socioeconomic status, can achieve at high levels.

Please share this document with your colleagues and your school board members as you develop policies and implement practices designed to ensure that all students are afforded a challenging educational program and are well-prepared for lifelong learning and careers in a competitive, global economy.

The Department will issue guidance to districts regarding follow-up activities to support the Board's direction.

Pvb/attachment

V.C. (substitute resolution)

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

TO BE PROPOSED:

January 6, 2010

WHEREAS, over the past several months, the State Board of Education (SBE) has received numerous presentations from superintendents and other school officials on plans to improve academic performance in their respective districts in accordance with the No Child Left Behind Act; and

WHEREAS, during these presentations the SBE has learned that some school districts engage in the practice of tracking students, and that there is a strong correlation between ethnicity, social class and track placement; and

WHEREAS, research has consistently shown that when schools track students, low- and limited-income, Black, and Hispanic students are disproportionately placed in low-track, non-college preparatory courses, which limits achievement and stifles expectation and opportunity for college and successful competition in the workplace; and

WHEREAS, the SBE believes that such a practice contributes to class- and race- linked differences in educational opportunities and performance, further widening an achievement gap in the state that is the largest in the nation; and

WHEREAS, the SBE disapproves of any policy or practice that permanently groups students for instruction that neither encourages nor even allows students to increase their level of academic challenge and performance; and

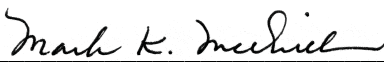
WHEREAS, the SBE believes that every student in the State of Connecticut has a right to be offered a high-quality education regardless of social class, race or ethnicity.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that effective immediately, any school district that engages in the practice of permanently assigning students for instructional purposes to an instructional group that denies voluntary association and instruction with higher achieving students, based on assessed or perceived readiness, shall make full disclosure to parents or guardians of students whose level of course work would not allow them to enter credit-bearing courses at the Connecticut State University System; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that any school district engaged in instructional placements that deny students assigned or voluntary access to instruction with higher performing peers shall: (1) make an annual filing to the State Department of Education, detailing such placements and the data and scientific research base that supports such placements; and (2) indicate the time period for which such access to assigned or requested instructional assignment with higher performing peers will be denied. Also, the local school district shall report the basis for determining students' placements, and the demographic characteristics of the students assigned to each placement, including the percentage of the various racial and ethnic groups, students eligible or not eligible for free and reduced price lunches, females and males.

Substitute Resolution, with friendly amendments, approved by a vote of 7:0 this sixth day of January, Two Thousand Ten.

Signed: 
Mark K. McQuillan, Secretary
State Board of Education