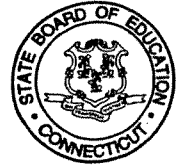




STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



February 9, 2005

Dear Parent or Guardian:

The State of Connecticut is committed to providing all students with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in school and in life. Your child's public school district has many dedicated staff members committed to teaching the challenging academic content and interpersonal skills that help students develop into productive citizens.

In January 2002, the U.S. Congress passed a new federal education law called the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. This law requires states to set specific academic achievement targets for all students and six subgroups of students (black, Hispanic, white, students with disabilities, English language learners and economically disadvantaged students). Districts must meet these targets for all students and all subgroups each year in order to achieve "adequate yearly progress" under the terms of NCLB. Connecticut student achievement targets are based on the Grade 10 Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) and the Grade 4, 6 and 8 Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT). This year the achievement targets for the Grade 10 CAPT are:

- 62 percent of students must score "proficient" or above in reading; and
- 59 percent of students must score "proficient" or above in math.

The achievement targets for the Grade 4, 6 and 8 CMT are:

- 57 percent of students must score "proficient" or above in reading;
- 64 percent of students must score "proficient" or above in math; and
- 70 percent of students must score "basic" or above in writing, or the percentage of students who score at or above "basic" in writing must improve from the previous year.

Meeting these performance levels for the whole school and for each of the six subgroups, and having at least 95 percent of all students in the district take the test, determines whether a district is or is not identified as not making "adequate yearly progress" under NCLB. A district that does not make adequate yearly progress for two consecutive years is identified as "in need of improvement."

The Manchester Public School District has been identified as "in need of improvement" based on the results of 2002-03 testing because:

1. One or more subgroups of students did not meet the proficiency rate in math and/or reading.
2. Fewer than 95 percent of students participated in the test.

As a result of this identification, the district must develop an improvement plan within the next three months. If you are interested in helping to develop this plan, please complete the attached form and return it to your child's school.

We at the Connecticut State Department of Education will support the district improvement process through a comprehensive professional training program. The state will also provide support through telephone technical assistance, periodic site visits and guidance in the development of improvement plans. We are working hard to ensure that all students meet the academic achievement targets in the future. Creating and maintaining a high-quality school district is a job for the entire community, and we need your help in reaching our goals. We encourage you to provide your thoughts and advice as we strive to help all of our students succeed now and in the future.

Thank you for all that you do to support your child's education. It is our privilege to continue working with you and your child.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Frances Rabinowitz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line above the last few letters.

Frances M. Rabinowitz
Associate Commissioner
Division of Teaching, Learning and Assessment

PARENT VOLUNTEER FORM
Please return this form to your child's school

Parent's Name

Child's Name

School Name

I am interested in helping my school district develop a district improvement plan. Please contact me at

Telephone Number or E-Mail Address

The best time of day to reach me is between the hours of _____
and _____.

Please return this form by March 4, 2005.