



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Series: 2003-2004

Circular Letter: C-11

TO: Superintendents of Schools

FROM: Theodore S. Sergi, Commissioner of Education

DATE: August 26, 2003

SUBJECT: Connecticut's Public School Information System

The 2000 Connecticut General Assembly passed Public Act 00-187 (see attached Connecticut General Statute Section 10-10a) instructing the Department of Education to develop and implement a state-wide public school information system (PSIS). This legislation effectively changed Connecticut's education data collection. The PSIS reporting system is based upon individual student data, and allows school districts to upload an extract from their electronic student management systems directly to the Department of Education. Prior to CGS 10-10a school districts would perform counts of student information (e.g., race, gender, free lunch status, grade, etc.) and then report these counts in the aggregate on Department ED data collection forms. For school year 1999-2000, the Department's annual *Data Acquisition Plan* contained a total of 65 ED forms. The 2003-04 *Data Acquisition Plan* contains 52 forms.

Data reporting under PSIS currently requires the upload of student information at three points in time throughout the school year, October, January, and June/July. The October upload is used primarily by the Division of Grants Management to calculate various state and federal grant payments to local school districts. These data are typically audited at the end of the school year. The January upload is used to fulfill the Department's state and federal reporting mandates, including those required under the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB). These data will be used along with the test scores from our state-wide assessment programs (Connecticut Mastery Test and Connecticut Academic Performance Test) to determine "adequate yearly progress" under the provisions of NCLB. In addition, data from the January upload will be used in the production of the Strategic School Profiles documents and the *Profiles of Our Schools: The Condition of Education in Connecticut* report to the General Assembly.

The first scheduled PSIS upload took place on October 1, 2002, and contained individual student information formerly gathered in the aggregate on ED006 *Student Census Report/Racial Survey* and ED228 *Assessment of Dominant Language*. Based upon our first year of implementation, school districts that experienced the greatest success performed the following steps:

- Kept student information up-to-date on an ongoing basis.
- Made changes to the source file from which the state upload originates.
- Ran PSIS reports to check data.

- Entered the appropriate superintendent's certification code after all data were successfully uploaded and verified.

This year four more data elements (compensatory education, migrant, homeless, and truant) will be dropped from existing ED reporting forms and added to the PSIS upload. In addition, a new web-based application has been developed for ED525 *Student Mobility Data Collection* (i.e., dropout data). This new application will be populated with student information from the PSIS system and schools will update the enrollment status of their students on an ongoing basis.

Plans for the future include the development of two new web applications that will also be populated with student data from PSIS. Specifications for the development of the ED166 *Disciplinary Offense Report* application have been developed and a vendor will soon be identified to code the application. We anticipate pilot testing this application during the current school year (2003-04), and implement state-wide during the 2004-05 school year. Initial work has begun on the specifications for the PC ISSIS *Special Education* web application. Current plans call for pilot testing this application during the spring of 2004, with full implementation scheduled to begin December 1, 2004.

Future plans also include assigning a unique identifier to each public school student in the state. Our information technology staff are currently exploring various options for assigning student identifiers. If you or a member of your technology office has any comments or suggestions regarding the development and implementation of a unique student identifier system, please contact Gregory Vassar, Chief, Office of Information Systems at (gregory.vassar@po.state.ct.us).

The PSIS system has provided the state with a comprehensive electronic database containing information on all public elementary and secondary school students. Use of these data for grant and accountability reporting purposes are time driven, and therefore, it is imperative that these data are uploaded within the parameters of the due dates (i.e., October 1-15, January 2-15, and June 15-August 1). Your cooperation and oversight of these data submissions will serve both the state and federal education community, and all Connecticut residents.

Thank you for your continued support and best wishes for a productive school year.

TSS:rjl

Sec. 10-10a. Public school information system. (a) The Department of Education shall develop and implement a state-wide public school information system. The system shall be designed for the purpose of establishing a standardized electronic data collection and reporting protocol that will facilitate compliance with state and federal reporting requirements, improve school-to-school and district-to-district information exchanges, and maintain the confidentiality of individual student and staff data. The initial design shall focus on student information, provided the system shall be created to allow for future compatibility with financial, facility and staff data. The system shall provide for the tracking of the performance of individual students on each of the state-wide mastery examinations under section 10-14n in order to allow the department to compare the progress of the same cohort of students who take each examination and to better analyze school performance.

(b) The system database of student information shall not be considered a public record for the purposes of section 1-210.

(c) The department shall initiate a pilot system project not later than the 2002-2003 school year with full implementation in the school year following successful implementation of the pilot. All school districts shall participate in the system, provided the department provides for technical assistance and training of school staff in the use of the system.

(P.A. 00-187, S. 8, 75; May 9 Sp. Sess. P.A. 02-7, S. 7.)

History: P.A. 00-187 effective July 1, 2000; May 9 Sp. Sess. P.A. 02-7 amended Subsec. (a) by deleting reference to Sec. 10-233b, effective August 15, 2002.