

## *News from the Stamford Public Schools*

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### **BOARD OF EDUCATION REVIEWS RECOMMENDATIONS OF INDEPENDENT LITERACY AUDIT**

Superintendent Dr. Joshua Starr tonight shared with the Board of Education recommendations to improve literacy instruction in grades K-5 in Stamford Public Schools. The recommendations emerged from a recent audit, requested by Dr. Starr, by the Indiana-based Curriculum Management Audit Center of Phi Delta Kappa International.

“This audit puts into writing what we know about Stamford Public Schools,” said Dr. Starr. “We have a top-notch and committed staff who use many practices that serve some students well. However, we also have practices that do not provide the appropriate support, monitoring, and accountability to ensure that all students receive the best literacy instruction possible. That needs to change.”

Results of the most recent Connecticut Mastery Test scores reveal that while several No Child Left Behind (NCLB) subgroups and schools achieved increases in the percentages of students performing at or above proficiency in reading and writing, only one school made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for all NCLB subgroups.

Auditors spent three days in Stamford Public Schools in November 2008. They reviewed 70 documents, conducted 91 interviews with administrators, teachers, and parents, and visited all 12 elementary schools to observe classroom instructional practices.

The 151-page report includes three comprehensive recommendations as well as dozens of objectives for improving literacy instruction. The recommendations are:

- Establish expectations and system guidance through updated and new board policies to support quality control of the educational program. Develop and implement planning processes and documents to guide curriculum management, student assessment, and program evaluation.
- Develop high quality language arts curriculum guides for K-5 to promote consistency of direction and control.
- Establish procedures for centrally managing professional development, institutionalize expectations for instructional best practices, and establish a process for the selection and evaluation of literacy programs.

The literacy audit was funded by the GE Foundation's Developing Futures Program.

Dr. Starr has requested \$846,000 for literacy initiatives in the proposed 2009-2010 operating budget. The revamping of the literacy curriculum is scheduled to take place over the next three to five years.