

House Republican Press Release

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The General Assembly and the State School Board: Supporting Education Excellence in CT



Our children are Connecticut's future, and to help make it a bright one for them, the General Assembly and the state Board of Education are working together to ensure they receive the best education possible in schools that are safe and conducive to learning.

While the roles of the General Assembly and the state Board of Education are different, both play an important part in ensuring our public schools are second to none and that students who graduate from them are prepared to enter the work force or to continue their education at institutions of higher learning .

The General Assembly enacts laws that directly affect school systems throughout the state; authorizes funding to support local school systems; signs off on grants that pay part of the cost to towns of providing special education services; and approves school construction grants to help towns pay for new school buildings or for school renovation and expansion projects.

The state Board of Education is responsible for general supervision and control of the educational interests of the state, including preschool, elementary and secondary education, special education, vocational and adult education.

In addition, the board establishes education policy, prepares legislative proposals, sets academic standards for teachers and students, administers a \$2.27 billion annual state education budget and provides leadership and support services to Connecticut's 149 local and 17 regional school districts. It also serves as the board of education for the 17 regional vocational high schools.

The board currently is developing its 2006-2011 Comprehensive Plan for Education 2006-2011, which is expected to focus on three priority areas: high academic achievement for all students in reading, writing, mathematics and science; high quality preschool education for all students; and reforming the state's high schools so that all students graduate and are prepared for careers in a competitive, global economy.

The board also is required to create nutritional guidelines for all foods sold in schools under the state's school nutrition law, which prohibits schools from selling beverages other than water, milk, or 100 percent fruit or vegetable juice.

The law (Public Act 06-63), which passed during the 2006 legislative session and is intended to fight childhood obesity, originated in the General Assembly's Education Committee – as do most education-related bills. It is a good example of a law approved

by the General Assembly that directly affects local school districts and which involves the state Board of Education as the agency that implements a policy devised by the state legislature.

After being approved by the Education Committee, the school nutrition bill was referred to the General Assembly's Finance and Appropriations committees, which signed off on the measure before it received final legislative approval by the state Senate and state House of Representatives. The bill then went to the governor, who signed it into law on May 19th.