

Series 2000-2001

Circular Letter C-4

To: Superintendents of Schools
From: Theodore S. Sergi, Commissioner of Education
Date: August 4, 2000
Subject: Certificate of Compliance with the Law

All Superintendents of Schools are required to certify that your schools have been maintained according to law on the ED001, which is due on September 1 of each year.

For your convenience in making this certification, we are enclosing a list of the most important requirements of our state laws with which you were required to comply for the 1999-2000 school year. Please note any exceptions or exemptions from statutory requirements on the ED001 or separately if you file electronically. Title 10 of the General Statutes does contain additional requirements; however, we believe that the attached list contains those most vital to the orderly operation of our schools. Please note that provisions which represent new requirements for 1999-2000 appear in italics.

If you have any questions with regard to any of the requirements, please contact Attorney Karen Flanagan, at (860) 566-3825.

Thank you.

TSS:kfd
Enclosure
g:/karjan/ED001-2000-letter

CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTES
WHICH HAVE A MAJOR IMPACT ON THE OPERATION
OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Section 10-220(a) describes the **duties of boards of education**. It provides as follows:

Each local or regional board of education shall maintain good public elementary and secondary schools, implement the educational interests of the state as defined in section 10-4a and provide such other educational activities as in its judgment will best serve the interests of the school district; provided any board of education may secure such opportunities in another school district in accordance with provisions of the general statutes and shall give all the children of the school district as nearly equal advantages as may be practicable; shall provide an appropriate learning environment for its students which includes (1) adequate instructional books, supplies, materials, equipment, staffing, facilities and technology, (2) equitable allocation of resources among its schools, and (3) a safe school setting; shall have charge of the schools of its respective school district; shall make a continuing study of the need for school facilities and of a long-term school building program and from time to time make recommendations based on such study to the town; shall report annually to the Commissioner of Education on the condition of its facilities and the action taken to implement its long-term school building program, which report the commissioner shall use to prepare an annual report that he shall submit in accordance with section 11-4a to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education; shall advise the Commissioner of Education of the relationship between any individual school building project pursuant to chapter 173 and such long-term school building program; shall have the care, maintenance and operation of buildings, lands, apparatus and other property used for school purposes and at all times shall insure all such buildings and all capital equipment contained therein against loss in an amount not less than eighty per cent of replacement cost; shall determine the number, age and qualifications of the pupils to be admitted into each school; shall develop and implement a written plan for minority staff recruitment for purposes of subdivision (3) of section 10-4a; shall employ and dismiss the teachers of the schools of such district subject to the provisions of sections 10-151 and 10-158a; shall designate the schools which shall be attended by the various children within the school district; shall make provisions as will enable each child of school age, residing in the district to attend some public day school for the period required by law and provide for the transportation of children wherever transportation is reasonable and desirable, and for such purpose may make contracts covering periods of not more than five years; may place in an alternative school program or other suitable educational program a pupil enrolling in school who is nineteen years of age or older and cannot acquire a sufficient number of credits for graduation by age twenty-one; may arrange with the board of education of an adjacent town for the instruction therein of such children as can attend school in such adjacent town more conveniently; shall cause each child five years of age and over and under sixteen years of age living in the school district to attend school in accordance with the provisions of section 10-184, and shall perform all acts required of it by the town or necessary to carry into effect the powers and duties imposed by law. (Please note that pursuant to Section 10-184, a parent or person having control of a child five or six years of age has the option of not sending the child to school until age seven by personally

appearing at the school district office and signing an option form. The school district must provide information about the educational opportunities available in the school system.)

Section 10-4a defines the **educational interests of the state** which shall include, but not be limited to the concern of the state that

- (1) each child shall have for the period prescribed in the general statutes equal opportunity to receive a suitable program of educational experiences;
- (2) each school district shall finance at a reasonable level at least equal to the minimum expenditure requirement pursuant to the provisions of section 10-262j an educational program designed to achieve this end;
- (3) in order to reduce racial, ethnic and economic isolation, each school district shall provide educational opportunities for its students to interact with students and teachers from other racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds and may provide such opportunities with students from other communities; and
- (4) the mandates in the general statutes pertaining to education within the jurisdiction of the State Board of Education be implemented.

Section 10-226h requires school districts to report, by October 1, 1998 and biennially thereafter, on **the programs and activities undertaken to reduce racial, ethnic and economic isolation**, including information on the programs undertaken and evidence over time of progress made.

School districts are required to provide at least **one hundred and eighty days** of actual school work for grades kindergarten to twelve and no less than **nine hundred hours** of actual school work for full day kindergarten and grades one to twelve and **four hundred and fifty hours** of actual school work for half-day kindergarten pursuant to Sections 10-15 and 10-16.

Sections 10-15c, 10-186 and 10-235 require school districts to **provide full and free access**, by transportation or otherwise, to its programs to all eligible students **without discrimination** on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin or sexual orientation, including to those residing with relatives and non-relatives and to those residing in temporary shelters. Children are eligible to attend school if they attain the age of five on or before January 1 of a school year until they attain the age of twenty-one or graduate.

Section 10-220d requires local and regional boards of education to provide **full access** to regional vocational-technical schools, regional vocational agriculture centers, interdistrict magnet schools, charter schools and interdistrict student attendance programs for the **recruitment**, other than for the purpose of interscholastic athletic competition, **of students** attending the schools under the board's jurisdiction.

Sections 10-16b, 10-18, 10-19, 10-220(b) and 10-221a obligate school district to (1) offer **prescribed courses of study** in accordance with duly adopted educational goals and student objectives **as part of a planned, ongoing and systematic program of instruction**, and (2) **require minimum credit requirements for high school graduation**. *Section 10-221h*

*requires boards to develop and implement a three-year **plan to improve the reading skills** of students in grades kindergarten through three.*

School districts must provide **special education and related services** to all eligible children requiring special education pursuant to Sections 10-76a through 10-76q.

Sections 10-17, 10-17a and 10-17d through 10-17g require school districts to assess the needs of students who are speakers of languages other than English and to provide **bilingual education, *English as a second language and other support services*** where required.

Adult education services must be provided for adult residents by a local or regional board of education or through cooperative arrangements or at a cooperating eligible entity or at a regional education service center as required by Sections 10-67 through 10-73c.

School districts must furnish **transportation** to eligible public and private school students, including students attending charter schools *and magnet schools*, and develop and implement a policy for reporting of all complaints relative to school transportation safety pursuant to Sections 10-97, 10-186, 10-220, 10-221c, 10-277, 10-280a and 10-281.

Each school district must prescribe **rules for the management, studies, classification and discipline of the public schools**, including the selection and use of nondiscriminatory texts, supplementary books, library books, supplies, materials and equipment as it deems necessary to meet the needs of instruction in its schools; adopt and **implement policies and procedures** concerning (1) homework, attendance, promotion and retention, (2) drug and alcohol use, sale and possession on school property, (3) youth suicide prevention and attempts, (4) truancy, (5) the encouragement parent-teacher communication, and (6) *weighted grading for honors and advanced placement courses* and must display flags in each classroom. (Sections 10-18a, 10-198a, 10-221, 10-228, 10-230 and P.A. 99-81) *P.A. 99-288 requires that, on or before July 1, 2000, promotion and graduation policies must be revised to ensure that such policies foster student achievement and reduce the incidence of social promotion.*

Section 10-16a requires each local and regional board of education to provide an opportunity for **silent meditation** for teachers and students at the start of each school day.

Sections 10-15b and 46b-56 require school districts to allow parents (custodial and non-custodial) **access to the records** of their minor children except for records containing information that is considered confidential under Section 10-154a and certain health information which is confidential pursuant to other provisions of the General Statutes. Under Section 10-221b, districts must establish a written, uniform policy concerning **on-campus recruiting** and access to directory information for all recruiters, including commercial, military and non-military and those representing institutions of higher education.

School districts must operate **school health programs** to ensure the well-being of their students in accordance with Sections 10-203 through 10-204a, 10-205 through 10-210, 10-212, 10-212a, and 10-214 through 10-215 and allow students to be exempted from **family**

life education programs under Section 10-16e. *On and after July 1, 1999 a copy of the record of each **pesticide application** at a school must be maintained at the school for five years. (P.A. 99-165)*

Section 10-266w obligates school districts to provide **breakfast programs** when required.

School districts must maintain **sanitary and safe schools** in accordance with all applicable fire, safety and health codes, ordinances, regulations and laws so that no serious threat of danger exists to any lawful occupant. **Smoking in school buildings** is prohibited while school is in session or student activities are being conducted. (Sections 10-203, 10-220, 10-221, 10-231 and 19a-342)

Section 10-221g requires each local and regional board of education to conduct an **instructional time and facility usage assessment** in order to maximize student learning and community use of facilities. Section 10-220 requires each board to report annually to the Commissioner on the **condition of its facilities** and action taken to implement its long term school building program.

Sections 10-221 and 10-223a through 10-223g, inclusive, require school districts to (1) adopt policies governing student conduct which provide for the fair and consistent application of **disciplinary policies and procedures**, (2) afford annual notice of such policies to all pupils and their parents and guardians, and (3) comply with due process requirements in imposing discipline.

School districts must ensure the reporting of **suspected or known abuse, or danger of abuse, of children** to the Commissioner of Children and Families or his representative, and the reporting of suspected or known abuse by a school employee to the Commissioner of Children and Families, the state or local police, and the Commissioner of Education within 72 hours of learning of the abuse, and adopt a written policy regarding the reporting by school employees of suspected child abuse. (Sections 17a-101 through 17a-101i and 17a-103)

Pursuant to Sections 10-145 to 10-145b, inclusive, 10-151 to 10-151c, inclusive, 10-153 to 10-153g, inclusive, 10-155f, 10-156 to 10-157a, inclusive, 10-220a, 10-221d, 10-235, 10-236a and 10-76dd, districts must employ, evaluate and indemnify appropriately **certified and qualified personnel** develop and implement teacher evaluation and professional development programs; provide **in-service training** on (1) the nature and relationship of drugs and alcohol to personality development and procedures to discourage their abuse, (2) health and mental health risk education, (3) the growth and development of exceptional children, and (4) school violence prevention and conflict resolution, (5) cardiopulmonary resuscitation and other emergency life saving procedures, (6) computer and other information technology as applied to student learning and classroom instruction, communications and data management, and (7) the teaching of the language arts, reading and reading readiness for teachers in grades kindergarten to three, inclusive; and file a signed copy of its teacher and administrator collective bargaining agreements with the Commissioner of Education. No board member shall be employed by the board of education of which he or she is a member under Section 10-232.

Section 10-217a requires school districts to provide **health services to students in eligible private schools** when designated this responsibility by the town or city.

School districts must properly plan for and maintain all **funds and accounts** within their jurisdiction pursuant to Sections 10-222 and 10-237 and **make returns of receipts, expenditures and statistics** as prescribed by the Commissioner under Section 10-237. Section 10-220(c) requires local and regional boards of education to submit **strategic school profile reports** by November 1 of each year

Boards of Education must **elect officers** and **hold meetings** pursuant to Section 10-218, and **hold public hearings** on citizen petition under Section 10-238.

Sections 10-249 and 10-250 require boards of education to determine by age the **number of children** of compulsory school age residing in the district and report this information to the Commissioner.

Note: Provisions which represent new requirements for 1999-2000 appear in italics.

PLEASE NOTE: THERE ARE MANY OTHER STATUTES WHICH IMPOSE ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS; HOWEVER, THIS LIST CONTAINS THOSE MOST VITAL TO THE ORDERLY OPERATION OF OUR SCHOOLS.