

**2012 Achievement Gap Task Force DRAFT Recommendations
(Revised for 11/2/12)**

Recommendations from School-based Health Centers and Mental Health Professionals (SBHC/MH) added below in Italics (from Sen. Harp)

Recommendation	Addressed in PA 12-116 or other authority	SDE Work towards Recommendation (Responses based on earlier version of draft recommendation table)
Schools		
<p>Require all schools with an achievement gap to offer the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and recess. (TH)</p> <p>In addition, require participation in after-school and summer meal programs. SDE not currently taking advantage of all meal programs. Why? (EZ)</p> <p>Districts should not just offer meals but push them (DK)</p>	<p>Mostly done.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under PA 12-116 all are required to offer a total of 20 minutes of physical activity for grades K-5. • All 30 Alliance Districts participate in the SBP but four of these each have one school in the district that does not provide breakfast • Currently there are five districts participating in the in-class school breakfast pilot under CGS § 10-215g. SDE expects more districts to join. Recently an email was sent to all superintendents seeking more applicants for the program. The Connecticut Breakfast Expansion Team has been working on this issue since 2009. 	<p>Recess component addressed in PA 12-116; list of school breakfast participants attached.</p>
<p>Laptops for every student in the middle schools that they can take home. Many of them do not have access to computers in the home and they can use them for research, homework, etc. Some states have programs where the laptops are donated. Companies receive tax incentives for joining these programs. Also, more computers in the 2-5 grades in the classroom. (AS)</p>	<p>No, but state offers a corporate tax credit for computer donations. (See OLR table on other states' laptop programs)</p>	<p>Some Alliance Districts are using technology as part of their plans.</p>

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<p>With the requirement that there be Student Success Plans for all students starting with 6th grade, the importance of a focus on the Middle Schools in closing the Academic Achievement Gaps (AAG) is reiterated. Middle School is an intervention point and a key transition set of years for most young people. The Master Plan (MP) should recommend that there be a workgroup charged with developing a plan to strengthen our Middle Schools – not just curriculum-wise but also looking at affective domains. (DK)</p> <p><u>SBHC/MH:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Teacher Professional Development (child development, early signs of emotional behavioral problems)</i> • <i>School-based health centers</i> 	<p>Partial, PA 11-35 requires Student Success Plans for each student starting in grade 6.</p>	<p>Student Success Plans are being implemented in all districts based on the Secondary School Reforms. These plans begin in 6th grade. Lower performing middle schools are to be addressed by Alliance Districts as part of tiering their schools and intervening as appropriate.</p>
<p>Support efforts to develop and implement freshmen academies. Not enough attention has been paid to the racial graduation gap. There is ample research and literature that supports the concept of freshmen academies as an effective way to increase graduation rates for all students. (GH)</p>	<p>No</p>	
<p>Expand the applied technology programs (formerly vo-tech programs) now available. Often the discussion about 21st century skills,</p>	<p>No</p>	

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<p>fails to include one important truth: We will always need plumbers, electricians, carpenters, etc. Effective, productive reforms would provide a 7-12 continuum of learning for students interested in applied technology, thereby providing 6 years of immersion in a skilled trade, wherein an apprenticeship could be substituted for the senior year. (GH)</p>		
<p>Change the state’s focus away from requiring more testing and towards capacity building to improve student achievement. Connecticut must disengage from what Richard F. Elmore calls an “overinvestment in testing and under-investment in capacity building” primarily because such theoretical approaches focus almost exclusively on testing, and only incidentally on building the capacity of individual educators. (Elmore, 2003). (GH)</p>	No	
<p>Early Education</p>		
<p>The MP should make a strong statement that CT’s Early Education Plan and the system that will support and implement it needs to include in more than a cursory passing plans to improve the first 1,000 days of a child’s life in CT(DK)</p>	<p>No. But PA 11-181 requires the state to develop a coordinated system of early child care and education by July 1, 2013.</p>	<p>Goal of the Early Childhood Planning Office is to create a statewide coordinated early childhood system. Much work is under way. Myra Jones-Taylor is the planning director. Her report is due 1/1/13. Ask for Jones-Taylor to report to task force.</p>

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<p><u>SBHC/MH:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent and family engagement • Teacher professional development (understanding the impact of childhood trauma on development and emotional-behavioral health) 		
Quality Pre-K for every child in the state and then followed by all day kindergarten. (AS)	Partial. 1,000 additional school readiness seats with half going to education reform districts.	Additionally, Alliance funds and Priority School District funds can be used for early education including all day kindergarten. Several districts are going in this direction using Alliance funding. All 1,000 slots successfully filled this year
Require all family day care home providers to attain 9 CEU's per year that focus on early childhood development. The credits can be gained through CT Charts a Course, community colleges, etc. (TH) Whatever other states do re: continuing ed requirements for family day care providers, we should do (TH)	No PA 12-116 requires new teacher prep course on preliteracy, practice-based.	CEUs no longer exist – districts are required to provide in-service PD and teachers collaborate and track based upon evaluation goal-setting process. DPH handles licensing - \$700,000 going to DPH for quality enhancement (part of \$3 million in school readiness quality enhancement which also includes standards and professional development).
Improve the home health visitation system to narrow health inequities and achievement gap; should include appropriate referrals for health and poverty reduction programs, Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT), and Medicaid (COC)	No.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 new school-based health clinics and 10 new family resource centers (plus additional funding for current FRCs) will help to address health and outreach services and home visits. • SBHC districts not yet determined • Make sure all FRCs do the same things
Integrate early education and home visitation systems; connect these systems in training, professional development and	No.	Early Childhood Planning Office is working to coordinate systems among agencies.

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<p>standards (COC)</p> <p><u>SBHC/MH:</u> <i>Re: home visitation:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider approaching the Yale Child Study Center to consider using established in-home therapeutic interventions • Consider Great Start, a pilot program to connect families to schools by providing in-home services to children at risk for school failure 		
<p>Increase support for the Reach out and Read program in order to promote learning long before students, especially those from lower socioeconomic situations, begin school. Reach out and Read has documented success. (GH)</p>	<p>Not specifically but increases school readiness seats (see above)</p>	
<p>Extending School Time</p>		
<p>The Master Plan (MP) should have a recommendation related to expanded learning time; it would be ideal to actually have that as a “number of hours.” The Massachusetts 2020 guidelines that call for an extra 300 hours of additional time each year. The MP should recommend a workgroup be charged with addressing this and bring back recommendations on how many more hours are needed and how that could be implemented. (DK)</p>	<p>No, but (1) the law allows a school or district to extend school time and some do (example, Capital Prep Magnet in Hartford) and (2) the four commissioner’s network school turnaround plans recently approved by SBE each call for extended learning time (OLR report 2012-R- 0388).</p>	<p>All Commissioner’s Network plans include extending the school day and/or school year. Alliance Districts are frequently using Alliance funding to extend learning time. The State is collaborating with the National Center on Time & Learning in a pilot with three Alliance Districts.</p> <p>A number of Alliance Districts are using plans to extends school time.</p>

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Require all schools with an achievement gap to extend the school day to 5:00 p.m. through utilizing existing staff, volunteers, and supervisory staff. (TH)		See Above.
Longer school day and reconfigure the school year for more marking periods - 4 or 5 and make them equally apart. (AS)		See Above.
Curriculum		
Require evidence-based curriculum in school districts with an achievement gap. The State Department of Education should monitor and evaluate the sufficiency of curriculums in low performing school districts and schools. Each curriculum shall be tested against the various state and federal tests for effectiveness. If the curriculum is inadequate, the SDE should identify tested and scored evidenced based curriculums from which the district can select and be required by SDE to implement. The SDE should also assure that the supporting materials (books, workbooks, etc.) are available to all students. (TH)	No, but all districts in the process of revamping curricula to align with SBE-adopted Common Core Standards.	The Common Core Standards, and correlated curriculum, are an important route to curricular rigor and instructional success. CSDE adopted the Common Core Standards in 2010. Implementation began in districts in the 2011-12 school year and continues. Full implementation and Smarter Balanced Assessments are expected in the 2014-15 school year.
SDE, in collaboration with the RESCs, will establish model curricula in reading and mathematics in grades K-3, complete with benchmarks, assessments, and progress monitoring tools aligned to the CCSS. Model curricula will be made available to all districts. Technical assistance with	PA 11-85 required SDE to approve and distribute model curricula and frameworks in reading and mathematics for grades prekindergarten to four. PA 12-116 requires intensive reading interventions, assessments for certain schools and a statewide reading plan for K-3.	CSDE website provides crosswalk documents, units of study, sample lesson plans, pacing guides, unit correlations and resources for district on the Common Core website. http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2618&q=322592

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implementation will be provided by SDE or local RESCs to Alliance and regional districts. (MC)		More work is under way.
Fund expansion of intensive reading instruction program that is included in PA 12-116. (COC)	No.	Early literacy was a focus of PA 12-116. One of the programs included is an intensive intervention pilot in 5 schools. Other components include new K-3 Reading Assessments, a statewide reading plan, and reading professional development. SDE wants to expand pilot program if funding is available.
Re-entry Issues/Behavioral Issues/Drop-Out Prevention		
Each school district shall develop a re-entry plan for students who are away from their school due to a juvenile justice intervention, a DCF or Special Education out-of-district placement, extended suspension and/or expulsion. For districts with large numbers of children re-entering the school system, a transitional school experience should be available prior to the child/youth re-entering his/her school. (TH)	No, but PA 11-115 expands students right to re-enter school after spending time in a juvenile detention facility and requires districts to give credit for courses completed in unified school districts 1 and 2 (DCF and DOC).	Coordination and collaboration with other state agencies under way.
Develop a regional system of schools for children who have behavioral problems who interrupt the classroom experience. These schools would work with children who are chronically disruptive, violent, and have had multiple suspensions/expulsions due to these anti-social behaviors expressed in the classroom. The students would also be at least one year behind grade. The schools in this system would have specially trained	No	

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<p>teachers, case managers, etc. knowledgeable of evidence based methods or best practices for teaching these children and addressing their behavior problems. (TH)</p>		
<p>Full study of school based arrests (where and how many), school resource officers (where, how many), change in school climate where sro's have been implemented, alternatives to sba's (JR)</p>	No	
<p>Boarding schools for troubled children</p>	No	
<p>The Master Plan should require that high schools below a certain threshold of dropout rates should have a "Drop Out Prevention Plan" developed by the district, approved by the Commissioner, and monitored by the State Department of Education. (DK)</p>	No	<p>SBE adopted statewide policy of excused and unexcused absenteeism to address truancy. Districts have been notified by C-Letter, and Department is preparing a letter with further guidance on how to address and track this issue.</p> <p>One Network school is a high school, enabling the pilot of work related to graduation rates and improvement thereof.</p>
<p>Establish system of tracking chronic absenteeism. Use data to identify patterns to help determine the correct interventions. (COC)</p>	No, but SBE has adopted a statewide definition of excused and unexcused absences as SBE was required to under PA 11-36.	<p>SBE adopted statewide policy of excused and unexcused absenteeism to address truancy. Districts have been notified by C-Letter, and Department is preparing a letter with further guidance on how to address and track this issue.</p>
<p><i>Recommend that each school sign a memorandum of understanding with their local provider of emergency mobile psychiatric services (EMPS) in an effort to build stronger ties to community-based resources (SBHC/MH)</i></p>		

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Teacher Preparation		
Increase urban field experiences, acceptance standards, and coursework in ELL & achievement gap strategies in teacher and leader preparation programs in State. (MC)	Partial, PA 12-116 requires four semesters but does not specifically require urban experiences.	Educator Preparatory Advisory Council (EPAC) is looking intensively at teacher preparation from many perspectives and is due to report to CGA on April 1 with recommendations. See Special Act 12-3 for full list of requirements in reporting.
An alignment between and among all the teacher and principal/administrator programs and curricula in CT that reflects rigorous courses and programs, practicum time in urban centers and districts under the guidance of true masters, and learning that measures proven cultural sensitivity and understanding are key components. The presentations by Dean DeFranco - and the 5 year program that UCONN requires – give a feel for that. Would love to see the MP recommend that Schools of Education in CT report back to us on how they will refine their programs – in light of PA 12-116 and given the AAG in CT- to better prepare teachers, principals, and administrators. (DK)	No	EPAC is looking intensively at teacher preparation from many perspectives and is due to report to CGA on April 1 with recommendations. See Special Act 12-3 for full list of requirements in reporting.
Improve teacher prep programs; build more clinical time into our teacher prep programs; mandate a fifth year in all our teacher prep programs to develop better teachers who will better serve our students. (PF)	Partial, PA 12-116 requires four semesters but does not specifically require urban experiences.	
<i>Teachers should be required to take a professional development course in basic child development, understanding the impact of trauma on emotional-behavioral health,</i>		

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<i>and in the early identification of child emotional-behavioral problems.(SBHC/MH)</i>		
Leader/Principal Preparation		
Increase clinical contact hours for principals. Improving principal prep programs, and improving the quality of that most important school leadership position, may be the greatest leverage point for reducing the gap. (PF)	No	
Incentivize high quality, effective principals to work in the most challenged schools may be something we want to consider as well. (PF)	No	
Parent Involvement		
Promote family-school partnerships at each school at every level. (COC)	Partial PA 12-116 establishes 10 new family resource centers; in PA 12-1, JSS, pilot program for Parent University in two educational reform districts	Parent University to be piloted in 2 districts this school year. Working to develop Parent Technology Pilot. 10 new Family Resource Centers, and increased funding for existing FRCs. School Governance Councils have been expanded to be required in all Turnaround, Focus and Review schools.
Teach parents about the achievement gap and its implication for children and society. (COC)	No	Work with PIRC (Parent Information Resource Center) to train parents in new accountability system.
Offer specific activities and roles for parents in schools and at home as partners (COC)	Partial, Even Start Family Literacy Program in PA 12-120	Parent University to be piloted in 2 districts this school year. Working to develop Parent Technology Pilot. 10 new Family Resource Centers, and increased funding for existing FRCs. School Governance Councils have been expanded to be required in all Turnaround, Focus and Review schools.

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Ensure cultural awareness at every entry point (i.e., at any opportunity in which school interacts with parents) including bi-lingual opportunity for parent participation. (COC)	No	CALI Training on cultural awareness is conducted through SDE.
Develop and implement parent academies and parent universities with a replicable model (GH)	Partial: PA 12-1, JSS, the budget implementer act, requires SDE to provide grants for a parent university pilot program in two educational reform districts.	
<i>There are multiple available strategies to promote parent engagement in the educational process. There is an evidence-based approach called Families and Schools Together (FAST) that has been replicated in hundreds of school communities. FAST has led to improved educational and behavioral outcomes among students, and the intervention has promoted safer and more nurturing school climate. Additionally, the Yale Child Study Center is currently piloting Great Start, a school-based in-home child and family therapy model. Great Start was created to build a bridge between the home and school, and to work with children who are at risk for school failure due to non-academic issues. (SBHC/MH)</i>		
Wrap-Around Services		
The Master Plan (MP) should include language that talks about the important role of “wrap around services” and which is supportive of Commissioner Pryor’s	Partial: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PA 12-116 authorizes 20 new or expanded School Based Health Centers and 10 new Family Resource Center; also 	20 new or expanded School Based Health Centers and 10 new Family Resource Center; also PA 12-1, JSS requires SDE to provide wrap-around services to education reform districts within available appropriations.

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<p>initiatives related to the community schools concept being rolled out statewide. Community based organizations like United Way can play a key role. All this is most important, perhaps, for the Alliance Districts. The MP should include a recommendation that any transformation plans include how the district will utilize, maximize, and rally community assets. (DK)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PA 12-1, JSS, requires SDE to provide wrap-around services to education reform districts within available appropriations. 	<p>Commissioner’s Network schools include focus on wraparound services. Multiple Alliance Districts do as well. Work with Interagency Council will lead to greater coordination of wraparound services.</p>
<p><i>There are several wrap-around initiatives operating in Connecticut that focus on the school building as the hub. For example, the School-Based Diversion Initiative is an interagency partnership that joins CSSD, DCF and SDE in education and prevention efforts in multiple school districts. The Initiative is overseen by the Child Health Development Institute in Farmington, CT. Additionally, the Educational Care Collaborative in Hamden, CT is building a network of community-based services around the Church Street Elementary School in an initiative that is funded by the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven. The CT Health Foundation is working with several school districts to enhance child development and mental health supports to support their K-12 students.(SBHC/MH)</i></p>		
<p>Black and Latino Males</p>		
<p>Partner with parents, business leaders, seniors and youth regarding the</p>	<p>No</p>	

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achievement gap and its impact on black and Latino males and Connecticut’s future workforce. Include Schott Foundation’s resource model that identifies the four core resources necessary for any child to have a true opportunity to learn. (COC)		
School leaders of races must study whether current school practices, procedures, policies and beliefs are negatively impacting black and Latino students. (GH)	No, but existing law and policy are intended to be non-discriminatory.	
Develop a framework for ongoing and meaningful collaboration between school districts and black and Latino Civic, Social and Religious organizations. In doing so, urban communities throughout the state can be more involved in supporting the academic achievement of black and Latino students. (GH)	No	
SDE should contract with the Schott Foundation in order to develop a comprehensive strategy that focuses specifically and intensively on the academic development of our lowest achievers, African-American and Latino boys. The partnership can focus upon developing and implementing mentoring programs, exploring the feasibility of all-male classrooms and schools, and the development of other research-based	No	

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strategies, community and/or school-based programs, and academic supports necessary to improve the outcomes for African-American and Latino students (GH)		
GED/Alternate Schools/Adult Education		
Encourage the CT Attorney General to oppose the privatization and increased cost of the GED. It is going from \$13.00 to \$120.00 without taking into consideration preparation costs. (TH)	No (pursuant to CGS § 10-5(b) fee is set at \$13).	
Let's get a handle on the number of alternative schools that exist in CT, the demographics of those schools, including those with disabilities and what the quality of instruction is. Also a timeline for what the growth has been over time. (JR)	Data is available on number of schools and demographics; no study on quality of instruction or timeline.	SDE has data on schools and demographics
Determine the number of adult education programs in the state, the demographics of their students, including those with disabilities, the quality of instruction and a resource needs assessment. Also a timeline for what the growth has been over time. (JR)	No	SDE has data on schools and demographics
Housing/Zoning/Poverty		
Through the I.C., establish a 2 year partnership with the Partnership for Healthy Communities aimed at creating legislation that will (a) incentivize mixed income	No	

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housing in communities with high-resource schools and (b) de-incentivize zoning practices in cities and towns which result in de facto segregation in CT. (MC)		
Address core issues of poverty, housing and fair access to effective schools, ask Interagency Council to lead effort (PF)	No	
Data Analysis		
Through the Interagency Council (IC), identify health, housing, and student mobility disparities using agreed upon criteria. Use said data to create action plans for addressing disparities. Report on progress semi-annually to the IC, Human Services, and Education Committee of General Assembly. (MC)	No	Commissioner sits on both councils – will need to work with and involve other agencies who are on that council.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a yearly rank of districts' (a) achievement gap status and (b) success at closing the achievements gaps based on pre-determined measures. Annually, the LEAs with the greatest gaps (25) will submit plans for approval by SDE. The districts with the greatest gains in closing the gaps (10) will present their strategies to the SDE annually. (MC) • SDE to identify non-Alliance Districts that have focus schools (DK) 	No	ESEA waiver creates new accountability system – see attached Power Point for details of this system. Specifically, Focus Schools under the new accountability system are schools with gaps in subgroups; Schools are responsible for implementing plans this school year to address these gaps.
Gather CT-specific data on performance of black and Hispanic males and include	Yes, performance data for black and Hispanic males is available; no regarding Schott's	Data for Focus Schools looks at Black and Hispanic subgroups, but not by gender. PA 12-116 includes new

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Schott's Opportunity to Learn Index (measures whether schools are providing every student with a true opportunity to learn). (COC)	Opportunity to Learn Index.	guidelines for newly approved Charter Schools including single gender and ELL students.
Graduation Requirements		
A few years ago SDE was required to establish the Board Examination pilot program that would permit some students to graduate high school after passing a Board Exam and enter our CT Higher Education system and would permit other students to remain in high school and pass a second level Board Examination. The pilot was never really funded and momentum was lost. It could, in theory, free up high school teachers to focus in the last two years of high school on both those who had not yet passed level one and those who were preparing for level two exams. The MP call for a expanded use of the Board Examination Pilot.(DK)	Partial, see PA 10-111 which required SDE to create a board exam pilot program that would allow students to graduate if they passed an appropriate series of exams.	CGS 10-5c enables SBE to permit students in grades 9-12 to substitute achievement of a passing score on a series of examinations for any student who successfully completes the board examination certificate program. CREC is implementing the board exam.
Oversight		
The MP should address implementation and results of PA 12-116 and refine our role in this process. (DK)	PA 12-116 places various reporting requirements on SDE and the Education Commissioner to report to the Education Committee	SDE is creating a Performance team that will conduct related work. Among other duties, this team will track school and district progress in gap closure and overall achievement, and annually update SPI and DPI, including subgroups, based on new assessment data. Reports due to CGA on Commissioner's Network, Early Literacy Pilot, teacher evaluations and other initiatives. RBA report cards will also be updated.
The MP should include a statement that	Not in PA 12-116, but in state law the local	Boards of education were required to approve Alliance

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local Boards of Education in CT are key partners and leaders in the movement to close the AAG and recommend that CABE and local Boards give AGTF a report that outlines what they need from the State to help them do their job more effectively. (DK)	board is the key actor in implementing local education policy.	District plans so they are partnering in those efforts. Lighthouse training through the Bureau of Accountability for Boards of Education. Special Master law enables intervention and support when boards are struggling.
The AGTF should become the oversight body for implementation of AG and reform efforts with periodic reports provided. No one outside the executive really monitors implementation which is why we talk about issues for years and years. (JR)	SBE and Education Committee and General Assembly provide oversight.	
<i>We encourage the Achievement Gap Task Force to create a small oversight group to ensure that child development and mental health issues are given the importance and weight that they deserve. Only evidence-based approaches to tackling these domains should be considered. Also, there should be oversight to ensure that school-based health centers are fully staffed, new SBHC's are opened in a timely fashion. (SBHC/MH)</i>		
Other		
There was a lot in the Education Reform acts of 2010, 2011, and 2012. I would suggest that it would be valuable for the AGTF – and the General Assembly – to have a report prepared (by OLR?) that lets us see the components of the original proposals that never made it to the finish line. This information could help us determine other		

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components/items that should be in the MP – which were not possible in legislation because of political and other considerations. (DK)		
At our 6/11 meeting Dr. Cardona bravely ventured into the water that contained topics liked shared resources across current district lines, aka regionalization and “student success is often impacted by the issues children face from 3 PM – 9 AM and on weekends.” I hope the MP doesn’t run from hot topics but includes them in a way that it will help creative solutions emerge and will show the leadership with which the Task Force has been charged by the General Assembly. (DK)		Regionalization: Small district study being conducted for considerations of regional cooperation, and there is \$100,000 allocated for technical assistance to help districts with regional cooperation