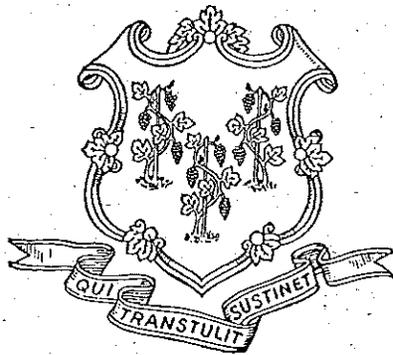


STATE BOARD OF TRUSTEES FOR THE HARTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Connecticut

General Assembly



LEGISLATIVE
PROGRAM REVIEW
AND
INVESTIGATIONS
COMMITTEE

December 1999

**CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY
LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM REVIEW AND INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE**

The Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee is a joint, bipartisan, statutory committee of the Connecticut General Assembly. It was established in 1972 to evaluate the efficiency, effectiveness, and statutory compliance of selected state agencies and programs, recommending remedies where needed. In 1975, the General Assembly expanded the committee's function to include investigations, and during the 1977 session added responsibility for "sunset" (automatic program termination) performance reviews. The committee was given authority to raise and report bills in 1985.

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LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM REVIEW
& INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE

**State Board of Trustees
for the
Hartford Public Schools**

DECEMBER 1999



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Key Points

STATE BOARD OF TRUSTEES FOR THE HARTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

- Special Act 97-4 declared an educational crisis existed in the Hartford public school system. The act dissolved the local board of education and established a state board of trustees to take managerial and administrative control of the school system beginning June 1, 1997.
 - The board's term expires June 30, 2002, following a two-year extension approved by the Connecticut State Board of Education in October 1999.
 - Special Act 97-4 gives the board of trustees specific duties and responsibilities *all in order to*: 1) increase student achievement; 2) enhance the quality, adequacy, and equality of educational opportunities; and 3) allocate and manage resources efficiently and effectively. The act also provides the board of trustees with unique collective bargaining powers.
 - State monitors were created by Special Act 97-4 to oversee progress made by the board and school district to improve operations and increase student academic performance. The monitors prepare quarterly progress reports, which are distributed to the legislature, governor, State Board of Education, and the board of trustees.
 - Major improvements have been made to the district's administrative operating systems including finance/budgeting, purchasing, personnel, and technology. The trustees have also implemented several key policies intended to increase student achievement; major programmatic initiatives intended to increase student performance have been made as well.
 - A structure is in place to monitor implementation of recommendations made in an independent operations audit required by Special Act 97-4, upon which the board has placed a high priority. Steady implementation progress has been made, although the full board does not receive regular status updates.
 - A structure is in place to monitor implementation of the Hartford Improvement Plan as required by Special Act 97-4. The plan's 48 recommendations have been condensed into a broader planning document; a complete implementation status report has not been developed since mid-1998 as a result.
 - The board of trustees began addressing elementary and middle school accreditation in late 1998. Progress and planning have been incremental, with six schools currently undergoing initial work. A fully comprehensive strategy for accreditation of all schools has not been developed to date.
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Key Points

- The current system supports various ways to involve parents in their children's schools, rather than a single mechanism as required by Special Act 97-4. The board has a parental involvement policy; the structure to implement the policy is changing under the new superintendent.
 - The advisory council established by Special Act 97-4 has helped develop several major board policies and assisted in the search for a permanent superintendent. At present, the council seems to lack a clear focus or agenda and its meetings are not conducted in a routine, organized manner.
 - The state monitors are diligent in documenting quarterly progress made by the board of trustees and the Hartford public school system. The monitor process adds a level of accountability to the system and the quarterly reports document progress from a qualitative and quantitative perspective. No annual report is prepared showing the system's cumulative progress.
 - Steps have been taken to develop legitimate operating systems, settle all collective bargaining contracts, develop a long range facilities plan, make capital improvements to schools, and develop a comprehensive set of policies and regulations. Standardized academic programs are currently being implemented districtwide.
 - Written procedures are needed for many administrative operations.
 - Visits by committee staff to randomly selected schools revealed the schools to be clean, although some schools showed signs of wear. No preventative maintenance plan is in place.
 - Formal reporting to the board on the implementation of its policies is not standardized.
 - The board's primary focus has been on implementing an organized system of operational/administrative structures and controls; focus should now be on implementing board policies outlined in its new policies manual, along with oversight of the district's recently initiated academic programs.
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STATE BOARD OF TRUSTEES FOR THE HARTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Recognizing the Hartford public school system faced an educational crisis, the state legislature passed Special Act 97-4 creating a state board of trustees to replace the local school board and oversee the management and administration of the school system. As a way to gauge the board's progress to date, the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee authorized a study of the State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools in March 1999. The study focused on the improvements and progress to date made by the trustees in fulfilling their statutory requirements.

As the study progressed, several areas needing increased attention became clear regarding the board's management of the school system's operations. As such, the committee focused its findings and recommendations in three main areas: requirements of Special Act 97-4; administrative operations; and system oversight.

Special Act 97-4

A primary objective of this study was to determine whether or not the State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools is complying with its statutory mandates specified in Special Act 97-4. The special act created the board of trustees and outlines several requirements the board is to fulfill during its term. These requirements and their implementation status serve as an initial gauge of the progress made by the board since its inception in June 1997.

Special Act 97-4 calls for the term of the Hartford board of trustees to expire on June 30, 2000. A key provision of the act allows the board to request a term extension if additional time is needed to: 1) sufficiently address recommendations from an independent management audit of the Hartford school district's operations and a series of 48 recommendations made by the commissioner of the state Department of Education (SDE) known as the Hartford Improvement Plan; and 2) improve student achievement. The special act requires the board to request an extension by January 1, 2000.

The board of trustees formally requested a two-year extension in September 1999. On October 6, 1999, the State Board of Education, which is the body responsible for making the extension determination, granted the extension. The state education board noted the trustees had made systematic

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progress in implementing the necessary requirements within the Hartford school system, but needed more time to fully complete their responsibilities. The state education board also noted the trustees needed additional time to allow their new superintendent, hired in April 1999, to implement his programs and initiatives under the trustees' direction. The State Board of Education said it supported the work the board of trustees was doing and voted unanimously to extend its term until June 31, 2002. The memo from the chairman of the board of trustees to the State Board of Education requesting the term extension and the state education board's resolution are provided in the report's appendices.

Operational audit. Special Act 97-4 required the board of trustees to facilitate an independent audit of the Hartford school district's administrative operations. Overall, the program review committee found a functional and organized structure exists to implement the audit recommendations, as required by Special Act 97-4. A steering committee was established in 1998 to serve as the main oversight body of the operational audit implementation process.

The audit steering committee is also systematically addressing and prioritizing the recommendations and has made steady progress at implementing the recommendations. A full listing of the recommendations and their current status is provided in the appendices. The program review committee found, however, that the full board of trustees does not receive regular updates regarding implementation of the operational audit recommendations.

Hartford Improvement Plan. Special Act 97-4 requires the state board of trustees to continue implementing a series of 48 recommendations developed by the state Department of Education and adopted by the previous Hartford Board of Education in 1996. The recommendations, termed the Hartford Improvement Plan, are aimed at improving the academic and administrative operations of the Hartford public school district.

Although Special Act 97-4 specifically requires the board of trustees to implement the Hartford Improvement Plan, the program review committee found no full status report showing implementation progress of the plan has been produced since June 1998. Beginning in late 1998, the original recommendations contained in the Hartford Improvement Plan were integrated into a broader planning document outlining the board's annual goals and objectives. Further, the structure originally designed to monitor the implementation of the recommendations in the Hartford Improvement Plan now focuses on the board's broader goals and objectives, in addition to those contained in the improvement plan.

The program review committee also found the state education commissioner and Department of Education (SDE) staff, including the state monitors, meet monthly with the superintendent and his staff to discuss progress on various topics, including the Hartford Improvement Plan. Such meetings help serve to monitor the implementation progress, but lack the full documentation necessary to evaluate the requirements of Special Act 97-4 regarding the Hartford Improvement Plan.

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Accreditation. The state board of trustees is required by Special Act 97-4 to ensure all elementary and middle schools within the Hartford school system become accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). The board's progress in this area was examined from several different perspectives. First, the committee wanted to know if an overall plan was in place to have the district's 29 individual elementary and middle schools complete the accreditation process. Second, since the accreditation process is new to the district's elementary and middle schools, the committee was interested in how school personnel were being helped with technical assistance and other necessary resources so they know how to approach accreditation. Third, the committee was interested in how the board of trustees was monitoring progress of the accreditation requirement of Special Act 97-4.

The committee found the board of trustees began addressing the accreditation process of elementary and middle schools in accordance with Special Act 97-4 late last year. Progress and planning have been made on an incremental basis, with six schools undergoing initial work beginning in late 1998.

A new coordinator has recently been selected by the district's new superintendent to oversee the accreditation process and is finalizing a schedule for the remaining schools to begin the accreditation process. Although a schedule has been presented to the board for additional schools to begin the accreditation process, no comprehensive strategy or action plan exists for all components of the process, including resources, technical assistance, and budget implications.

Parental involvement. Special Act 97-4 calls for the board of trustees to provide a mechanism for parent, teacher, and community involvement in the schools. To date, no single mechanism exists. Rather, the overall system supports various ways for parents, teachers, and the community to become involved in their schools.

The program review committee believes the issues before the board of trustees in this area are whether a formal parental involvement policy exists, if the proper structure is in place to fulfill the policy, and if regular oversight is provided to ensure the policy is implemented in its intended manner. The committee found the board has an established parental involvement policy. In general, the policy requires the district to make its schools "open and inviting" to parents and the Hartford community. The policy further states a partnership among parents, students, the community, and school employees on behalf of children should exist. Each school should also have an active organization for fostering parent/community involvement.

The school district has been developing various ways to involve parents, teachers, and the community in schools. For example, more parent/teacher organizations are being established within schools, increased contact between parents and teachers through more conferences and open houses is now part of the new teachers' collective bargaining agreement, and increased training for parents is taking place. The district is also involved in partnerships with a variety of

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community groups to increase the involvement of parents in the school system. Overall, the committee found the district is currently revising the structure used to implement the board's goals and objectives regarding parental involvement as a result of the new superintendent hired in April 1999.

Advisory Council. A seven-member advisory council was established in early 1998. The council, required by Special Act 97-4 and composed of two parents with children in the school system, two teachers, two principals, and a representative from higher education, is responsible for advising the board of trustees and superintendent on matters regarding curriculum, student achievement, parental and community involvement, and school safety and discipline. The special act does not provide for the appointment of a chairperson.

The council seems to serve its advisory role. For example, it assisted the trustees during its search for a new permanent superintendent and participated in developing various policies ultimately adopted by the board, including the social promotion, parental involvement, and extended day/year policies. Further, the program review committee was informed that the council holds regular meetings, which are usually attended by most council members as well as the trustees and district administration.

The committee found, however, the role of the council may have diminished somewhat now that its work on board policies and the superintendent search have concluded. For example, the advisory council's meetings are not conducted in a completely organized manner, were informal, and lacked focus.

State monitors. Two full-time equivalent state monitor positions were established within the Department of Education in August 1997, in accordance with Special Act 97-4. The monitors are to assess the progress made by the board of trustees along with the needs of the school district. The monitors must also consult with the board and superintendent. The special act further requires the monitors to continue their duties for one year following the conclusion of the board's term currently set for June 30, 2002.

The program review committee's overall observations of the state monitors and the monitoring process are positive. The monitors are diligent in their efforts to document progress made on a quarterly basis by the board of trustees and Hartford public school system. The monitors also add a level of accountability through their presence and quarterly reporting process. The quarterly reports required by Special Act 97-4 document the school system's progress from a qualitative and quantitative perspective. The monthly written reports, however, are not prepared, but this does not seem to pose any problems. No annual report is prepared through the monitor process for providing a cumulative analysis of the board's yearly progress.

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Administrative Operations

A major goal of the State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools has been to develop efficient and effective operating systems for the overall administration and management of the school district in accordance with Special Act 97-4. The systems inherited by the board were not functioning in their intended manner. The basic functions of financial management, purchasing, human resources, facilities, and technology all had problems or deficiencies to varying degrees impeding the overall operation of the school district.

The program review committee believes important steps have been taken under the direction of the board of trustees to develop legitimate operating systems. The progress to date has been the development of organized and more efficient administrative systems, settlement of the district's 12 collective bargaining contracts, development of a long range facilities plan, and capital improvements to facilities. On the academic side, standardized programs are being implemented districtwide, primarily under the board's new permanent superintendent. As such, the board of trustees has directed and overseen the development of the school district's basic "infrastructure," both operationally and academically.

Financial management. The program review committee found a new financial management structure has been developed under the board of trustees. The school district's financial management and budget areas are now stabilized, no deficit was incurred this year, and the vast majority of outstanding balances from past years have been paid.

The yearly budget process was reorganized for the current school year with a written budget manual and guidelines prepared and distributed to schools. The purchasing process has also been restructured to include instructional supplies delivered by the vendor to each school, by teacher, twice per year; the delivery rate for instructional supplies delivered in mid-August for 1999-00 school year was close to 97 percent.

The committee found, however, written procedures still need to be developed for the entire financial management area. Further, the automated financial management system purchased almost three years ago is not fully operational; the system is being implemented by an outside consultant with no internal resources identified to sustain it once implemented.

Facilities. On-site visits by committee staff to 10 randomly selected schools revealed the schools to be clean, although some schools showed signs of wear. The long range facilities plan -- required by Special Act 97-4 -- is completed in draft form and a process is in place to finalize the plan. The committee found that implementation planning is required once the facilities plan is finalized.

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In terms of maintenance, school custodians have daily schedules, although the district lacks an overall preventative maintenance schedule/plan. An independent consultant's report on preventative maintenance is included as part of the long range facilities plan. A new administrator was also hired in mid-November to oversee the buildings and grounds operation and a new automated work order system for routine repairs and maintenance, purchased through the Operational Audit Steering Committee, was implemented in mid-November with staff training scheduled.

A natural outgrowth of the long-range facilities plan is for the board to examine the overall student populations within each school and determine if redistricting is necessary. The board of trustees approved a temporary redistricting plan in June, but it is only good through the 1999-00 school year. The committee believes additional analysis is needed to determine whether a new plan is necessary, particularly after the draft long-range facilities plan is finalized.

Human resources. When the trustees began operation of the Hartford school system in mid-1997, only two of the twelve bargaining units actually had current contracts in place—the teacher and the principal units. The other units were operating under contracts that had expired, in most cases a year earlier. The board of trustees has remedied this problem, and all the contracts are current. Further, in late 1997, most district job descriptions were outdated or nonexistent. This caused problems with job postings conflicting with outdated job descriptions. Through a major effort on part of the district, 226 new job titles were either approved or in the reworking process as of October 1999.

C.G.S. Section 10-151b requires teacher evaluations be conducted in accordance with guidelines established by the State Board of Education. At present, most Hartford teachers are evaluated with an assessment tool in use since 1988. The evaluation instrument, however, is being revised to reflect recent changes in state guidelines.

Steps are underway to develop and implement an effective personnel evaluation system for teachers, including attempts to actually pilot a new system at selected schools. In the last eight months, the Human Resources department has taken the lead for revamping teacher evaluations. There is a committee composed of five administrators and teachers, working under the direction of a human resource manager. The current expectation is to present the new evaluation method to the board of trustees next spring, with a three-year implementation plan. Work is also being done on the evaluation processes for non-teacher employees.

Technology. The overall level of technology within the school district is increasing under the board of trustees, both instructionally and administratively. The board also adopted a technology plan in early 1998. The plan's implementation is overseen by a technology committee composed of district, private, university, and non-profit representatives. The program review committee found, however, the technology committee has lacked overall direction from the school district this year, primarily due to the recent change in administrations. The school

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district's new executive director for technology began chairing the technology committee in October 1999 with a focus on reestablishing the committee's purpose. Regular reporting to the board of trustees on the overall implementation status of the technology plan, however, is lacking. The current plan is in place until 2001, meaning the board should determine if any revisions to the plan are necessary upon the plan's expiration.

System Oversight

The board of trustees has revamped its entire policies and administrative manual, with a final version nearly completed. A revised set of bylaws governing the board's conduct has also been adopted. The board's policies manual and operating bylaws were reviewed and found to be clearly written and comprehensive.

It is evident from the information and analysis presented throughout this report that the board of trustees has primarily focused its efforts on developing and implementing structures and controls to guide the school district's administrative operations -- as required by Special Act 97-4. Now that such changes have been established, the board must focus on ensuring the proper systems and processes are being developed to implement its various policies and regulations. This effort becomes further warranted given the board's revamped policies and regulations are near completion and a permanent superintendent was hired by the board in April 1999 to carry out those policies.

Structures and procedures to implement the board's policies in areas such as social promotion, parental involvement, attendance, and extended day/year are either being developed or revised by the current superintendent. As such, it is important for the board to receive regular updates on how well its policies are being implemented.

The legislative program review committee believes more formal reporting back to the board needs to occur to help ensure proper oversight of the implementation progress. One of the main ways to oversee policy implementation is through a standardized reporting process, which the board does not seem to have except for the monthly financial reports presented at each board meeting and general reports made by the superintendent. The board collects its information through a variety of mechanisms, including regular board meetings and informational meetings. Informational meetings are used by the board (and the general public) as the primary way to receive information from the administration on specific topics or policy areas. Although informational meetings serve a valuable purpose, they are ad hoc in nature and cannot feasibly cover the board's numerous policies and regulations. For this reason, the committee believes a more formal and standardized reporting structure is necessary.

The board is aware more formal and frequent reporting is needed. The overall improvement of the district's management information system is being examined as a means of increasing the flow of information to the board. As part of this effort, the operational audit

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steering committee is working on developing and increasing the internal reporting capacity of the school district as its various automated systems become more developed.

Another way for the board to ensure proper implementation and oversight of its policies is through a formal performance evaluation of the superintendent. The evaluation is the primary mechanism used to determine how well the board’s policies are being implemented and provides built-in accountability to the system. The superintendent’s contract calls for an annual performance evaluation to occur before the end of each year of the contract, which runs from April 1, 1999, through March 31, 2002.

The board has also established a formal set of roles and responsibilities for the superintendent, which are included in the superintendent’s contract. These standardized roles and responsibilities, along with the board’s newly revised policies manual and annual goals and objectives, should enhance system oversight and the evaluation of the superintendent’s yearly performance.

Sustainability. The program review committee expressed interest at its public hearings on this topic about ways to ensure changes made under the board of trustees are sustained in the future, independent of a particular board of education or superintendent. The table below offers some ways to continue the district’s progress. Several of the initiatives were originally contained in Special Act 97-4 and could be continued through legislation, while others would be administrative changes not necessarily needing legislation. The factors highlighted in the table are not exhaustive; rather they offer some of the various ways to maintain positive changes occurring within the school district. No recommendation about any of these possibilities is made. It is important to note, though, that the city of Hartford is currently engaged in a charter revision review that could significantly change the framework within which these and other options would operate.

Hartford Public Schools: Positive Change Sustainability Factors		
Factor	Pros	Cons
Legislative Options		
Continue collective bargaining provision of Special Act 97-4; gives board direct access to union membership and changes arbitration criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses negotiation efforts on best interests of children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible opposition from unions and/or management
Require frequent long range facilities plan updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires district to review facilities status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource intensive
Require second full-scale opera-		

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<p>tional audit after board's term to determine efficiency/effectiveness of changes made under trustees</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies efficiencies after systems fully established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personnel and fiscal resources to conduct study and implement recs.
<p>Continue advisory council</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides small forum for board, supt., constituencies to discuss issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members needed Undefined role
<p>Continue state involvement through monitor process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitors serve as outside check on district's progress Help ensure accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources necessary Local opposition possible
<p>Require schools to complete and maintain NEASC accreditation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures schools meet regionally-accepted standards Standardization across district 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource-intensive and time consuming process Master plan needed
<p>Require sunset provision on various legislative changes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reasserts local control after specified time period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local opposition possible to extend-ing state involvement/treating Htfd. differently
<p>Administrative/Municipal Options</p>		
<p>Require formal training for new board members</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assists members with role, responsibilities, and board operations prior to term Available from various sources (CABE, SDE, United Way) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board members <i>may</i> not participate if training is voluntary
<p>District to regularly disclose financial info (e.g., monthly status reports, annual audit results)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows full broad review and analysis of financial data Information already available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None foreseen
<p>Periodic update of board policies and procedures by board</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires board to regularly review its policies Ensures current policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None foreseen
<p>Continue to seek technical assistance from SDE/others</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows district to use state and other as resource 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local opposition possible
<p>School District Governance</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change way school board selected in Hartford Board appointed by mayor, city council, or jointly Board appointed by independent panel Other 	<p>See Appendix I for comments from Hartford Board of Trustees chairman and Connecticut Assoc. of Boards of Education</p>	
<p>Source: Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee</p>		

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RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Each member of the State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools should begin receiving a copy of the monthly status reports distributed to the audit steering committee. The board should hold at least semi-annual informational meetings devoted to providing the board and general public with a full progress report on the implementation status efforts of the operational audit required by Special Act 97-4.
2. The board of trustees, through the superintendent, and the state education department should determine which of original 48 recommendations contained in the Hartford Improvement Plan have been satisfactorily implemented, which recommendations are still relevant, and then prioritize those recommendations for implementation purposes. Specific indicators, such as timeframes for implementation, should be established for the recommendations as part of the prioritization process. Consideration should be given to the costs associated with implementation and how the recommendations align with the district's overall academic and operational goals and strategy.
3. Beginning in March 2000, and quarterly thereafter, the State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools should be provided with the implementation status of the recommendations contained in the Hartford Improvement Plan. The update should include, but not be limited to, a listing of recommendations and whether they have been fully or partially implemented, or if no progress has been made.
4. The board of trustees should ensure a comprehensive written strategy, including an action plan, is developed for the accreditation of all the district's elementary and middle schools in accordance with Special Act 97-4. The strategy and action plan should be developed in conjunction with the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, the state Department of Education, and any other resources identified by the board. Included in the comprehensive strategy should be a timetable for the accreditation of all schools, financial and staff resources projected to complete the accreditation process, and a plan for professional development and technical assistance for schools.
5. The board of trustees should ensure coordination of the various parental, community, and school involvement approaches being implemented throughout the district. Through its oversight role, the board also needs to ensure the district's performance regarding parental involvement is measured against the parental involvement standards adopted by the board in its original policy.
6. The advisory council, created by Special Act 97-4, should reestablish its role and the various representatives on the council need to develop and coordinate a clear agenda of

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major issue areas. Direction should come from the superintendent and trustees during this process, although the parent, teacher, and principal representatives should meet separately on occasion to develop their collective strategy on improving the council's role/process and developing its agenda.

7. An Advisory Council chairperson should be appointed by the chairman of the board of trustees. The council, through its chairperson, should incorporate more organization into its regular meetings. This should at least include developing a working agenda for every meeting, taking minutes of meetings, making written requests for specific information to the superintendent, and ensuring responses from the administration to such requests are made at the council's following meeting.
8. The state monitors should begin developing an annual report as part of its regular fourth quarter reports. The annual report should detail the board's cumulative progress in meeting its stated goals and objectives and implementation of its specified policies and procedures over the course of the previous year. The distribution of the annual reports shall be the same as its other quarterly reports.
9. The board of trustees should ensure all financial management processes and procedures are formally documented in a written manual(s) for use by school and central office personnel.
10. The board of trustees should ensure the school district develops the internal capacity to take ownership of the automated financial management project upon its full implementation. At minimum, this should include: assigning a project manager/team to oversee the system; providing necessary resources for continued project development and support; and providing staff training as needed.
11. The board of trustees should devise short- and long-term implementation strategies in conjunction with city to implement the 10-year facilities plan upon its completion. Using the facilities plan, the board should also analyze whether redistricting for the city's public schools is necessary and develop a plan to ensure students attend properly sized facilities.
12. Periodic updates should be given to the board of trustees regarding the status of the board's technology plan, including how the district's current initiatives are linked with the plan. The board of trustees should also determine whether revisions to the current technology plan are necessary, and update/revise the plan before the plan's expiration in 2001.
13. The board of trustees should require formal periodic reports on the development and implementation of the personnel performance evaluation instrument.

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14. The board of trustees should develop a standardized reporting mechanism for oversight purposes. At minimum, the board should enhance its oversight role by establishing a quarterly calendar of specific reports submitted by the superintendent regarding implementation progress of the board's various policies and the district's academic programs. The board should also develop a cumulative annual report for the school district outlining the district's yearly progress and successes.

State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools

On June 1, 1997, the state formally took control of the Hartford Public School system. The Hartford Board of Education was dissolved and replaced with a seven-member board of trustees appointed by the state. The board of trustees was established by Special Act 97-4, and is responsible for overseeing the district's administrative and managerial operations.

The board's primary function pursuant to Special Act 97-4 is to enhance the quality, adequacy, and equality of educational opportunities, increase student achievement, and allocate and manage resources efficiently and effectively. The board is also required by statute to continue implementing an educational improvement plan developed by the state Department of Education and adopted by the Hartford School Board in 1996, as well as recommendations resulting from a 1997 independent audit of the school system's administrative operations.

The State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools is responsible for managing the school system from June 1, 1997, through June 30, 2002 (including its recent extension). The board is responsible for the overall management, administration, and governance of Hartford's 32 public schools, plus eight alternative education programs, serving 24,000 students making Hartford the largest school district in the state. The district's 1999-00 general operating costs are approximately \$192 million, not including an additional \$50 million in special funds (federal, foundations, etc.) and \$35 million from the city to account for indirect/fringe benefit costs. Special Act 97-4 also requires the board of trustees to continue implementing an educational improvement plan developed by the state Department of Education and adopted by the previous Hartford School Board in 1996, as well as recommendations resulting from the 1997 operational audit.

The Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee authorized this study of the State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools in March 1999. The study focuses on the progress made by the board of trustees, state Department of Education, and the State Board of Education in implementing their statutory charges to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the school system's administrative and managerial operations. The board's progress in developing and implementing sustainable operating systems was also examined. The study scope primarily calls for reviewing:

- the board's compliance with requirements outlined in Special Act 97-4 regarding planning, reporting, and communications;
- the development and implementation of efficient and effective administrative operating systems;
- progress in addressing and implementing recommendations made in the independent operations audit of the school system required by Special Act 97-4; and
- implementation of the improvement plan developed between the state Department of Education and the Hartford Board of Education in 1996, including efforts to develop programs, procedures, and benchmarks to improve student performance and measure achievement.

An evaluation of education system outcomes since the takeover by the board of trustees, namely whether or not the board has increased student achievement, is not included in this study.

Methods

In preparing this report, the policies and procedures developed by the board and administration were analyzed, the board's progress in implementing its policies was examined, and interviews with numerous people and groups involved in the Hartford school system were conducted, including each trustee, central office administrators and staff, school personnel, union officials, the state monitors, fiscal and operations consultants, parent and community groups, the state education commissioner, and the state education board chairman.

Minutes from each board meeting were reviewed, as were the quarterly progress reports submitted to the board by state monitors established by Special Act 97-4 to oversee the board's progress. The monitors provided the committee with pertinent information, and committee staff accompanied them on visits to 16 schools within the district, summer programs, and a special education facility. Formal visits by staff were also made to a random sample of 10 elementary, middle, and high schools as part of a facilities review.

Committee staff attended numerous meetings held by the board, education commissioner and superintendent, advisory council, operational audit steering committee, joint board/city building and facilities committee, and State Board of Education. Training sessions for academic programs held by the district were attended, and testimony from two public hearings held by the program review committee on this topic was also examined.

Report Organization

The report is divided into five chapters. Chapter I provides an overview of the State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools. The board's membership, administrative structure, term, and duties, responsibilities, and activities are described in this chapter. Chapter II summarizes the major policies enacted by the board of trustees to increase student achievement, and the major academic programs developed by the school district since the state takeover.

Chapter III discusses in detail the board's specific responsibilities relating to Special Act 97-4 and includes findings and recommendations. Chapter IV provides analysis, findings, and recommendations regarding the board's progress in developing efficient and effective administrative operations. Finally, Chapter V summarizes several ways to sustain the positive changes made by the State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools.

Extension. It should be noted that Special Act 97-4 provided the board of trustees with an opportunity to request a two-year extension to its term. The legislation specified the request could be made if the board determined more time was necessary to fulfill its statutory requirements. The request, if made, was due to the State Board of Education by January 1, 2000. The State Board of Education serves as the formal decision-making body if a request is made.

Deciding more time was necessary to complete its work, the trustees formally requested a term extension this past September. On October 6, 1999, the extension was unanimously approved by the State Board of Education. The extension allows the board of trustees to continue its governance of the Hartford school district until June 30, 2002.

Appendices. The report includes the following appendices:

- A. State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools: Membership
- B. Advisory Council Membership
- C. Board Term Extension Memo; State Board of Education Resolution
- D. Operational Audit Recommendations and Status
- E. Hartford Improvement Plan
- F. 1999-00 Actions Document
- G. New England Association of Schools and Colleges Accreditation Standards
- H. Hartford School District Budget Information
- I. BOT/CABE Comments Regarding Charter Revision in Hartford

Agency Response

It is the policy of the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee to provide agencies subject to a study with an opportunity to review and comment on the recommendations prior to publication of the final report. The responses from the State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools and the state Department of Education are provided in Appendix J.



State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools: Overview

In April 1997, the state legislature passed Special Act 97-4 declaring the Hartford school district was in a state of crisis. The act found the continued existence of the crisis was detrimental to Hartford's children and in conflict with the educational interests of the state. Resolution of the crisis was considered a matter of paramount public interest. The district's educational performance was low, a privatization effort recently failed, and there was persistent turnover at the superintendent level, all factors precipitating state intervention.

As a way of dealing with the problems facing the district, the legislature dissolved the local Hartford school board for a period of at least 37 months beginning June 1, 1997. In its place, a newly created State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools became responsible for the governance, management, and fiscal operations of the Hartford public school system. The trustees became the district's board of education with all the duties, rights, and responsibilities designated to such boards under state law.

Board Membership

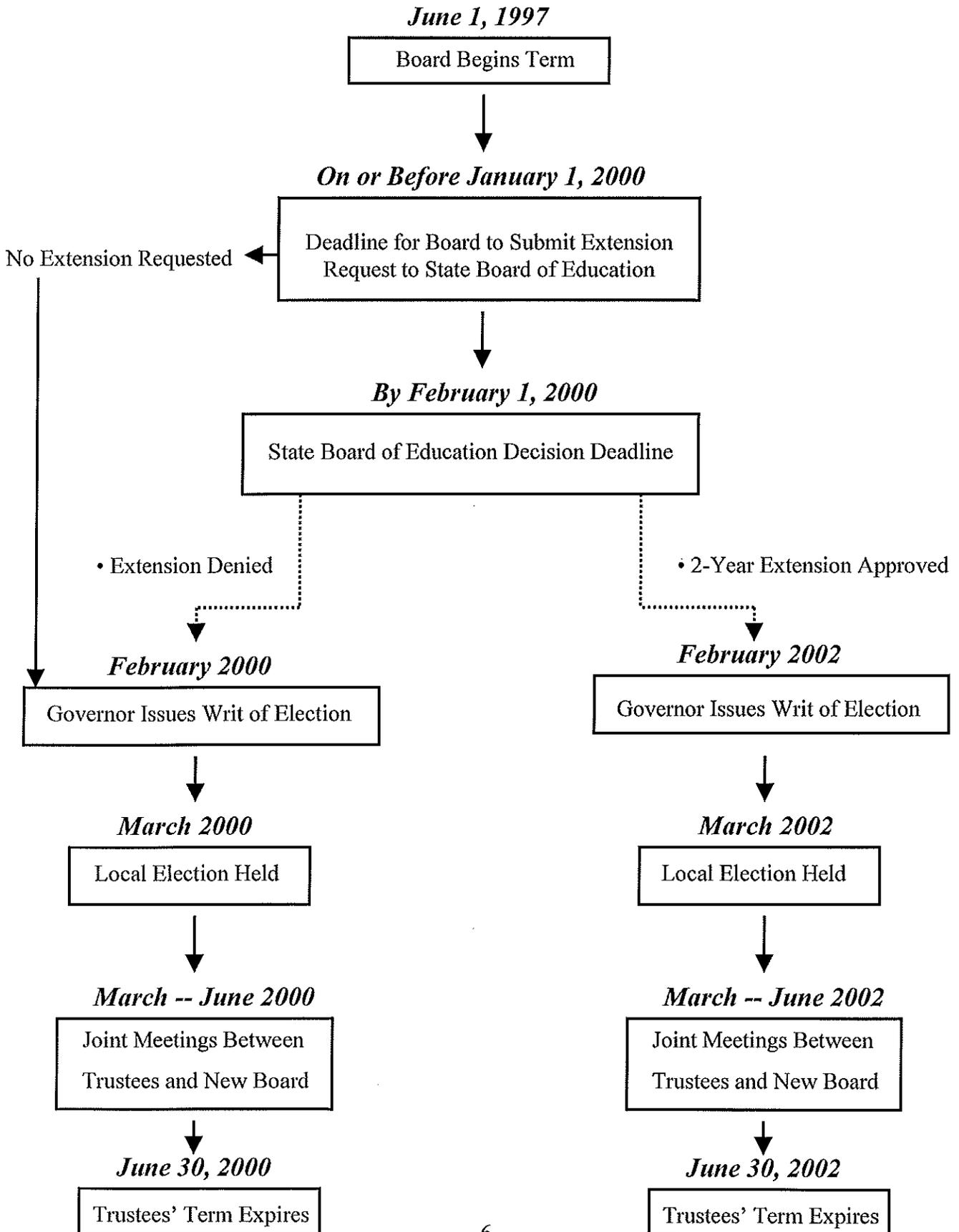
The State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools is required by law to have up to seven members appointed jointly by the governor and legislative leaders. The mayor of Hartford also serves on the board as an ex-officio, nonvoting member. The board's chairperson is designated by the governor. Six trustees currently serve on the board, and a membership list is provided in Appendix A.

The appointed board members must include representatives of racial and ethnic minorities and persons with expertise in the fields of education and financial matters. No board member is permitted to be a relative of any Hartford school district employee.

Term

Figure I-1 sets out selected key dates relating to the term of the State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools. The board is solely responsible for the management of the school system from June 1, 1997, through June 30, 2000. On or before January 1, 2000, the trustees may request a two-year extension. The final decision regarding the extension rests with the Connecticut State Board of Education. As mentioned earlier, however, the board of trustees received a term extension.

Figure I-1. State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools: Key Dates



Extension criteria. Special Act 97-4 outlines several factors for extending the board's term. Included in the State Board of Education's decision making criteria are whether: 1) additional time is needed by the trustees to improve student achievement, and 2) the trustees have had sufficient time to address both the Hartford Improvement Plan (described in full later) and the findings and recommendations of a fiscal and operational audit required by Special Act 97-4. If the trustees seek an extension, which was the case, the State Board of Education is required to act on the request by February 1, 2000. In fact, the state education board granted the extension in October 1999, allowing the trustees to continue managing the Hartford public school system through June 30, 2002.

Process upon board expiration. As shown in Figure I-1, Special Act 97-4 outlines a process to transfer governance of the school system once the board of trustees' term expires. Since the board's extension request has already been granted, in January 2002, the governor is required to issue a writ of election to the Hartford city clerk ordering an election for new school board members on a specified date in March 2002. Candidates are to be nominated and elected in accordance with the city charter.

Following the election, new school board members are scheduled to take office July 1, 2002. Special Act 97-4 specifies that terms of six elected members will expire on the Monday immediately preceding the first Tuesday in December 2003, while the terms of three members will expire the Monday immediately preceding the first Tuesday in December 2005. In other words, six new members will serve 17-month terms once elected and three will serve for 41 months.

During the period from the election of a new school board until it officially takes control, joint meetings are required with the out-going state board of trustees. The purpose of the meetings is to provide a transition from the trustees to the new school board. Further, as discussed later in the report, the state monitors assigned in accordance with Special Act 97-4 to oversee the board of trustees must continue their oversight role under the newly elected board of education for one year.

Duties and Responsibilities

The State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools has various duties and responsibilities required by Special Act 97-4. The board is primarily responsible for the governance, management, and fiscal operations of the school district *all in order to*: 1) increase student achievement; 2) enhance the quality, adequacy, and equality of educational opportunities; and 3) allocate and manage resources efficiently and effectively. The board of trustees also has all the duties and responsibilities state law provides to local boards of education. For example, all contracts and agreements – including collective bargaining agreements – made in the name of the former Hartford Board of Education are now assigned to the state board of trustees.

Specific responsibilities of the board also include:

- all aspects of school district governance and management, including delegating any such authority to the district's superintendent;
- developing a budget for the district;
- continuing to implement the Hartford Improvement Plan;
- requesting the SDE commissioner to waive any provision of the statutes or regulation under the department's jurisdiction regarding the development of innovative programs for educational improvement the board determines may assist it in improving the district; and
- providing a mechanism for parent, teacher, and community involvement in the schools.

Advisory council. Special Act 97-4 requires the State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools and the superintendent of schools to appoint a seven-member advisory council. The council must consist of parents, classroom teachers, school principals, and a representative from an institution of higher education. Full council membership is provided in Appendix B.

The advisory council was established with a full complement of members in February 1998. It holds formal meetings prior to the monthly board of trustees meetings to discuss its agenda. The superintendent attends the meetings as do various board members.

The purpose of the council is to advise the trustees and superintendent on matters relating to curriculum, student achievement, parental and community involvement, and school safety and discipline. The council terminates upon the expiration of the board of trustees, and its responsibilities are transferred to the district's newly elected local board of education.

Financial and operational audit. The board of trustees, in consultation with the state education commissioner, was required by Special Act 97-4 to contract for a fiscal and operational audit of the Hartford public school system. The audit had to be conducted by a certified public accounting firm, paid for by the city, and completed by January 1, 1998. The board is required to develop a plan to address the audit findings and implement its recommendations. A summary of the audit is provided later in the report.

Accreditation. Another directive spelled out in Special Act 97-4 requires the board to ensure all elementary and middle schools within the Hartford public school district become accredited. Currently, six elementary schools plus the three high schools are undergoing accreditation. The accrediting agency is the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.

Long-term building program. The board of trustees is required to develop a long-term school building program for the district. The program must be developed in consultation with the state education commissioner and expedited by the board and city.

Collective bargaining. With the passage of Special Act 97-4, the State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools took over the administration of 12 different collective bargaining agreements. Two of the contracts, covering teachers and principals/supervisors, fall under the requirements of the Teacher Negotiation Act (TNA), while the remaining 10 are covered by the Municipal Employee Relations Act (MERA). Both acts set out procedures by which public employee contracts are to be resolved. The teachers' act imposes strict deadlines tied to the municipal budget process, while MERA's timeframes are more flexible. Both provide for binding arbitration.

Among the employee groups under MERA are: buildings and grounds supervisors; custodians; paraprofessionals; health professionals; and school secretaries. Table I-1 identifies each unit and its membership size.

Table I-1. Hartford School System Bargaining Units and Membership	
Bargaining Unit	Number of Members
Hartford Federation of Teachers (Local No. 1018, AFT, AFL-CIO)	1,918
Hartford Principals' and Supervisors' Association	114
Hartford Federation of Paraprofessionals	491
Health Professionals (Local 1018A/B)	61
Hartford Federation of School Secretaries (Local 1018C)	180
Special Officers (Corridor Supervisors) (Local 1018D)	60
Substitute Teachers (Local 1018E)	144*
Buildings and Grounds Supervisors (Local 818 of Council 4 AFSCME)	8
Hartford Educational Support Personnel	67
Hartford School Support Supervisors' Association, Local 78, AFSA, AFL-CIO	27
Local 566 AFSCME (Custodians)	357
Local 3534 HFTSP (Technical Support Personnel)	2
TOTAL	3,429
*There are more substitute teachers used by the district, but only these meet the standard volume of days required for access to the bargaining unit.	
Source of data: Hartford School District (as of August 31, 1999)	

Special Act 97-4 gives the trustees special powers with respect to the collective bargaining process under both TNA and MERA. First, the act provides the trustees with direct access to the whole membership of a bargaining unit if attempts to reopen and renegotiate a contract with union representatives fail. This is not an option under either TNA or MERA. Second, the act alters certain provisions of the arbitration process for any contracts that reach the arbitration stage.

With respect to reopening contracts already in place, if the union representative agrees with the board's request to renegotiate current contract issues, the parties have up to 28 days to attempt such negotiations. If agreement is reached, the process moves to the normal employee ratification phase. However, if the board and the union representatives fail to agree, the board's last best offer is submitted to the bargaining unit membership for a final vote.

Alternatively, if the union representative denies the initial request to renegotiate, the State Board of Labor Relations is required to convene a meeting of the bargaining unit membership. The board then may present its proposed revision directly to all the affected employees for their vote, which is final.

As mentioned, the act alters the process for any negotiations that end in arbitration. Specifically:

- the arbitrators may make no presumption in favor of: 1) retaining contract provisions agreed to by the local Hartford Board of Education and the unions in previous negotiations or awarded by arbitrators in prior arbitration proceedings; or 2) continuing past employment practices of the local Hartford Board of Education (*Current law directs arbitrators to consider previous negotiations between the parties and existing conditions of employment*);
- the arbitrators must give the highest priority to the educational interests of the state, as those interests relate to Hartford's children, in arriving at their decisions and are to consider other factors in light of such educational interests (*Current law directs arbitrators to consider several factors in making their decisions, but under both TNA and MERA, arbitrators must give priority to the financial capability of the affected municipality in their decisions*);
- the arbitrators are not limited to the last best offers of the parties on the issues in dispute (*Under both TNA and MERA, the arbitrators must choose the last best offer of a party, and cannot fashion a third, independent solution*); and
- the arbitration decision is not subject to rejection by the Hartford city council (*Under both TNA and MERA, the local legislative body may reject the arbitration decision by a two-thirds vote, sending the issues back to one more, final arbitration*).

Use of provisions. When the trustees took over operation of the Hartford school system in 1997, only two of the twelve bargaining units actually had current contracts in place—the teacher and the principal units. The other units were operating under contracts that had expired, in most cases a year earlier. The Office of Attorney General issued an opinion stating contracts that expired before Special Act 97-4 was enacted were not subject to the special collective bargaining provisions. According to district personnel, this did not prove to be a bar to negotiating those contracts in the spirit of the special act.

With respect to the teachers’ and principals’ contracts, participants in the process believe that the very presence of the special act provisions aided in the negotiations. Specifically, a salary reopener for the last year of the teachers contract that expired in June 1999 went to arbitration under the special provisions, and the arbitrator awarded no salary increase.

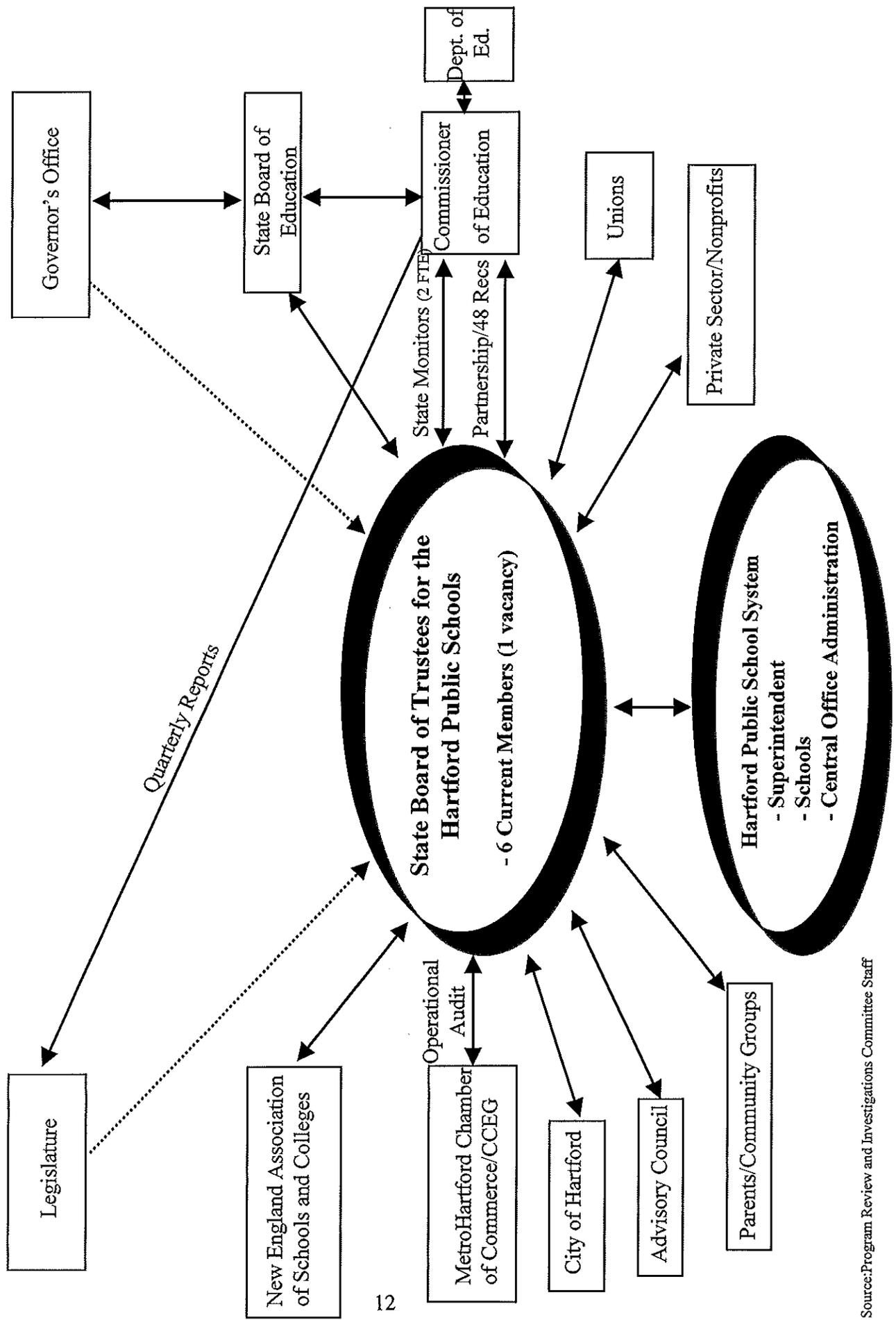
Administrative Structure and Board Activities

Figure I-2 illustrates the overall administrative and operational structure of the board of trustees. The board interacts with numerous constituencies, each providing input to assist the board in managing the district’s affairs. The trustees have links with state and local agencies, private sector companies, and non-profit groups. Although the diagram focuses on the board, these constituencies also interact with the superintendent and school system on a regular basis.

Table I-2 shows the board’s meeting activity since June 1997. The board conducts its normal business at “regular” monthly meetings held throughout the year at various schools in the district. There is a specific agenda for each meeting, and formal votes are taken. The board is required to maintain a formal record of its proceedings, including attendance and votes cast by members.

Table I-2. State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools: Meeting Activities: June 1997 through July 1999			
	Regular Meetings	Special Meetings	Informational Meetings
Number of Meetings	29	14	6
Avg. Attendance	6.4 (7 members)	6.3	No mtgs w/ 7 members
	5.7 (6 members)	5.8	5.3
Avg. Meeting Length	2 hrs. 54 min.	1 hr. 6 min.	2 hrs. 19 min.
Note: Board membership from 6/97 to 5/98 was seven members. Membership from 6/98 to present is six members.			
Source of data: State Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes			

Figure I-2. State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools: Operational Structure



Additional meetings are also called by the board to discuss particular topic areas. "Special" meetings are used by the board for matters needing board attention, but not warranting a full board meeting (i.e., action on grant applications or collective bargaining agreements.) The board also holds meetings for "informational" purposes, allowing the board to obtain information on specific topics, such as program or operational initiatives. No voting is done at informational meetings.

Analysis of the board's minutes revealed the trustees have met at least once a month since taking control in June 1997. As Table I-2 shows, meeting attendance on part of the trustees is also very high. From June 1997 to May 1998, when the board had seven members, attendance at the regular meetings averaged 6.4 members. Attendance at meetings since the board's membership was six averaged 5.7 members. The board experienced similarly high attendance rates for its special and informational meetings as well.

The typical agenda for regular meetings held by the trustees covers a wide variety of topics relating to the operation and administration of the school system. A public comment period and reports from students are standard agenda items for regular meetings. Overall, as the table shows, regular meetings average almost 3 hours, informational meetings just under 2 ½ hours, and special meetings roughly an hour.

Executive sessions are held before each regular board meeting and, on several occasions, before special and informational meetings. The trustees use the sessions to discuss personnel and legal matters. On average, executive sessions last between 1 and 2 hours.

Work of the board is primarily completed using a "committee of the whole" process. There are times, however, when specific board members serve on committees for particular subject matters (e.g., labor relations/collective bargaining, building, and audit implementation.) The board also uses outside resources on an as-needed basis to help facilitate its business.

State Monitors

Special Act 97-4 specifically calls for the creation of two state monitor positions for the Hartford public schools. The monitors are chosen by the state education commissioner and report directly to him. Currently, there are three persons serving as state monitors -- one full-time, and two half-time. One monitor was a former interim commissioner of the education department, one is an education consultant within the department, and one was involved in education issues at the community level.

According to the special act, the monitors' main function is to consult with and assist the State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools and the superintendent in assessing the progress and needs of the school district. The act also requires the monitors to secure outside assistance from corporations and universities in helping fulfill the district's needs. The monitors are required to meet regularly with the commissioner and superintendent to review the district's progress and needs. Monthly follow-up reports are to be prepared by the monitors for the SDE commissioner and State Board of Education, with copies also sent to the board of trustees. The

reports are to note any additional assistance required by the school district. In practice, the monthly meetings occur, although monthly written reports are not produced.

Quarterly Progress Reports on the Hartford Public Schools. Beginning October 1, 1997, the state education commissioner and the State Board of Education are required to send quarterly reports to the governor and the legislature's education committee. The special act requires the reports to address the operations of the Hartford school district and progress made under the management of the board of trustees. Quarterly reports are required until the school district is again under the direction of a local board of education.

The quarterly reports are developed by the state monitors, with final distribution by the commissioner. The reports are detailed and include information on student achievement, school visits, operation of the school system, and the district's progress toward fulfilling specific recommendations outlined in the "Hartford Improvement Plan", a joint effort between school district and the state education department described in the next section.

School visits. As part of their oversight duties, the state monitors have conducted three rounds of visits to each school within the Hartford school district. The first round of visits, started in late 1997, focused on general observations, the overall physical condition of the schools, and discussions with school staff. Inspections were made of buildings, classrooms, bathrooms, and grounds during the visits to obtain a baseline overview of the schools. A facility specialist from the state Department of Education accompanied the monitors on the physical plant inspections. The monitors detailed their findings in the March 1998 quarterly report.

A second round of visits was conducted during the summer of 1998 and at the start of the 1998-99 school year. The visits concentrated on recent improvements made at individual schools since the monitors' last visit, progress made in fulfilling various goals adopted by the board of trustees, and facility improvements. The third round of school visits was made by the monitors during the first and second quarters of 1999. The monitors asked school personnel and school improvement teams (described later) to identify improvements having the greatest impact upon student success since the monitors' last visited the schools. The monitors also asked school personnel and improvement teams to identify their greatest needs for increasing student success and improving the school.

The state monitors also visited four of the various six-week summer school programs held during 1999, as well as summer programs held in 1998. The standard protocol for this summer's visits included meeting with the school principal and staff to go over a list of questions covering specific areas, as well as a tour of the program. The monitors also visited the "Parent Power Institute" conducted at the University of Hartford. The program was for parents with children in the Hartford school system, and included classes covering various professional and personal growth topics.

Major Student Achievement Polices and Program Initiatives

The board of trustees has taken several major steps over the last two years intended to make the district a successful operation, both academically and administratively. Specifically, the board has adopted policies with broad implications for academic performance and parent/community involvement, hired a new permanent superintendent in April 1999, and revamped its outdated operating procedures. The board has also reorganized its central office by developing and enhancing administrative processes and business practices.

One of the purposes of this study was to document the major efforts made by the school board to implement Special Act 97-4, particularly in developing programs, procedures, and benchmarks for improving student performance and measuring achievement. This chapter highlights some of the main policy and programmatic initiatives undertaken to increase student performance. As specified in the study scope, however, it is not the program review committee's intention to measure the district's academic achievement while under the current board's direction.

Student Achievement Initiatives -- Board Policies

In the course of revamping and updating its entire policy and administrative manual, the board of trustees adopted new policies related to student achievement in several key areas. The overall aim of the board's policies is to increase academic performance and enhance the quality, adequacy, and equality of educational opportunities. The program review committee identified the following major policies as those focused on by the trustees during their first two years:

- Student Attendance and Truancy;
- Student Promotion, Retention, and Intervention;
- Parent and Community Involvement;
- School Improvement Teams; and
- Extended Day/Year.

Student Attendance and Truancy

According to state Department of Education data, the cumulative four-year dropout rate for Hartford's public schools in 1998 was 51 percent. This figure is significantly above the statewide average of roughly 15 percent for the

four-year period ending 1998. In recognition of the district's comparatively high dropout rate, and upon a recommendation contained in the Hartford Improvement Plan calling for updated policies to significantly increase student attendance, the board of trustees enacted its student attendance policy in August 1997. The detailed policy states in part that any student with 15 or more unexcused absences, or who continually cuts class, will have his or her whole progress for the year reviewed by the appropriate teachers and principal. The policy further establishes a penalty for habitual truancy (unexcused absences of 20 or more days) stating such student's promotion to the next grade may be contingent upon the successful completion of a summer school program, or retention in the same grade to acquire the appropriate skills for promotion.

A formal plan to implement the board's new attendance and truancy policy was completed by the district's superintendent in early 1998. The "Hartford Public Schools Reschooling Plan for Attendance Improvement, Truancy, and Dropout Reduction" is based on prevention and intervention as the two primary methods used by the district to address attendance issues. The plan addresses the roles/responsibilities of parents, students, and schools. Strategies are devised to increase attendance and lower truancy and dropouts, including incentives to recognize and reward attendance improvement, development of a "re-schooling" team to monitor and evaluate attendance goals, and establishing attendance improvement committees at individual schools.

Additional initiatives by the district to increase school attendance include a coordinator to oversee dropout prevention and attendance efforts, attendance workers at the middle and high school levels to monitor unexcused absences, and parent liaisons at the elementary schools to work with parents regarding attendance improvement.

Upon approving the attendance and truancy policy, the board instructed the superintendent to disseminate the policy to all principals and administrators, and make it available to all parents and students. The new policy is also included in the district's overall policy and administrative manual.

Student Promotion, Retention, and Intervention

The legislature, under P.A. 99-288, requires local education boards to review and revise their policies for promoting students to the next grade. The law calls for school districts to include in their policies: 1) objective criteria for student promotion; 2) a provision for measuring student progress against such criteria and reporting the information to parents; 3) alternatives to promotion, such as transition programs; and 4) a provision for supplemental services for students not making adequate progress. Policies have to be in place by July 1, 2000.

The Hartford school district's past practice of promoting students to the next grade without the students having the requisite skills and abilities under some circumstances -- called social promotion -- was changed by the board of trustees in March 1999. The board adopted a new procedure whereby a student's advancement to the next grade must be directly related to his or her proficiency/appropriate developmental progress in achieving specific performance standards and outcomes. The standards are determined by the school district in conjunction with benchmarks set by the state Department of Education.

The policy calls for qualified staff having well articulated curricula in which students are expected to achieve academic and behavioral standards in place for each grade level. For students needing additional assistance and on-going assessment, the school system must provide such support. Students will be retained in their grades, in part, if they do not demonstrate appropriate proficiency and progress after opportunities for additional assistance are provided. The school principal, however, has the final decision regarding retention and promotion.

Individual schools are responsible for providing the extra assistance necessary for students not showing appropriate achievement according to the performance standards. The school improvement plan (discussed later) within each school must support and address this area. School improvement plans should include:

- a means for providing appropriate services for students requiring additional support;
- descriptions of the additional support services available districtwide and at the individual school, including regular school day and extended day/year programs; and
- an evaluation component to assess the effectiveness of the additional support services.

Regulations for implementing the board's policy have been drafted by the current superintendent's office and were presented to and adopted by the board in mid-June. The regulations outline the specific criteria the district will use to determine student retention by grade levels, including attendance. The regulations also require students to achieve minimum baseline scores on their state mastery exams, which is the first time the district has used this standard.

Although educational achievement is the primary consideration for determining student promotion or retention, the regulations cite two exceptions. First, a student will generally not repeat more than two years in elementary grades 1-6. Second, there may be times when a school principal, following review of all relevant information, may promote a pupil who does not meet promotion requirements. The regulations are in effect only for the summer, and will be reviewed and updated for the 1999-00 school year.

Upon adopting the promotion, retention, and intervention policy, the board required a review of the full policy on alternate years from its implementation date. This is to ensure the policy remains aligned with state and district standards and new educational research.

Parent and Community Involvement

Special Act 97-4 requires the board to "provide a mechanism for parent, teacher, and community involvement in the schools." Establishing a parental involvement policy was a board goal for 1997-98. Specifically, the board wanted to increase parental involvement with the expectation that parent-teacher communication would occur on a monthly basis. (This process is separate from the advisory council the board was also required to develop.)

In November 1997, the board adopted a "Student-Centered Parent and Community Involvement" policy based on the premise that parents should be full partners in decisions that affect their children. The board received input on the policy from various constituencies, including parents and community groups.

On the theory that students and parents/guardians are the district's first customers, the parental involvement policy requires the district to make its schools "open and inviting" to parents and the Hartford community. The policy further states a partnership among parents, students, the community, and school employees on behalf of children should exist. Each school should also have an active organization for fostering parent/community involvement.

Various standards for measuring parent/family involvement programs have been drafted to support the policy. Each standard has several "quality indicators" by which overall success is to be measured. The standards include: communication between school and home; promotion and support of parenting skills; parental involvement in student learning; parental volunteer efforts; school decision making and advocacy; and community collaboration to strengthen schools, families, and student learning.

In early 1998, the district also developed a guide for implementing the parent and community involvement policy. The guide provides new ideas and approaches related to school outreach strategies, and outlines ways to include School Improvement Teams (described below) as part of the overall process to increase parental and community involvement in schools. A new parental involvement program is being developed by the current administration.

Parent liaisons. Parents have been hired full-time to act as parent liaisons and work with teachers, administrators, and other parents to coordinate and advocate for family involvement in helping students learn. The liaisons help provide continuity for their school's parental involvement initiatives, such as programs to increase student attendance.

Through 1997, parent liaisons worked on a part-time basis. In 1998, they were hired as full-time employees. Their current overall role, however, is changing under the new superintendent. Family Resource Aides, as they are now considered, will receive monthly training on various topics throughout the year, including attendance outreach, community outreach, and fundraising development. The training is coordinated through an assistant superintendent and the district's new Office of Parent Involvement.

School Improvement Teams

Several of the major planning efforts undertaken by the district involve a degree of decentralization whereby management of a school is made through a shared decision making process at the school/community level. Rather than have all strategic and management decisions emanate from the central office, this decentralized approach, also referred to as site-based management, attempts to involve the broader school community in planning, decision making, and implementation of specified functions for a particular school.

School improvement teams are a key component of decentralized management. The teams consist of parents, administrators, teachers, students, non-instructional personnel, and business/community representatives. According to an August 1998 proposal by the Hartford school superintendent on the roles and responsibilities of school improvement teams, the primary responsibilities of such teams include:

- 1) serving as an advisory body to the school principal;
- 2) increasing parent, community, and student involvement;
- 3) creating and maintaining a focus on the school mission; and
- 4) developing, monitoring, overseeing, and evaluating the implementation of the annual school improvement plan.

One of the major functions of the improvement teams is to develop a school improvement plan. The plan is intended to serve several purposes, including: 1) assessing the resources currently provided to the school and needed; and 2) describing unique themes and building on the school's strengths.

The superintendent's 1998 proposal was developed in response to the board's goal of adopting a policy ensuring each school had a functioning school improvement team. In August 1998, the trustees endorsed the superintendent's school improvement team proposal, and instructed him to execute its implementation. In its endorsement, the board noted that it is critical for school improvement teams to focus on academic improvements at school sites rather than management issues.

Extended Day/Year

In March 1999, the board of trustees adopted a policy to maintain quality extended day/year programs within the city's public schools. The programs must be included in each school's improvement plan provided adequate funding exists to support the programs. The extended day/year programs are designed to:

- improve general student academic performance;
- support student needs according to personalized educational programs;
- increase parental involvement;
- promote creativity;
- increase social skills; and
- support health, fitness, and positive youth/family development.

According to the policy, development and implementation of extended day/year programs will be overseen by the superintendent, the city, community-based organizations, and parents. In addition to available funding, program continuation is contingent upon the achievement level of goals developed jointly with the schools. The programs will be monitored and evaluated by the district. The effective date of the policy is the 1999-00 school year.

Student Achievement Initiatives: Programs

While the board of trustees develops policies to guide the school district, the superintendent is responsible for implementing those policies. Multiple programs and services designed to accomplish the board's objectives for improving student achievement either already exist within the school system or are in the process of being developed and implemented.

The committee identified several key programmatic efforts aimed at increasing student achievement. Although the following program descriptions are not an exhaustive listing of every program or service in place to address student performance, they encapsulate and highlight the primary programs available to students at various grade levels throughout the district since the board of trustees began its term. Given that the current permanent superintendent was hired in April 1999 and is developing and implementing a series of new academic initiatives, the focus is on those programs. The major programs highlighted by the program review committee include:

- School Reform (*Success for All*);
- Classroom Technology Integration (*Jostens*);
- Literacy/Numeracy/Test Sophistication;
- Spring/Summer Schools;
- Parent Summer Institute;
- Ninth Grade Laptop Program;
- Computer Application Program;
- Sylvan Learning Systems;
- Early Reading Success;
- Academies/Centers for Educational Excellence; and
- School Redistricting.

School Reform (*Success for All*)

The superintendent is implementing a district-wide school reform program called *Success for All* (SFA) for all elementary schools. (One school previously implemented a comparable reform model, and was allowed to continue this effort in lieu of transitioning to the *Success for All* model; and another school has already implemented the SFA model.)

The *Success for All* program, developed by Johns Hopkins University and the Baltimore city school district in the mid-1980s, is a comprehensive approach to restructuring elementary schools to ensure each child's success in reading and writing. The program emphasizes prevention and early intervention as ways to anticipate and solve learning problems. It provides intensive academic assistance to students at risk of school failure. By receiving intensive help early on, students at lower reading levels can "catch up" with their classmates at the appropriate

level. The intent is to give students the necessary help to quickly achieve basic skills, rather than waiting until they require remedial education or are retained in the same grade.

The new literacy program is primarily designed for use in elementary schools with a large disadvantaged population base. It serves grades 1-6, but also has preschool and kindergarten components. Math, science, and social studies components are also available. The program has English and Spanish versions.

Staff support. One of the primary requirements necessary before SFA can be implemented, as stipulated by the Success for All Foundation, the nonprofit organization that produces the SFA product, is clear support for the program from the superintendent, principals and teachers. Parents and the community are also required to be informed about the program.

Each school must conduct a vote among its teachers to adopt the program. The vote is by secret ballot, and at least 80 percent of the teachers must cast an affirmative vote before the program is adopted and implemented. Each Hartford elementary school, except for the one already using an alternative model, will be implementing *Success for All* for the 1999-00 school year. Prior to the vote, principals and teachers were provided the opportunity to visit several schools in New York City currently using SFA, and speak to SFA representatives. The voting deadline was June 2, 1999.

Program curriculum, instruction, and assessment. For most of the day, students are assigned to heterogeneous, age-grouped classes. Under the SFA program, students are grouped across classes and grades by their reading levels beginning in first grade. Students at a common reading level are then provided with a 90-minute block of uninterrupted daily reading instruction, which is the primary component of the SFA program. The individual groups give teachers the opportunity to provide direct attention to students within a particular reading level, rather than having to segment a class with students at various levels.

The SFA program provides a pre-established curriculum initiated during the first grade year. A second curriculum is also provided through the program for grades 2 through 6. This process ensures standardization among schools.

Students experiencing reading difficulties – particularly in first grade – are given one-to-one tutoring. The tutoring is provided by trained teacher-tutors and paraprofessionals. Tutors diagnose students' needs and tailor their instruction around those needs.

SFA facilitator. Every elementary school using SFA is to have at least one full-time facilitator. The facilitator must be a certified teacher, and is responsible (with the principal) for assisting in program implementation and operation. Facilitators provide teachers with program information through classroom visits, coaching, and formal meetings. They may work with individual students to determine successful teaching strategies and convey these strategies to teachers. Facilitators also coordinate activities and services among teachers, parents, students, administrators, tutors, and family support staff to ensure each child's success.

Family support team. Another SFA program component is the family support team, consisting of the school principal or assistant principal, the SFA facilitator, social workers, counselors, attendance monitors, teachers, and volunteers. The team is to work closely with students and parents to focus on issues such as attendance, coordination of outside social services, parental involvement, and student behavior.

Training. Formal professional development is provided for facilitators, administrators, teachers, and tutors. A training program for principals and facilitators was conducted by the SFA foundation over the summer. The facilitators and principals then provided training to teachers and tutors during a three-day session held prior to the start of school in September. Teachers are scheduled to receive SFA materials in time for school.

The program also provides on-site assistance and follow-up visits during implementation. After each visit, the school will receive a detailed summary of observations and discussions, and a description of “next step” implementation plans.

Program assessment. The program focuses on individual accountability, common goals, and recognition of group success. Assessments are administered to students every eight weeks to ensure adequate progress and to determine if additional support services are necessary. An advisory committee within the school composed of the principal, the SFA facilitator, selected teachers and tutors, and parent representatives is supposed to meet regularly to review the program’s progress and identify/solve programmatic problems.

Cost. Approximately \$4.3 million is budgeted for the upcoming school year to implement SFA. Program cost primarily entails training, curriculum and program materials, and professional development, and is based on enrollment size and location of the individual school, and number of schools collaborating in training.

Classroom Technology Integration (*Jostens*)

The district is also implementing the *Jostens* software-based teaching initiative for the 1999-00 school year. Developed by the Jostens Learning Corporation, the program is intended to enhance student performance and improve the teaching process through the use of integrating technology into the classroom.

Increased teacher effectiveness and individualized instruction focusing on each student’s needs are key goals of the program. The primary focus of this year’s program will be on assisting teachers improve performance in reading and math/for students in grades 3, 5, and 7. The program incorporates objectives of the state’s Connecticut Mastery Test.

The program allows teachers to simulate a prescribed exam (e.g., CMT) by subject matter and grade level. Based on the test results, an individualized “learning path” using a prescribed curriculum is computer-generated and targeted to meet the needs of a particular student. Teachers have the ability to modify the course of instruction. The program’s reporting capabilities track progress on either an individualized or group basis. Periodic assessments are made to measure the program’s success at increasing student performance.

Although the focus is on grades 3, 5, and 7, the program is being implemented in each elementary, middle, and high school throughout the district. Full project implementation is divided into four phases, whereby software is installed and professional development occurs. Software and support services are provided by the Jostens company. The final installation/training phase for Hartford was completed at the end of August 1999.

Total program cost to the district is based on a five-year leasing option. The first year of the option will cost the district \$419,690; the overall five-year cost is \$1.89 million. In July, the board of trustees gave approval to the superintendent to enter into a contract for the Jostens program.

Literacy/Numeracy/Test Sophistication

The district is developing several scripted programs for the 1999-00 school year balancing literacy and numeracy to prepare students for the annual Connecticut Mastery Tests. The programs provide teachers with pre-planned curricula and teaching materials. In addition, students will be instructed on test taking strategies and will be given practice mastery exams to simulate the real CMT given every October. The programs are also intended to:

- provide students with a comprehensive, systematic level of instruction to improve their knowledge or reading/thinking strategies;
- develop reading, writing, and math skills to support parts of the state mastery tests;
- familiarize students with test taking procedures enabling improved performance;
- focus on individual student needs; and
- reduce test anxiety without compromising test integrity.

The literacy enhancement and test sophistication program is designed to give students initial instruction and systematic, on-going practice in strategies and skills necessary to increase reading and writing comprehension. The program focuses on helping students learn how to organize and write effective narrative, expository, and persuasive essays. The numeracy enhancement and test sophistication program is focused on increasing the mathematical abilities of students, again using pre-designed scripted lesson plans. The specialized programs will be administered until the CMT is given. After that time, the district will begin using its standard literacy and math programs.

Looping. Another practice being implemented this school year designed to help students taking the CMTs is “looping.” Students entering grades 4, 6, and 8, the grades administered the CMT, will remain with their teachers who taught them in grades 3, 5, and 7. The concept behind this practice is to maintain the students’ degree of familiarity with their teachers as the students enter the CMT grades. By keeping students with their previous year’s teachers, there is intended to be “built-in” continuity from the previous school year. This continuity is intended to help students achieve better on the mastery tests.

Spring/Summer Schools

Upon taking office in April 1999, the new superintendent initiated two programs to help increase student performance, particularly those students taking the upcoming state mastery tests. The first initiative involved extra classroom instruction time during the normal spring vacation week. Students were encouraged to attend "Spring Power School" during their vacation break for additional instruction covering topics included on the CMTs.

The district's second initiative was the "Summer Power School" program, which emphasized academics and focused on increasing student achievement. Pre-planned instruction curricula and materials in reading and math was provided daily for three hours during the six-week program. The overall goal of the program is to help students achieve better in school and on the state mastery tests. Students taking the mastery exams were automatically enrolled in the program and encouraged to attend. A weekly average of 3,590 students participated in the summer school program from July 1 through August 6 (excluding two days designated for field trips only). The district is currently working on attendance figures for the last week of summer school, including the number of students taking part in the practice CMT exams held during that week.

Curriculum. Students attended summer school four days a week during the six-week period. The program's curriculum was tightly scripted by the central office, to ensure standardized instruction and materials were provided for students, particularly those taking the upcoming CMT exams. Teachers received prescribed lesson plans detailing daily instruction and the amount of time spent for each activity.

Students spent each three-hour morning session on academics. Afternoon sessions included community summer programs providing recreational opportunities and enrichment programs, such as cultural activities. There was no fee to attend the summer school programs, and students were provided with free breakfasts and lunches.

Training. Certified teachers hired for the summer school program and principals received training from the district's central office regarding standardized curriculum and format. Using the training received from the central office, the teachers and principals then trained other staff members at their individual schools.

Assessment. Practice CMT exams were given at both the beginning and end of the summer school program. The district is analyzing the results and will make any adjustments for the upcoming school year it believes necessary. The superintendent is also receiving formal evaluations from teachers regarding the strengths and weaknesses of this year's summer school program.

Parent Summer Institute

Professional and personal growth classes for parents within the Hartford school district were held over a four-week period during the summer. The cooperative effort between the Hartford public schools and the University of Hartford focused primarily on providing parents with increased opportunities to become involved in their children's public school system.

Parents participated in a series of one-week classes presented during the four-week period. The class offerings included parent leadership training, accessing information with technology, and preparing your child for school. The summer institute was provided at no cost to parents, and transportation and childcare were made available. The district has not finalized its actual attendance figures for the program, but enrollment statistics show between from 61 to 98 parents signed up for classes.

Ninth Grade Laptop Program

Efforts to increase the use of technology within the school district include a 9th grade laptop program. The pilot program provides approximately 400 incoming 9th grade students entering high school (roughly 20 percent) with the opportunity to purchase or lease laptop computers at reduced prices. The program increases students' exposure to computers for coursework, Internet access, and technology training. Teachers within individual schools have been selected and trained to oversee the program.

The district's goal is to have the students retain their computers during their first two years of high school. Program expansion is anticipated next year, in which all 10th graders would have laptop computers in addition to another 400 9th graders. Training for the program is being provided by the Capital Region Education Council (CREC). The expected "roll-out" of the program is mid-September.

Computer Application Program

The district is implementing a computer application program (ScanTEK) to provide 9th and 10th graders the opportunity to learn about and work with computers on a technical basis. Students in the program disassemble, repair, refurbish, and assemble computers, allowing them to gain an understanding of computer hardware through practical applications.

The program also has a student performance tracking system. The system provides a comprehensive competency-based portfolio of job skills students can transfer to further education or training, or for use at job interviews.

Sylvan Learning Systems

The Sylvan Learning Systems program is designed to augment a school's curriculum by providing supplemental instruction to low-performing students. The program uses an individualized, prescriptive approach to instruction. Students are first given a series of tests to identify their specific skill needs. Once this occurs, individualized education plans are

developed for each child. The plans are updated daily, allowing the school to manage and monitor a student's progress.

Instruction and advancement are geared around a student's mastery of specific skills. The program's goal is to accelerate learning to bring the student up to grade level using an individualized approach. Trained/certified staff provide instruction, and a teacher to student ratio of 1:3 is required. The program also calls for staff/teacher conferences after every eight hours of instruction. Conferences with parents are held after every 12 hours of instruction.

The program was adopted by the board of trustees in March 1998, and was piloted in the Hartford Public High School during the summer of 1998. In August 1998, the acting superintendent requested the board implement the program at three additional elementary schools. There was much discussion by the board, mainly around contract language and lack of identifiable performance on part of the program given its short tenure within the district. The board ultimately approved implementing the Sylvan program in three additional schools plus Hartford High, to serve roughly 350 students at a cost of \$1.8 million for three years.

With the implementation of both the Sylvan and Jostens programs, the district is operating two similar supplemental instructional programs. The board questioned this approach at a recent meeting, and ultimately decided to use the Jostens program districtwide. The board also decided a review of the Sylvan contract would be made.

Early Reading Success

The board of trustees authorized the superintendent to submit a grant application to the state Department of Education under the Early Reading Success program created by P.A. 98-243. The public act required the education department to develop an early reading grant program designed to: 1) help priority school districts establish intensive early reading programs for students in danger of not learning to read by the end of first grade; 2) establish full-day kindergarten programs; and 3) reduce class size for grades K-3 to a maximum of 18 children per class.

The district was awarded an Early Reading Success grant for \$3.2 million in mid-1998. The funding was primarily designated for early reading intervention purposes. Twenty-one reading specialists for grades K-3 were hired, and assigned to the 17 elementary schools with the lowest performance scores on the most recent CMTs. The grant was also used for other projects, including extended day programs in reading for elementary school students and professional development for reading teachers.

The primary instructional method used under the district's early reading intervention program includes a 90-minute block of uninterrupted instruction for language arts for grades 1-3. At the onset of the program, reading and writing levels for students are determined using the "First Steps" system, which is the district's student assessment tool. The assessments are conducted by teachers to first identify skill deficiencies and then monitor progress. Teachers use the assessments to develop instruction plans and measure a student's development in reading,

writing, language, and spelling. The early reading intervention program and the assessments are aligned with the district's overall curricula and the state's mastery tests, and will be integrated with the Success for All literacy reform program described above.

The school district also received over \$530,000 in funding under a separate part of the Early Reading Success grant for library books. The funding is to enhance libraries and media centers.

Academies/Centers for Educational Excellence

In early 1998, then-Superintendent Patricia Daniel presented a framework for restructuring secondary schools within the city's public school system. High schools would become "centers for educational excellence," focusing on skills needed to achieve in an era of increased technology and information. The educational centers are intended to integrate core academics with technical/occupational areas. The centers are intended to maintain close contact with business and educational institutions assisting with the program. The program is offered to students throughout their four years of high school, and students select their course of study.

The goal of the program is to motivate students to stay in school and pursue educational choices moving them toward a career. All standard graduation requirements are met, and student proficiencies are addressed preparing them for higher education or work. Examples of programs within individual high schools include: Technology/ Pre-Engineering; Humanities/Fine Arts, Finance; Allied Health/Nursing; and Bio-Medical.

Lighthouse Grant. Two schools within the district recently received grants from the state education department to attract students from throughout the district for specialized programs. The grant allows the schools to develop "academies" geared toward specific themes. Hartford Public High School, for example, received \$100,000 in August 1999 to continue its "Academy for Excellence and Career Exploration." The program is designed for 9th graders and incorporates the latest teaching strategies and technology for students to develop skills to meet state goals on the Connecticut Academic Performance Test, which is a state mastery test given yearly to 10th graders.

The designated schools using the grant funding are designed to attract students from throughout the Hartford school district, and help strengthen an interdistrict magnet school program, which attracts students from several surrounding communities.

School Redistricting

A plan to redistrict the Hartford public schools was received by the board in July 1999. The new plan, essentially designed by then-acting Superintendent Matthew Borelli, is an effort to alleviate the crowded conditions existing at several schools throughout the city. The plan also attempts to eliminate inappropriate space for educational programs, reduce the number of students in any one building where overcrowding exists, and maintain local neighborhood schools. The board approved the plan for the 1999-00 school year, with the new superintendent

conducting a more comprehensive redistricting study beginning in September 1999 that coordinates with the results of the district's 10-year facilities plan to be completed in early-2000.

SPECIAL ACT 97-4

A primary objective of this study was to determine whether or not the State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools is complying with its statutory mandates specified in Special Act 97-4. The special act created the board of trustees and outlines several specific requirements the board of trustees is to fulfill during its term. These requirements and their implementation status serve as an initial gauge of the progress made by the board since its inception in mid-1997.

Special Act 97-4 calls for the term of the Hartford board of trustees to expire on June 30, 2000. A key provision of the special act allows the board to request an extension of its term if additional time is needed to: 1) sufficiently address recommendations from an independent management audit of the Hartford school district's operations and a series of 48 recommendations made by the commissioner of the state Department of Education (SDE) known as the Hartford Improvement Plan; and 2) improve student achievement. The special act requires the board to request an extension by January 1, 2000.

The board of trustees formally requested a two-year extension this past September. On October 6, 1999, the State Board of Education granted the extension. The state education board noted the trustees have made systematic progress in implementing the necessary requirements within the Hartford school system, but needed more time to fully complete their responsibilities. The state education board also noted the trustees needed additional time to allow their new superintendent, hired in April 1999, to implement his programs and initiatives under the trustees' direction. The State Board of Education said it supported the work the board of trustees was doing and voted unanimously to extend its term until June 31, 2002. Appendix C provides the memo from the chairman of the board of trustees to the State Board of Education requesting the term extension and the state education board's resolution approving the extension.

As mentioned, Special Act 97-4 outlines numerous responsibilities the board of trustees is to accomplish. The committee analyzed whether the board is complying with its statutory requirements. A brief description of the special act's provisions is presented below, along with the committee's analysis, findings, and recommendations.

Operational Audit

Special Act 97-4 required the board of trustees, in consultation with the state education commissioner, to contract for a fiscal and operational audit of the school district for completion by January 1, 1998. The audit, completed in

December 1997, focused on the district's administrative operations to avoid duplication with the city's annual fiscal audit. The operational audit was completed by the accounting firm of Coopers and Lybrand.

The audit outlined five primary organizational themes applicable to the entire operations of the school district, including:

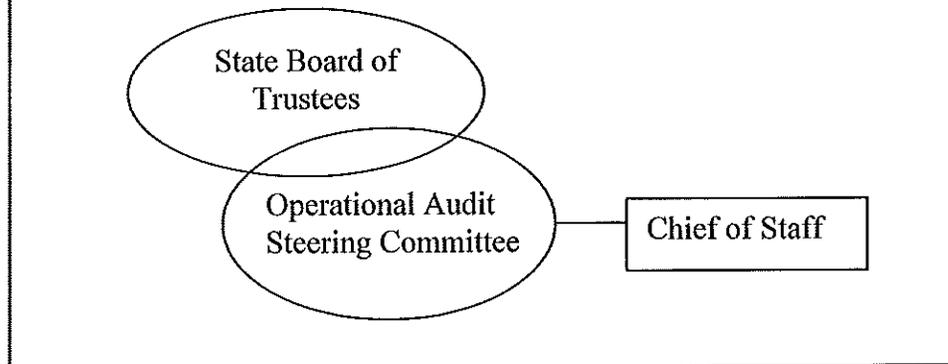
1. An overall lack of tangible accountability and responsibility throughout the organization.
2. Control processes and procedures are not standardized or reinforced.
3. Statutory requirements and contractual agreements frequently complicate efficient operations and data processing between/within the Hartford public school system and the city.
4. System and process improvements are being compromised by incomplete process redesigns, sub-optimal project management, lack of resources, limited training and education, and no year 2000 or business continuity planning.
5. A culture has been created over time within the school district resulting in operational "silos" which prohibit information-sharing and effective communication.

In addition to these observations, the audit contained findings and 98 recommendations in 10 specific operational areas. The auditors made recommendations where controls and/or processes were weak. The report noted the 10 areas were those needing the greatest attention for change within the school district. The operational areas examined included: budget and planning; enrollment management; facilities, construction, and property maintenance; financial management; human resources; information technology; payroll; procurement; special funds; and warehouse facilities. The board of trustees has placed a high priority on implementing the audit's recommendations. A summary of the operational audit is provided in Appendix D. The summary outlines the findings and recommendations in each of the 10 functional areas.

Implementation structure. In accordance with Special Act 97-4, the trustees have developed a plan and structure to implement the recommendations. In early 1998, the trustees decided they needed assistance in organizing a structure for implementing the audit recommendations given the board's limited resources. At that point, the MetroHartford Chamber of Commerce formed a collaboration with the board to assist in developing such a structure. The chamber -- through its not-for-profit affiliate "Citizens' Committee for Effective Government" (CCEG) -- assisted the board in organizing a 13-member Operational Audit Steering Committee, which currently oversees the implementation process. The committee includes two board members (including the board chairman, who chairs the steering committee), the superintendent of schools, the commissioner of education, the majority and minority leaders of the Hartford city council, the city manager, two CCEG representatives and two alternates, and two representatives of the firms that conducted the operational and financial audits. School district staff and city personnel serve on the committee on an as-needed basis. The committee structure is shown in Figure III-1.

The purpose of the audit steering committee is to set priorities, serve as an oversight body regarding audit recommendation implementation, and ensure a coordinated implementation effort among the school district, city, and community. The committee began its work in April 1998.

Figure III-1. Operational Audit Steering Committee--Organization



According to minutes and other relevant documents, the committee has met on a consistent basis since its inception in mid-1998. The records indicate the committee continually reviews the efforts to implement the audit recommendations and discusses strategies for future work.

To facilitate the steering committee's work, a chief of staff position was created in mid-1998. The chief of staff oversees the daily implementation responsibilities and is accountable to the full steering committee, including the chairman of the board of trustees who chairs the steering committee. The original chief of staff position was filled in June 1998. The position became vacant, however, the following month when the person resigned to become the interim school superintendent in Hartford. A new chief of staff was hired in November 1998, and has been in the position since that time. This factor, along with little turnover of the steering committee members and regular attendance at meetings by members, shows stability in the audit implementation structure.

CCEG also acts as the fiduciary for the operational audit implementation project. Funding for implementation comes mainly from state appropriations provided through grants from the education department to the school district. A contractual arrangement between CCEG and the board provides that the district will release monthly allotments to CCEG for the purpose of implementing the audit recommendations. The FY 2000 state appropriation for the project totaled \$600,000; the FY 99 appropriation was \$400,000. Additional in-kind contributions to the audit committee totaled an estimated \$250,000 for FY 99. The funding is used for such expenses as outside consultants for special projects, the chief of staff's salary, and administrative support.

Implementation status. The Coopers and Lybrand audit identified 98 recommendations for improving the operations of the Hartford school system. Realizing full implementation of the recommendations at one time was not feasible, the audit steering committee prioritized the recommendations. The committee began this process in August 1998, followed by a review at the end of that year.

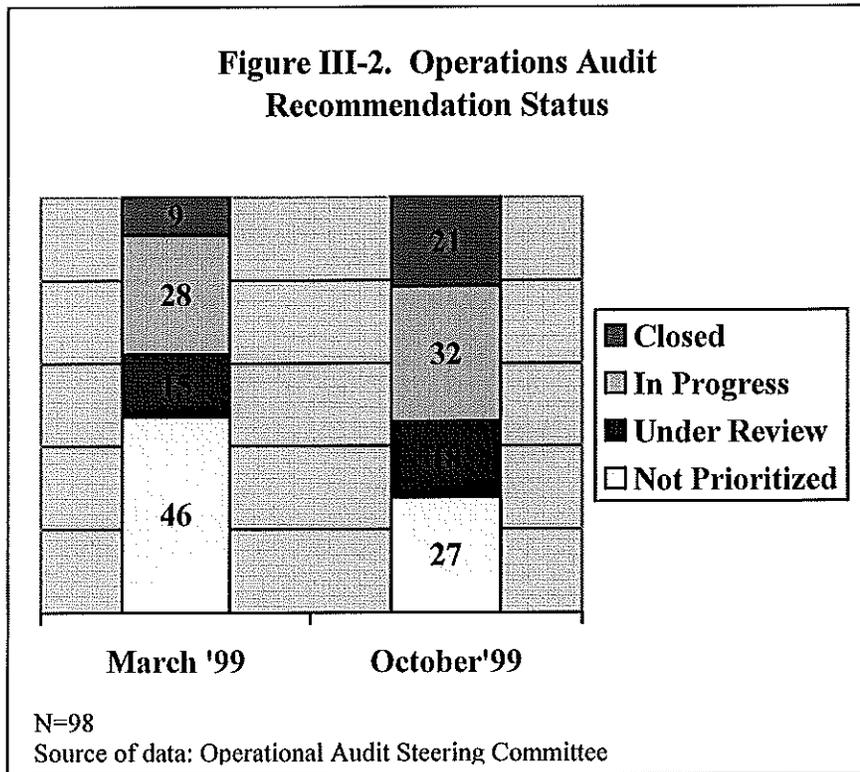
The chief of staff monitors the overall progress of the implementation project and has developed a system for tracking each recommendation. The steering committee knows which recommendations have been prioritized, are closed, remain in progress, are under review, or have yet to be prioritized. The chief of staff provides the steering committee with this information on a regular basis. In addition, a more detailed quarterly update report is given to the steering committee for the prioritized recommendations, including each recommendation's objective, status, and any issues with respect to implementation.

Program review committee staff attended the steering committee's monthly meetings held during the course of this study. Monthly updates on the implementation status of the recommendations were provided to the committee members at those meetings by the chief of staff and others. The steering committee also devoted time at a recent meeting to prioritize which recommendation areas would be focused on during the coming months.

The status reports provided to the audit steering committee were analyzed during this study to determine the level of progress made by the board of trustees in implementing the audit recommendations. The reports, in their current form, were first presented to the steering committee in March 1999. The first status report incorporates work completed from mid-1998 through March 1999.

Analysis of the status reports shows the board is making steady progress, both in fully implementing the recommendations and prioritizing remaining recommendations for future implementation. Figure III-2 shows the actual progress made from March 1999 and October 1999.

Of the 98 total audit recommendations, 21 (one-fifth) have been fully implemented as of October 1999. This is more than double the number of recommendations implemented as of March 1999. The number of recommendations in the process of implementation has also increased, from 28 to 32 (14 percent). Progress is being made in the number of recommendations being prioritized for implementation as well. Between March and



October, the audit steering committee decreased the number of “not prioritized” recommendations by 41 percent, leaving 27 of the 98 original recommendations not addressed.

The program review committee believes Figure III-2 shows progress by the steering committee in implementing the operational audit recommendations. The committee recognizes the figure only shows aggregate information and does not indicate which recommendations have been implemented or their relative difficulty in being implemented. The steering committee, however, prioritizes the recommendations and focuses its efforts accordingly. Further, implementation of the operational audit recommendations shows actual structural changes being made to the school district’s operations.

As noted earlier, the operational audit discussed five organizational-wide themes not specific to any particular department or operation within the school district. The program review committee observed the steering committee is addressing these broad issues in addition to the actual recommendations, again leading to structural changes in the system. For example, the audit cited a need for increased communication between the district and the city. The steering committee’s chief of staff, as part of the overall audit implementation efforts, is facilitating meetings between district and city officials and staff to help foster such increased communication.

Reports to board. Although progress reports are provided to the audit steering committee, the full board of trustees does not receive regular audit updates. During this study, the board held one “informational meeting” to discuss the audit steering committee structure and process. An implementation update was also provided to the trustees at the meeting. That was the only time, however, the full board and general public received a formal status report on the operational audit implementation progress.

As part of their quarterly reports, the state monitors attempt to provide an update on the board’s progress in implementing all the requirements of Special Act 97-4, including the operational audit. The most recent quarterly report distributed in late September, the sixth report overall, provides a status report of the audit recommendations. The fifth quarterly report, however, presented this past May focused on academic achievement, and did not include an update on the audit recommendations. The fourth quarterly report provided a brief update, but that report was published in December 1998. In other words, 10 months elapsed in the monitors’ reporting process between updates on the operational audit recommendations. These factors indicate more frequent and formal reporting to the board is necessary on the progress of implementing the operational audit recommendations.

Summary of Findings

- *A functional and organized structure exists via the audit steering committee to implement the operational audit recommendations; the committee has met on a regular basis to address the audit’s findings.*

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- *Oversight of the daily audit recommendation process exists through a chief of staff, who is accountable to the steering committee and the chairman of the board of trustees.*
 - *The audit steering committee is systematically addressing and prioritizing the recommendations and has made steady progress at implementing the recommendations*
 - *Neither the full board of trustees nor the public receives regular updates regarding implementation of the operational audit recommendations.*

Recommendation

Each member of the State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools should begin receiving a copy of the monthly status reports distributed to the audit steering committee. The board should hold at least semi-annual informational meetings devoted to providing the board and general public with a full progress report on the implementation status efforts of the operational audit required by Special Act 97-4.

Although the chairman of the board of trustees chairs the steering committee and is aware of the level of progress being made regarding implementation, the program review committee believes more routine reporting and formal updates should be made to the entire board of trustees and general public. Regular status reports will provide a greater opportunity to follow the implementation progress of the operational audit recommendations. This is important because the audit, and its implementation, was specifically required by Special Act 97-4. Providing the trustees with periodic updates will allow the full board to monitor and gauge the overall progress of the audit implementation efforts and thereby help ensure continued structural changes to the operations of the school district.

Hartford Improvement Plan

Special Act 97-4 requires the state board of trustees to continue implementing a series of 48 recommendations developed by the state Department of Education and adopted by the Hartford Board of Education in 1996. The recommendations, termed the Hartford Improvement Plan, are aimed at improving the academic and administrative operations of the Hartford public school district.

As a precursor to the Hartford Improvement Plan, the state education commissioner requested the assistance of Brown University in early 1996 to help identify major issues impeding the educational progress of the Hartford school system. The university, through its Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory (LAB), was to use its findings to make recommendations to assist in providing appropriate educational programs for all students within the district.

The university assembled a team of 12 of its staff to work on the project. The team conducted close to 200 interviews to collect information regarding the problems facing the school district. Community members, teachers, administrators, and others were interviewed. A final report was issued in November 1996.

The questions asked by the Brown University team focused on goals delineated in the school district's 1994 strategic plan. The study's findings indicated the vast majority of respondents believed the system was either "somewhat" or "not at all" effective in achieving any of the goals identified by the strategic plan. The report also found that although the district had strengths, those interviewed believed such strengths were not sufficient enough to alleviate the systemic problems faced by the school district. The study further outlined five main themes identified as needing major attention, including:

- curriculum;
- accountability and leadership;
- communication and collaboration;
- resource management; and
- training and staff development.

The Brown University study made clear its recommendations should not be implemented in isolation. They were to be combined with those from other studies of the school district to provide a comprehensive approach to solving the district's educational issues. The study team also concluded the operations, approaches, and attitudes within the district needed to change before a unified effort toward a common goal could be achieved.

At the same time as the Brown University study, the state Department of Education conducted a study of specific program areas within the Hartford school system and released its findings in a report entitled *Building Success Program by Program*. The areas studied by the department were: 1) curriculum and instruction; 2) federally funded programs through Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act; 3) bilingual/English as a Second Language programs; 4) special education; 5) early childhood; 6) parent involvement; 7) budget analysis; 8) collective bargaining; and 9) partnerships, governance teams, and local resources.

The department's study was a compilation of interviews, analysis of relevant documents and reports, and experiences of education department staff. Its purpose was to help "further discussion and decision making within the Hartford Public Schools and continue the improvements undertaken by the district."

Using the Brown University and SDE studies, along with the district's 1994 strategic plan, the commissioner of education released a detailed document in November 1996 outlining 48 specific recommendations for improving the Hartford public schools. As mentioned, the recommendations became known as the Hartford Improvement Plan. The purpose of the plan is "to bring together key points from all the documents developed to identify and address the problems faced by the Hartford Public Schools." The plan's 48 recommendations are provided in Appendix E.

In early 1997, the Hartford Board of Education formally adopted the education department's 48 recommendations as its own goals in addition to those outlined in the 1994 strategic plan. The department said it would assist and work with the district toward achieving better functioning schools, both from an academic and operations perspective. The assistance was – and continues to be --primarily guided by the recommendations.

Actions document. A handbook entitled "Actions to Improve the Hartford Public Schools" (i.e., "actions document") has been developed by the state education department in conjunction with the superintendent and essentially replaces the Hartford Improvement Plan. The "actions document" encompasses the various themes of the original 48 recommendations, along with key points of the different strategic documents developed for the school system, and consolidates them into 10 separate categories or clusters for better coordination and reference. The categories include:

- school district management and accountability;
- curriculum and course offerings;
- instruction, assessment, and school climate;
- professional development;
- early childhood;
- technology;
- student support;
- parent and community support;
- fiscal management; and
- facilities management.

Using the actions document as a focal point, the district's two permanent superintendents during the state board of trustees' tenure each developed their own goals and objectives to meet the state education department's recommendations. The current superintendent, Anthony Amato, has finalized his goals and objectives for the 1999-2000 document. The trustees recently approved the superintendent's goals for the new school year. The document will also be aligned with the board's goals and objectives, which were being discussed as part of a board retreat held in late August. A copy of the 1999-00 actions document is provided in Appendix F.

The district's goals and objectives outlined in the 1999-2000 actions document have not been developed in isolation. The Department of Education, in assisting the school district, has assembled an internal team to work with the district in identifying and achieving the commissioner's improvement recommendations. The team consists of several department personnel with knowledge and experience in specific areas relevant to the 10 major themes outlined in the actions document. The department offers technical assistance to the school

district and works with district personnel in implementing the recommendations. The department also tracks the district's implementation progress and reports to the superintendent on a regular basis. The project is overseen within the department by an associate commissioner and by the school district's chief of staff.

As noted earlier, implementation of the Hartford Improvement Plan, which is incorporated into the current "actions document," is specifically cited in Special Act 97-4 as one of the charges to the State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools. The state monitors are also tracking the progress made in implementing the improvement plan/actions document. During the most recent round of school visits, for example, the monitors made sure school improvement teams have copies of the actions document handbook. The monitors also asked the teams what success they have had within their particular schools in implementing the recommendations. The results of these visits, and the monitors' observations, will be included in the upcoming quarterly report submitted to the legislature as required by Special Act 97-4.

Implementation structure. An appropriate organizational structure is in place to implement the original 48 improvement recommendations. The structure involves a team from the state education department working in conjunction with a team assembled by the school district to implement the recommendations. Under this approach, the state is supposed to provide technical assistance when requested and help monitor implementation.

With changes in superintendents over the last several years, however, the people identified by the school district to work with the state education department team have also changed. For example, as a result of the most recent change in administration, it took six months to identify staff from the district who would be responsible for continuing implementation of the recommendations. The fact that key district staff responsible for working with SDE to ensure implementation of the Hartford Improvement Plan has fluctuated causes interruptions in addressing the plan's recommendations.

Implementation status and reporting. At present, the actual status of the original 48 recommendations is not clearly articulated in any formal document. The program review committee believes this is because the 48 recommendations have been integrated within the board's full spectrum of goals and objectives.

For planning purposes, the inclusion of the recommendations into the board's annual goals and objectives seems appropriate. Special Act 97-4, however, requires the board to implement the original Hartford Improvement Plan. Tracking the status of the individual recommendations is necessary if compliance with the special act is to be determined.

The last full accounting of the implementation status of the Hartford Improvement Plan was provided in the final report of a three-report series developed by the school district and the state education department in June 1998 (Partnership for School Improvement: Interim Report No. 3). All three reports, distributed to the board chairman, provided a detailed update on the implementation status of the Hartford Improvement Plan. All reports and documents since then, including the state monitors' reports, refer to the board's broader annual goals and objectives and not the Hartford Improvement Plan specified in legislation.

Program review committee staff attended several monthly meetings held between the state education commissioner and the Hartford school superintendent. Key staff from the department and district, including the state monitors, attended meetings. At each meeting the state monitors requested an update from the district on the progress in implementing the Hartford Improvement Plan/board goals and objectives. The program review committee believes such meetings help serve to monitor the implementation process and progress of the 48 improvement recommendations. However, the focus continues to be more on the board's overall goals and objectives than the original 48 recommendations.

Summary of Findings

- *Special Act 97-4 specifically requires the board of trustees to implement the Hartford Improvement Plan, yet no full status report showing implementation progress of the plan has been produced since June 1998.*
- *The recommendations contained in the original Hartford Improvement Plan have been integrated into a broader planning document outlining the board's annual goals and objectives.*
- *The structure originally designed to monitor the implementation of the recommendations in the Hartford Improvement Plan now focuses on the board's broader goals and objectives, in addition to those contained in the improvement plan.*
- *The SDE commissioner and staff, including the state monitors, meet monthly with the superintendent to discuss progress on various topics, including the Hartford Improvement Plan. Such meetings help serve to monitor the implementation progress, but lack the documentation necessary to evaluate the requirements of Special Act 97-4 regarding the Hartford Improvement Plan.*

Recommendations

The board of trustees, through the superintendent, and the state education department should determine which of original 48 recommendations contained in the Hartford Improvement Plan have been satisfactorily implemented, which recommendations are still relevant, and then prioritize those recommendations for implementation purposes. Specific indicators, such as timeframes for implementation, should be established for the recommendations as part of the prioritization process. Consideration should be given to the costs associated with implementation and how the recommendations align with the district's overall academic and operational goals and strategy.

Beginning in March 2000, and quarterly thereafter, the State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools should be provided with the implementation status of the recommendations contained in the Hartford Improvement Plan. The update should include, but not be limited to, a listing of recommendations, whether they have been fully or partially implemented, or if no progress has been made.

Accreditation

The state board of trustees is required by Special Act 97-4 to ensure all elementary and middle schools within the Hartford school system become accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). Schools are required to address 10 different areas for accreditation, including mission, needs assessment, instruction, facilities, and budget. The overall process includes a self-evaluation phase, a peer review phase, and a follow-up phase addressing the strengths and weaknesses identified in the first two phases. A site visit(s) of the school by NEASC is also part of the process. Depending on the individual school, the self-evaluation phase alone can take between 12 to 18 months to complete. The standards used for accreditation are provided in Appendix G.

The board's progress in this area was examined from several different perspectives. First, the committee wanted to know if an overall plan was in place to have the district's 29 individual elementary and middle schools complete the accreditation process. Second, since the process is new to the district's elementary and middle schools, the committee was interested in how school personnel are being helped with technical assistance and other necessary resources so they know how to approach accreditation. Third, the committee was interested in how the board of trustees was monitoring progress of the accreditation requirement of Special Act 97-4.

Planning and resources. The accreditation process for Hartford's elementary and middle schools began in earnest in October 1998, almost a year and a half after the board's term began. Prior to that time, the board focused on the accreditation efforts of the district's three high schools. In October 1998, a presentation was made to the trustees by the district administrator overseeing accreditation outlining how elementary and middle schools would begin developing and aligning their budgets in accordance with standards required for accreditation.

Overall, the board of trustees has approached accreditation on an incremental basis. Six elementary schools were originally selected in late 1998 to undergo accreditation. As Table III-1 shows, the six schools are still in the beginning stages of the accreditation process. The district estimates each school is about 40 percent through the self-evaluation phase, which is the first of a three-phase process.

Planning for an additional six schools to begin the self-evaluation phase in early 2000 is currently underway; a third group of six schools, including the first middle school, is also being scheduled to begin the accreditation process. The schools included in the district's schedule are those Hartford schools on the SDE commissioner's list of priority schools released in mid-1999 in accordance with P.A. 99-288. The plan -- presented to the board in mid-November 1999 -- did not, however, indicate what, if any, resources the district would provide the schools for the accreditation process, such as technical assistance and professional development.

Table III-1. Status of Hartford Elementary and Middle Accreditation Efforts: October 1999.	
School	Accreditation Status
Barnard Brown Elementary	Phase 1: Self Evaluation (40% complete)
Hooker Elementary	Phase 1: Self Evaluation (40% complete)
Kennelly Elementary	Phase 1: Self Evaluation (40% complete)
Milner Elementary	Phase 1: Self Evaluation (40% complete)
Simpson-Waverly Elementary	Phase 1: Self Evaluation (40% complete)
Twain Elementary	Phase 1: Self Evaluation (40% complete)
Note: A target date for peer reviews of the elementary schools is Fall 2000. Source of data: State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools; NEASC	

The six schools currently undergoing accreditation were selected through a voluntary application process. The schools were required to answer questions and received input from the school improvement teams and the community. An internal steering committee has also been appointed within each school. The steering committee develops a timeline for the self-study phase of the process, develops a budget, maintains contact with NEASC and the district's central office, and oversees the process.

As noted above, a peer-review process takes place once the self-evaluation phase is completed. The reviews are conducted by outside teams assembled by NEASC consisting of mainly administrators and teachers. The teams attempt to validate the work done by a school during the self-evaluation phase and determine how well the school meets NEASC accreditation standards. The final phase is a follow-up visit by NEASC to determine how well the school has implemented the recommendations made by the peer review team.

Although not specifically required by Special Act 97-4, the city's three high schools are also at various stages of accreditation. As shown in Table III-2, Bulkeley and Weaver High Schools are accredited, although each has items to remediate. Hartford high school is accredited with probation and has deficiencies to resolve. The school will undergo another site visit by NEASC in April 2000. A one-year correction plan has been developed and a five-year plan is also being developed with the help of outside resources.

Table III-2. Hartford Seconding Schools' Accreditation Efforts: October 1999.	
School	Accreditation Status
Bulkeley High School	Accredited: minimal items to remediate
Hartford Public High School	Accreditation with probation: short term plan created; working on 5-year plan
Weaver High School	Accredited: minimal items to remediate
Note: Bulkeley and Weaver High Schools are working towards their 10-year accreditation status, Bulkeley beginning in 2003 and Weaver, 2002. Source of data: State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools; NEASC	

Oversight. At least three separate presentations have been made to the board of trustees on the status of the accreditation efforts for elementary and middle schools by district staff. In late 1998, an accreditation workshop was held by the board with a report presented by the central office outlining the district's approach to accreditation. The board also received an update report on the accreditation process at its January 1999 meeting, which included discussion about the need for preparing a comprehensive plan for accreditation of schools districtwide.

During a recent reorganization of the district's administrators, the current superintendent selected a new person to coordinate the accreditation process. To date, the person has made two presentations to the board regarding accreditation -- the first in October 1999 and the second at an informational meeting of the board in mid-November. The informational meeting allowed the board to focus on the accreditation area, and receive an update on the district's upcoming approach for accreditation. The coordinator has also been in contact with NEASC to facilitate the accreditation process.

The quarterly reports prepared by the state monitors also serve to oversee the district's progress in accrediting elementary and middle schools. Although they have adequately documented the accreditation process, the program review committee believes the reports need to now focus on accreditation from a more comprehensive perspective. This includes identifying the district's overall strategy for approaching accreditation of elementary and middle schools and the resources necessary to continue the process, which should prove easier now that a district coordinator has been appointed to oversee the accreditation efforts.

Summary of Findings

- *The board of trustees began addressing the accreditation process of elementary and middle schools in accordance with Special Act 97-4 late last year.*
- *Progress and planning have been made on an incremental basis, with six schools undergoing initial work beginning in late 1998.*
- *A coordinator has recently been selected to oversee the accreditation process and is developing a schedule for schools to begin the accreditation process.*
- *Although a schedule has been presented to the board for additional schools to begin the accreditation process, no comprehensive strategy or action plan exists for all components of the process, including resources, technical assistance, and budget implications.*
- *The school district is working in conjunction with NEASC and other outside resources to facilitate the accreditation process, including providing professional development and technical assistance.*

Recommendation

The board of trustees should ensure a comprehensive written strategy, including an action plan, is developed for the accreditation of all the district's elementary and middle schools in accordance with Special Act 97-4. The strategy and action plan should be developed in conjunction with the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, the state Department of Education, and any other resources identified by the board. Included in the comprehensive strategy should be a timetable for the accreditation of all schools, financial and staff resources projected to complete the accreditation process, and a plan for professional development and technical assistance for schools.

Given the district's incremental progress to date and the amount of time necessary to complete the accreditation process, it is unlikely at the current pace that all of Hartford's schools will be accredited by the end of board's term in June 2002. The intent of the above recommendation is to push the board forward on the accreditation process. The committee believes accreditation could be a component for ensuring sustained progress by establishing a defined and ongoing assessment tool following the expiration of the board's term in mid-2002.

There is reason to be optimistic about the accreditation process. As mentioned, the district's coordinator for accreditation has had several recent meetings with NEASC, and a schedule of the next schools to begin accreditation has been developed. The program review committee believes, however, there needs to be a more comprehensive strategy, including budget and other resource and assistance implications, followed by a complete action plan, presented to the board of trustees if accreditation of *all* elementary and middle schools is to occur.

The state monitors, in their March 1998 quarterly report, provided a detailed workgrid summarizing the major components of the district's goals and improvement areas, state laws affecting Hartford schools, and the NEASC accreditation standards for Hartford. The monitors are working on a revised version of the workgrid, which could be a useful tool for designing a comprehensive accreditation strategy. This is particularly important in making sure the work necessary for accreditation is coordinated with the other planning documents and requirements.

Parental Involvement Mechanism

Special Act 97-4 calls for the board of trustees to provide a mechanism for parent, teacher, and community involvement in the schools. To date, no single mechanism exists, rather the overall system supports various ways for parents, teachers, and the community to become involved in their schools.

The program review committee believes the issues before the board of trustees should be whether a formal parental involvement policy exists, if the proper structure is in place to fulfill the policy, and if regular oversight is provided to ensure the policy is implemented in its intended manner. The board has an established parental involvement policy. In general, the policy requires the district to make its schools "open and inviting" to parents and the Hartford community. The policy further states a partnership among parents, students, the community, and

school employees on behalf of children should exist. Each school should also have an active organization for fostering parent/community involvement.

Six specific areas by which to measure parent/family involvement programs were drafted to support the board's original policy. Each area has various "quality indicators" by which overall success can be measured. The six measurement areas include:

- communication between school and home;
- parenting skills;
- student learning;
- parental volunteer efforts;
- school decision making and advocacy; and
- community collaboration to strengthen schools, families, and student learning.

The school district has been developing various ways to involve parents, teachers, and the community in schools. In addition to the initiatives described later in the report, the district is implementing several other structures to support the board's parental involvement policy, including more parent/teacher organizations within schools, increased contact between parents and teachers through conferences and open houses, and increased training for parents. The district is also involved in partnerships with a variety of community groups to increase the involvement of parents in the school system, including the Hartford Parent Network, Hartford Areas Rally Together, Educate our Children Now, and others.

Parent organizations. Probably the closest fit to a single mechanism for parent involvement is the recent establishment/reconstitution of Parent Teacher Organizations and Parent Teacher Associations in each school throughout the district. These organizations are intended to foster interaction among parents, schools, and the community regarding schools. When the board of trustees began its term, this type of structure was not present in every school.

Elections for members of each school's parent organization have been held by each school within the district. Standardized bylaws and operating procedures have also been developed by the central office for use by each organization.

The development of a "President's Council" is also progressing. The idea behind this initiative is to have each school's parent organization select a representative to serve on the council. The council as a whole then meets with the superintendent to discuss issues.

Parent/teacher interaction. The current teachers' contract calls for more open houses to take place during the year. Teachers at all levels are now required to attend two mandatory evening open house activities each year. The previous teachers' contract called for one open house a year. Further, as a way to standardize the open house process, the central office has provided principals with a schedule of events that should occur at each open house during the current school year.

The new teachers' contract also provides for parent-teacher conferences at all schools levels. Under the previous contract, conferences were only required at elementary schools. To facilitate this change, the new contract calls for teachers to have four hours per semester for

parent conferences. The teacher's union also agreed to having conferences held during the evening hours in addition to time during the afternoon. The thought behind this effort was to have teachers more accessible to parents who could not make conferences during the afternoon. The central office has distributed a checklist to principals of areas to be covered during parent/teacher conferences.

The program review committee believes the changes in the teachers' contract language show a commitment on the part of teachers and the board to increase the amount of contact between parents and teachers. The changes also become the baseline for future contract negotiations, which may help ensure their continuation in the future.

Parent training. Training is being provided by the district to help parents become more involved in their children's schools. A "parent institute" was held over the summer attended by approximately 100 parents. The program, taught by a variety of professionals including Hartford teachers, offered parents courses on learning about the organization of the school system, ways to become involved in their child's school, computer training, and personal growth classes. The superintendent has developed comparable parent training programs that began this fall, and more are anticipated during the school year.

Student handbooks. It came to the committee's attention late in the study that the distribution of student handbooks to parents is not a coordinated effort and varies throughout the district. Some schools develop handbooks for parents describing the district's various policies and procedures and them to students at the beginning of the school year to be sent home to parents. Other schools do not distribute such handbooks.

As a result of the uneven development of student handbooks, some parents may not be receiving the information they need regarding the district's policies and procedures. The central office was unclear about past practice and said it would look into the matter.

Summary of Findings

- *A parental involvement policy has been developed by the board of trustees with clear standards.*
- *The current system supports several different ways to involve parents in the schools, rather than a single mechanism as required by Special Act 97-4.*
- *The district is revising the structure used to implement the board's goals and objectives regarding parental involvement.*

Recommendation

The board of trustees should ensure coordination of the various parental, community, and school involvement approaches being implemented throughout the district. Through its oversight role, the board also needs to ensure the district's

performance regarding parental involvement is measured against the parental involvement standards adopted by the board in its original policy.

Advisory Council

A seven-member advisory council was established in early 1998 in accordance with Special Act 97-4. The council is composed of parents with children in the school system, teachers, principals, and a representative from higher education. It is responsible for advising the board of trustees and superintendent on matters regarding curriculum, student achievement, parental and community involvement, and school safety and discipline. The special act does not provide for the appointment of a chairperson.

Committee staff attended several council meetings held during this study. Overall, the council seems to have served its advisory role in the past. For example, it assisted the trustees during its search for a new permanent superintendent. The council was involved in the interview process and in recommending a list of finalists to the trustees. The council also participated in developing various policies ultimately adopted by the board, including the social promotion, parental involvement, and extended day/year policies. Further, regular meetings have been held and usually attended by most council members, as well as the trustees and district administration.

It appears, however, the role of the council may have diminished somewhat now that its work on board policies and the superintendent search have concluded. Advisory council meetings are held on days the board has its regular monthly meeting, and scheduled one hour before the board's normal executive session. The council meetings attended, however, were not conducted in a completely organized manner. The meetings were informal and lacked focus. For example, no formal agenda was ever used and no minutes were taken. There were also times when the different constituencies represented on the council did not have enough time to provide their input or ask questions. A more formal structure with allotted time frames for each group represented on the council would help provide more coordination, facilitate the meetings, and ensure equitable time for the groups to address their issues.

It is also unclear to the committee whether there is any formal manner in which the different groups on the advisory council collect their information. There is no mechanism in place, such as a periodic survey of parents, teachers, or community members or an "informational meeting/hearing" process for the council members to inform the vast constituencies represented on the advisory council about the council's role or to solicit feedback. The advisory council process might improve if such informational collection strategies were used periodically.

Summary of Findings

- *The advisory council established by Special Act 97-4 has been involved in developing several major board policies and in the search for a permanent superintendent.*
- *At present, the council seems to lack a clear focus or agenda.*

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- *The council's meetings are not conducted in a routine, organized manner.*

Recommendations

The advisory council, created by Special Act 97-4, should reestablish its role and the various representatives on the council need to develop and coordinate a clear agenda of major issue areas. Direction should come from the superintendent and trustees during this process, although the parent, teacher, and principal representatives should meet separately on occasion to develop their collective strategy on improving the council's role/process and developing its agenda.

An advisory council chairperson should be appointed by the chairman of the board of trustees. The council, through its chairperson, should incorporate more organization into its regular meetings. This should at least include developing a working agenda for every meeting, taking minutes of meetings, making written requests for specific information to the superintendent, and ensuring responses from the administration to such requests are made at the council's following meeting.

State Monitors

Two full-time equivalent state monitor positions were established within the Department of Education in August 1997. According to Special Act 97-4, the monitors are to assess the progress made by the board of trustees and the needs of the school district. The monitors must also consult with the board and superintendent. The special act further requires the monitors to continue their duties for one year following conclusion of the board's term currently set for June 30, 2002.

The program review committee's overall assessment of the state monitor process is positive. The monitors are knowledgeable about the Hartford school district and diligent in their efforts in requesting and gathering information, visiting schools, attending key meetings, and meeting with school personnel, parents, community groups, and the board of trustees on a regular basis. The monitors have a strong understanding of the operational systems being implemented within the district, including the automated financial management system, purchasing system, and the overall technology initiatives. The committee also believes the monitors show a solid grasp of the academic expectations and initiatives taking place within the school district.

Special Act 97-4 requires the monitors' work be presented in quarterly progress reports. The reports are distributed by the SDE commissioner and state board of education. They address the operations and academic standing of the Hartford school district along with any progress made under the management of the trustees on a quarterly basis. The reports are sent to the legislature's education committee for review. Legislative leaders, the governor, and the board of trustees also receive copies and the reports are made available to the public. The quarterly reports are required until the trustees' term expires.

To date, six quarterly reports have been issued by the monitors. Two of the reports did not correspond with the actual timeframe they should have, but incorporated two quarters worth of reporting into one. The monitors said this was necessary so updated statistical information could be collected, analyzed, and reported for performance indicators such as test scores, attendance rates, and truancy levels, and to incorporate the results of site visits and facilities reviews made of each school. The program review committee concurs with this response. Further, no one expressed any objection to the committee regarding the frequency or adequacy of the monitors' reports.

Each of the quarterly reports prepared by the state monitors was reviewed during this study. The reports were detailed and included synopses of the district's progress, or lack of progress, in many relevant areas. The reports focused on key elements of Special Act 97-4, the board's annual goals and objectives, and quantitative indicators of the school district's performance, including achievement levels on standardized exams required by the state.

The committee believes the quarterly reports, and the state monitor process as a whole, bring accountability regarding the performance of the Hartford school district under the trustees. Given the content of the reports, their frequency, and to whom they are distributed, the committee believes the reports provide policy makers, administrators, and the public with a collective source of information and analysis to make decisions regarding the school district's progress.

Although the committee believes the quarterly reports are well prepared, the overall reporting process does not incorporate any type of annual or cumulative report. The reports only document what happens from quarter to quarter. No annual report is made compiling the overall progress of the board of trustees for that year. Such a report would be useful in gauging improvement and progress on a yearly basis made against the board's established annual goals and objectives without compromising the analysis of any trends provided by the quarterly reports.

The state monitors are also required by Special Act 97-4 to make monthly written reports to the state education commissioner and the State Board of Education on the progress and needs of the Hartford school district. The reports must be forwarded to the board of trustees and the superintendent. No such written reports are prepared; rather the monitors meet with the education commissioner on a monthly basis to discuss the school district. The committee believes the monthly meetings between the monitors, commissioner, and superintendent are sufficient to fulfill the statutory intent.

Summary of Findings

- *The state monitors are diligent in their efforts to document progress made on a quarterly basis by the board of trustees and Hartford public school system.*
- *The state monitors add a level of accountability through their presence and quarterly reporting process.*

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- *The quarterly reports document the school system's progress from a qualitative and quantitative perspective.*
 - *The monthly written reports required by Special Act 97-4 are not prepared, but this does not seem to pose any problems.*
 - *No annual report is prepared through the state monitor process.*

Recommendation

The state monitors should begin developing an annual report as part of its regular fourth quarter reports. The annual report should detail the board's cumulative progress in meeting its stated goals and objectives and implementation of its specified policies and procedures over the course of the previous year. The distribution of the annual reports shall be the same as its other quarterly reports.

Administrative Operating Systems

A major goal of the State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools has been to develop efficient and effective operating systems for the overall administration and management of the school district in accordance with Special Act 97-4. The systems inherited by the board were not functioning in their intended manner. The basic functions of financial management, purchasing, facilities, technology, and human resources all had problems or deficiencies to varying degrees impeding the overall operation of the school district.

The program review committee believes important steps have been taken under the direction of the board of trustees to develop legitimate operating systems. The progress to date has been the development of organized and more efficient administrative systems. For example, the board's finance and budget operation has been reorganized, new budget and reporting processes have been implemented, and a systemwide automated financial management system is being installed. Purchasing processes have also changed, mainly to help alleviate a backlog of purchase orders and to ensure teachers receive supplies before the school year starts. Collective bargaining agreements have been renegotiated, job descriptions have been updated or created, and personnel evaluation systems are being formulated. Changes and upgrades to the district's technology infrastructure have also occurred, providing the district with greater and quicker access to various types of information. The development of a long range facilities plan has also occurred.

On the academic side, standardized programs are being implemented districtwide, primarily under the board's current superintendent hired in April 1999. As such, the board of trustees has directed and overseen the development of the school district's basic "infrastructure," both operationally and academically.

Given the changes are in their beginning stages for the most part, the program review committee could not examine ultimate outcomes. Rather, the committee focused on the types of progress made during the board's term to date in developing and implementing functional systems the district previously lacked. The committee also examined whether appropriate controls and structures are being developed to help sustain the trustees' improvements after control of the educational system is returned to the city and its residents.

Financial Management

The financial management problems the board faced upon its appointment are well documented and were discussed at the public hearing held by the committee in September. There were outstanding debts, the district was in a budget deficit situation, proper financial accounting systems were deficient, and instructional supplies were generally not available at the opening of the school year. The independent financial auditors, who audit the board of education as part of the city's audit, said the financial system was in a chaotic state and the entire system had to be stabilized before any forward progress could be initiated.

In early 1998, various controls were put into place to help stabilize the district's financial troubles, such as budget, purchasing, and hiring freezes. The district's financial management problems also dictated the establishment of an expenditure control committee in early 1998 to review emergency requests, monitor overtime, and identify whether special funds could absorb general budget costs to avoid a deficit situation.

Current board members have said it took several months following their appointments to fully realize the magnitude of the financial management problems, with serious issues surfacing in late 1997 and the first quarter of 1998. The problems became severe enough that the board requested the chief state's attorney's office to conduct an investigation of the school district's financial management practices.

Chief state's attorney's report. Problems with the district's financial management in the area of special education escalated to the point that in early 1998 the board requested the chief state's attorney's office investigate the school district's financial records to determine if criminal wrongdoing had occurred. The examination into the finances of the Hartford school district by the Office of the Chief State's Attorney concluded that although criminal findings could not be substantiated, payment voucher records had been altered and bills for 1997 were paid with 1998 funds.

The investigation by the chief state's attorney did not uncover any criminal wrongdoing. The report, released in July 1999, found the school district lacked appropriate financial controls. For example, payment voucher records had been altered and bills incurred in one fiscal year were being paid with funds from another fiscal year. The investigation also revealed the district concealed a \$2 million deficit in special education expenses for the 1996-97 fiscal year, and cited the district for inadequate financial management supervision and accountability.

The city's independent financial auditors also cited financial management problems in their 1997 and 1998 audits of the board. Aside from specific recommendations in detailed areas, the auditors identified a general lack of written procedures in the financial management area.

Management structure. The board of trustees began assembling an entirely new upper-level financial management team in mid-1998 to help deal with the district's financial problems. A new assistant superintendent for finance and administration was hired that August. The assistant superintendent then hired a new finance director, purchasing manager, and special funds director, who handles funding received outside of the general budget, including state and federal

grants. The assistant superintendent, however, resigned in mid-1999 and the finance director became the acting executive director for finance and administration having the same responsibilities as the previous assistant superintendent.

Budget and reporting processes. One of the first tasks of the new financial management team was to develop and implement a budget manual and process for the 1999-00 budget cycle. The manual includes written guidelines for the new process and was distributed to school principals and cost center managers. Past budgeting practices were revamped resulting in more input from the local school level into the budget process. Principals were instructed to develop their budgets according to their individual school improvement plans and other districtwide planning efforts, such as the Hartford Improvement Plan, yearly goals and objectives, and the standards used for accreditation as required by Special Act 97-4.

The new budget process also included board "workshops" to discuss and develop the budget according to the district's priorities once the information from the school level was received. At least nine detailed public sessions were held by the board at the beginning of 1999 to thoroughly examine each budgetary item. Board members have noted the workshops were important not only for creating a budget, but providing a public forum for the budget development process.

Another key component of the district's improved financial accounting system deals with special funds/major grants. Monthly reports are now produced for the board for all special fund sources by fund and cost center. The new process helps address the concerns raised by the chief state's attorney's report referenced earlier. It is also the first time the district has had such an in-depth financial accounting and reporting process for its special funds.

As a result of the enhanced budget and reporting processes, the board chairman told the committee that the board now has appropriate, accurate, and timely financial information for management analysis and budget development. The board's present budget/financial management position is favorable compared to the situation early last year. According to financial statements obtained by the committee, the school district had a zero balance for FY99 and did not incur a deficit. As a result, no budget, purchasing, or hiring freezes were necessary during the year as in the past.

Many outstanding payment balances for services provided to the district from previous years have been eliminated or put on a payment schedule. For example, an agreement was reached with one vendor to begin having the district pay off its outstanding debt of roughly \$2 million for services provided during 1996 and 1997. Although a payment plan was arranged with final payment due this school year, the district paid the bill in full sooner than expected. Aside from several bills being reviewed by the city that include balances under dispute, payments to vendors are current. As an indication of progress, one of the district's larger vendors was contacted and said the overall purchasing and payment processes have improved tremendously since mid-1998.

Increased financial reporting is also taking place. Detailed financial status reports are presented monthly to the board as part of the new financial management structure. The reports allow the board to monitor the financial condition of the school district. The board was also informed at a recent meeting that all relevant financial reports due to the state education department, which have been filed up to 11 months late in the past, were submitted according to their statutory deadlines for the 1998-99 fiscal year. Further, there is now an accounting of the roughly \$40 million received as special funds, and the board recently received a report tracking these funds for the 1998-99 fiscal year. This is a practice that did not occur in the past.

The trustees believe the improved financial management and reporting systems helped the board secure additional funding for the 1999-00 school year totaling approximately \$8 million; \$6 million came from the state and \$2 million from the city. In accordance with Special Act 97-4, 1999-00 marked the first year the board of trustees could determine the amount of local funding necessary to operate the school district. The overall general budget for the district increased from \$184 million in FY99 to \$192 million in FY00, or just over four percent. Appendix H provides the district's adopted 1999-00 budget and its 1998-99 expenditures by object group and line item as a way to compare where the additional funding will be allocated.

During interviews with the trustees, each believed the current financial management system provides timely reports and the information included in the reports is adequate for management analysis purposes. The trustees noted, however, the improved budget and financial reporting systems are recent developments (within the last year) and were not in place during the beginning stages of the board.

Purchasing process. The school district has begun to restructure and standardize its purchasing process under the board of trustees. For example, the way the district purchases instructional supplies for teachers was changed for the 1999-00 school year. The new process required schools to submit purchase requisitions to the central office for supplies by mid-June 1999 for the 1999-00 school year and again in January 2000. The requisitions submitted in June were batched and a single purchase order was sent to one vendor. The negotiated delivery deadline from the vendor for all supplies was mid-August, well in advance of the start of school. Principals were also trained on the new purchase order system to make sure the process operated efficiently.

According to records provided to the committee, the delivery rate for instructional supplies for this school year was over 96 percent. The records also show a similar delivery rate for office supplies to the schools. Other procedural changes recently instituted for purchasing include ordering copy paper and bathroom supplies in bulk for the entire school year before the start of school.

Overall, the new system allows the district to maximize economies of scale for purchasing such items and provides for supplies to be delivered directly to the schools by individual teacher prior to the start of the school year, eliminating the central office from the delivery process. Under past practice the supplies were delivered to the central office and then distributed to the schools. There was no system in place to ensure the supplies were delivered prior to the school year.

Toward the end of 1998 and into early 1999, the district had a backlog of approximately 1,000 purchase orders. As a result, orders for such things as school supplies and materials were going unfilled. With the board's reorganization of the financial management area, the backlog has been eliminated. It is now the goal of the central office to fill purchase orders within one week after they have been received.

The district also experienced general maintenance problems last year due to the purchase of inferior cleaning and custodial products. The problems have been identified and rectified for the upcoming school year. New products have also been ordered and delivered according to the district's specifications. Custodians have been trained by company representatives on how to use the new products to ensure maximum effectiveness.

Financial management procedures manual. Although financial management processes are becoming more efficient, the district lacks a written procedures manual, a factor also cited for this shortcoming in the board's recent financial audits. The committee has been informed that written documentation is being collected for outlining written procedures, but other priorities have delayed development of a comprehensive manual. The financial management system has incurred major changes over the last year and the program review committee believes written procedures are necessary to ensure the improvements made to the system become normal business practice.

Automated financial management system. The school district is installing an automated financial management system, called SmartStream, purchased almost three years ago. The system is an automated software package integrating various financial management components (e.g., general ledger, procurement, budget, and payroll/human resources.) It is client server based rather than operating from a mainframe, and is being integrated with the district's wide area network capabilities. Each school will have access to the system. The school district's conversion to the SmartStream system is being done in conjunction with the city, which is making the same conversion.

The system is partially operational and most of the recent implementation efforts have focused on installing a new version of the software that is Year 2000 compliant. The new software went "live" in mid-November 1999, and is being tested for reliability.

A consultant has been retained through the Operational Audit Steering Committee (described earlier) to implement the automated financial management system because of problems encountered with its installation. The consultant, hired in February 1999, regularly reports on implementation progress to the steering committee. Although reports to the committee show progress on the Year 2000 conversion efforts, the system as a whole has been criticized by some as not being appropriate for the school district. The district and city, however, are committed to implementing the system and are working toward its implementation.

Much attention and focus has been given to the automated financial management system, although progress has been incremental. Further, there has been limited progress in developing the internal resources necessary to maintain the system once it is fully operational. The program review committee believes the board of trustees needs to ensure the district has the internal

capacity to operate, manage, and maintain the automated financial management system once the consultant's work is completed, tentatively scheduled for late 2000. The consultant has made this issue known to the audit steering committee, which is looking into the matter.

Summary of Findings

- *A new financial management structure has been developed under the board of trustees.*
- *The school district's financial management and budget areas are now stabilized; no deficit was incurred this year and the vast majority of outstanding balances from past years have been paid.*
- *The yearly budget process was reorganized for the 1999-00 school year with a written budget manual and guidelines prepared and distributed to schools.*
- *The purchasing process has been restructured to include instructional supplies delivered by the vendor to each school, by teacher, twice per year; the delivery rate for instructional supplies delivered in mid-August for 1999-00 school year was close to 97 percent.*
- *Written procedures still need to be developed for the entire financial management area.*
- *The automated financial management system purchased almost three years ago is not fully operational; the system is being implemented by an outside consultant with no internal resources identified to sustain it once implemented.*

Recommendations

The board of trustees should ensure all financial management processes and procedures are formally documented in a written manual(s) for use by school and central office personnel.

The board of trustees should ensure the school district develops the internal capacity to take ownership of the automated financial management project upon its full implementation. At minimum, this should include: assigning a project manager/team to oversee the system; providing necessary resources for continued project development and support; and providing staff training as needed.

Facilities

The overall condition of the district's schools is an issue being addressed by the board of trustees. For example, during the board's term thus far, a long range facilities plan was initiated and developed and bond funding has been secured for various capital improvement projects, including roof replacements, new windows, and oil tank extractions. In addition, development of a new Hartford Public High School is expected to begin soon.

Although capital improvements are being made, preventative maintenance within the school district remains an issue. The district is responsible for maintaining 32 schools covering 4.3 million square feet of building space and 287 acres of grounds.

Site visits. As a way to see firsthand the overall *general* condition of Hartford's schools, committee staff conducted site visits to 10 randomly selected schools throughout the district. The visits were unannounced and conducted around the start of the school day to aid comparability.

Each school was reviewed for basic factors such as: overall cleanliness and appearance; condition of the exterior and interior main student entrance; condition of the main student hallway; presence of bathroom supplies; presence and condition of basic classroom and cafeteria equipment such as chairs, desks, tables, and temperature and lighting levels. The ten schools visited included eight elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. The schools provided a mix of newer and older facilities with their own characteristics and issues. The schools also had varying student population levels and covered each of the main quadrants within the city. Table IV-1 identifies some specifics about the schools reviewed.

Table IV-1. Hartford Public School Sites Visited by Program Review Committee Staff.				
Site Visited	Year Built	Last Renovation	Capacity	Bldg. Size (sq. ft.)
Burns Elementary	1939	1992	800	109,850
Fisher Elementary	1965	--	680	103,492
King Elementary	1924	1977	1,000	152,000
Kinsella Elementary	1974	1988	520	96,741
Sanchez Elementary	1992	--	560	130,360
SAND Elementary	1998	--	480	81,684
Twain Elementary	1952	--	500	70,000
West Middle Elem.	1894	1930	540	100,874
Quirk Middle School	1972	--	1,422	225,873
Bulkeley High School	1974	--	2,016	299,300

Sources of Data: Hartford Public Schools; Connecticut Department of Education

Using ratings of either "good", "adequate", or "poor" and "yes" or "no" in its review, the committee staff's overall conclusion is the schools visited were clean, although some of the facilities showed signs of wear. Observations of each school's exterior revealed litter was relatively nonexistent. Very few schools showed signs of graffiti, and what graffiti was noticed was minimal. Several schools had plexiglas windows, which have become cloudy. The facades on the schools varied and were primarily considered either "adequate" or "good", with only one school rated as "poor." (The board is aware of this problem and is considering several options to correct it.) The overall condition of the grounds for the vast majority of schools was considered "adequate," although the visits were made in late fall and leaf pick-up was either beginning or had not started for most schools.

As previously noted, several factors of each school's interior were examined. The main observation is that each school is clean with signs of wear. Two of the schools visited were built within the last seven years and rated highly for each factor reviewed.

The main student entrances for all but one school were considered either "good" or "adequate". This included being free of obstructions, having secure handrails where appropriate, and having adequate lighting. Students at the school having a "poor" student entrance entered from the back of the building, near the school's trash collection area and outside mechanical operations.

The overall appearance of each school's interior was generally clean, yet worn, for most schools. Several schools had main interiors with murals, plants, or carpeting. The main hallways used by students were considered clean, yet most schools had maintenance issues, such as chipped/scratched painting, missing/damaged ceiling tiles, missing/damaged floor tiles, or the need for general repairs. The overall appearance of classrooms visited was mainly "good" with supplies evident, artwork present, desks/writing tables and chairs available to students, and adequate lighting and temperature levels.

Repeated problems were found with school bathrooms. Other than in the new schools, bathrooms were not as well-kept as the other parts of each school. Boys' bathrooms also generally lacked soap and paper towels, although hot water was usually present. Toilet paper was not present in several boys' bathrooms. Girls' bathrooms were also generally without soap, but usually had paper towels and toilet paper.

Several head custodians and principals at all levels noted that bathrooms remain an issue. Although schools received bathroom supplies at the beginning of the school year, there is a general problem with maintaining the supplies and dispensers and keeping them from abuse or damage by students. Some schools have tried several methods to correct the problems, such as having teachers distribute supplies as students leave the classroom.

Cafeterias, for the most part, were clean. All were equipped with enough tables and chairs for students, and lighting and temperature levels were "good". The overall appearance of cafeterias varied, with the vast majority of schools considered "adequate." One school received a "poor" rating for its cafeteria, mainly because it was in the school's basement, was poorly painted, and devoid of artwork or design.

Although the newly-built schools received high ratings, several problems were found. The committee was informed that a tar-like substance that has been dripping from the gymnasium roof of one school since it was built. The substance is adhering to a rubberized gym floor causing stains and possible deterioration. The principal said attempts have been made to have the problem corrected, but there is difficulty in determining who is ultimately responsible since the school is new. The other new school visited had a side entrance for students directly adjacent to an abandoned house with a trash-strewn backyard.

Facilities reviews by state monitors. As mentioned earlier, the state monitors have conducted site visits and inspections of each school within the Hartford public school system as part of their overall review. The monitors have made three separate inspections/visits to each school since mid-1997 (alternative and special education facilities have been inspected once). The monitors have documented their detailed findings in the quarterly reports submitted to the legislature's education committee. Another round of school inspections/visits by the state monitors is planned for late 1999.

Long range facilities plan. A perennial challenge facing the Hartford public school system is the overall physical condition of its school facilities. The operational audit found the district did not have an updated, prioritized, long-range plan for facilities or property maintenance. The audit also noted that preventative maintenance is compromised by constant crisis management to alleviate current facilities and maintenance problems.

Recognizing this concern prior to the operational audit's findings, the legislature, through Special Act 97-4, required the state board of trustees to develop a long-range school building program. The act also required the board and the city to "expeditiously" implement the program.

Responding to the legislative direction, the board of trustees hired an architectural firm in early 1998 to conduct a multi-phase assessment of the school district's facilities. The result of this analysis will be a 10-year facilities master plan for the school district, scheduled to be completed in early 2000.

The process for developing the plan is multi-faceted. One major component of the project was a demographic analysis and enrollment projection study. This task, completed in March 1999, will serve as the foundation for all future capital improvements from 1999-2008.

Development of a master plan also required an analysis of the overall physical condition of each school facility. The facilities condition component is complete, and a written report outlining the major capital improvements necessary for each school was submitted to the board of trustees in August 1999. Results of the facilities condition analysis will be included in the overall master facilities report/plan.

Other major components of the master plan require a financial analysis of the overall costs of any improvements associated with the facilities analysis, and a short-term assessment of priority projects relating to roof replacement at nine schools, system-wide underground storage tank replacement, and system-wide window replacement. The plan must also include a comprehensive short-term preventative maintenance program based on current conditions, and a long-term routine preventative maintenance program for each school facility. The preventative maintenance report has been completed.

In addition to the long-range facilities plan, the board hired a consultant in 1998 to conduct a review of the school district's buildings and grounds department. The study was completed and submitted to the board in October 1998. Some of the operational problems cited by the consultant include: 1) a lack of funding for school needs; 2) protecting buildings from vandalism with products and devices that look terrible (e.g., non-breakable, polycarbonate glazing material for windows); 3) too many approval levels for purchasing products; 4)

understaffed buildings and grounds department; 5) unsatisfactory type and quality of some custodial products; and 6) inadequate business practices within the department. Various process problems within the buildings and grounds department cited in the consultant's report and the Coopers and Lybrand operational audit are being examined currently by the chief of staff of the Operational Audit Steering Committee and the school district.

School building committee. A school building committee composed of school, city, state, and private representatives has taken on the role of overseeing the work being accomplished regarding public school facilities. The committee consists of three members of the board of trustees (including the chairman), school district representatives, the city manager and city staff, a city council member, and a representative from the school facilities unit of the state education department.

The building committee meets monthly to monitor the progress toward improving the city's public school facilities. The primary focus of the committee's recent meetings has been on the long-range facilities plan. The committee, however, is also following several other major initiatives, including: planning and construction of a new Hartford Public High School facility; capital improvements to various schools, including new roofs, underground storage tank removal/replacement, electrical upgrades, and health and safety matters; and property/general maintenance issues.

Last year the city approved a \$108 million bond plan for capital improvements to school facilities to help fund various projects. The plan calls for \$68 million for the Hartford Public High School project; \$27 million in priority repairs to various schools, such as electrical service upgrades for increased computer equipment installation, health and safety projects, air conditioning projects, and window replacements; and \$13 million for new roofs and replacement/extraction of underground storage tanks. Another \$20 million in bonds were issued in late 1996 for renovation projects at 13 schools across the district.

The long range facilities plan detailed above was submitted by the private company that developed it to the joint school/city building committee in mid-November for review. It is anticipated that the plan will be reviewed by the building committee, board members, and schools principals. After the review period, a final facilities plan will be delivered to the board sometime in early 2000.

Although the facilities plan fulfills the requirement in Special Act 97-4 that a long-term school building program be developed by the district, the board needs to ensure the proper implementation structure is in place once the final version of the plan is completed. This includes developing short and long term strategies on how to best address the plan's findings and recommendations. Implementation of the major capital improvements outlined in the plan is also dependent upon funding. Proper planning, therefore, is required to prioritize projects for funding purposes. The board recognizes this responsibility as evidenced by its inclusion as a discussion topic at an informational meeting held by the board in mid-November 1999.

Preventative maintenance. Preventative maintenance is considered a problem within the school district. There is no master preventative maintenance schedule or plan whereby buildings and grounds department staff routinely check/repair capital equipment within schools.

The lack of a preventative maintenance plan is being addressed as part of the long range facilities plan. The preventative maintenance plan includes an analysis of the district's maintenance operation by an independent consultant. The consultant's draft report indicates preventative maintenance is lacking, and a program based on a solid plan can help ensure the capital improvements made by the district remain in good condition.

The consultant's report addresses five primary areas: a short term preventative maintenance program; a long term preventative maintenance program; implementation plans; evaluation of staffing requirements; and a custodial work plan. The report also includes an analysis of staffing requirements, the components required for a preventative maintenance program, and standardized checklists for such a program. The staffing analysis shows the district has an appropriate number of custodians (236) according to various standards used by the consultant, but their distribution among schools is questionable.

As noted above, the site visits conducted by committee staff found clean schools, a fact concurred with in the consultant's report. Custodians have daily schedules according to records obtained from the buildings and grounds department. The schedules are developed by school, and include responsibilities such as trash removal, sweeping/vacuuming, refilling bathroom supplies, and overall cleaning. The committee believes the site visits revealing school cleanliness and appearance are good indicators of adequate custodial services.

Although the schools were found to be generally clean, the district's custodial service has experienced significant problems in the past due to inferior cleaning products. The problems have been identified and rectified for this school year. New products from a different vendor were ordered and delivered according to the district's specifications, and custodial staff throughout the district received training by company representatives on how to use the new products to ensure maximum effectiveness. These changes were confirmed with several head custodians during the committee staff's school visits.

Regarding maintenance staff, the report suggests 11 more are necessary to maintain a program of 50 percent preventative maintenance and 50 percent routine/emergency repairs. The board of trustees authorized 13 new maintenance positions in its 1999-00 budget to facilitate maintenance. To date, four positions have been filled. The director of the building and grounds department noted the department is having difficulty filling the remaining positions due to either a lack of candidates or lack of proper experience for those who apply.

To help improve the overall buildings and grounds operation and facilitate the recommendations in the consultant's report, a new chief of staff to oversee the buildings and grounds operation was hired by the district in mid-November 1999. The district, through the Operational Audit Steering Committee, also purchased a new automated work order system for routine repairs and maintenance. The system was implemented in November and staff training is scheduled.

As the buildings and grounds operations become more standardized and a formal preventative maintenance program is established, the committee believes there is a need for the district to develop written policies and procedures. This recommendation was also highlighted in the consultant's report on preventative maintenance.

Redistricting. A natural outgrowth of the long range facilities plan is for the board of trustees to address the issue of redistricting and develop a redistricting plan or strategy. The plan would be based in large part on the findings of the facilities plan, since it includes a projection of the district's population demographics for the next 10 years.

The board has already addressed redistricting once this past June when it approved a plan submitted to the board in mid-March 1999. The plan, however, is considered temporary and only good through the 1999-00 school year. The plan reconfigured 11 schools, mainly due to the opening of a refurbished elementary school with a large student capacity.

Redistricting is a difficult issue with ramifications on the district's school children and families. Given the development of the long range facilities plan and a temporary plan currently in place, the committee believes the board of trustees should examine redistricting before its term expires. The administration should analyze the overall distribution of the student population throughout the district and the demographic trends highlighted in the long range facilities study to determine if redistricting is necessary. Once this is completed, and restructuring is necessary, a new plan should be presented to the board for its consideration.

Summary of Findings

- *On-site visits to randomly selected schools revealed the schools to be clean, although some schools showed signs of wear.*
- *The long range facilities plan required by Special Act 97-4 is completed in draft form and a process is in place to finalize the plan.*
- *School custodians have daily schedules, although the district lacks an overall preventative maintenance schedule/plan. An independent consultant's report on preventative maintenance is included in the long range facilities plan.*
- *A new chief of staff was hired in mid-November to oversee the buildings and grounds operation; a new automated work order system for routine repairs and maintenance, purchased through the Operational Audit Steering Committee, was implemented in mid-November and staff training is scheduled.*
- *The board of trustees approved a temporary redistricting plan in June, but it is only good through the 1999-00 school year; additional analysis is needed to determine whether a new plan is necessary, particularly after the draft long range facilities plan is finalized.*

Recommendation

The board of trustees should devise short- and long-term implementation strategies in conjunction with the city to implement the 10-year facilities plan upon its completion. Using the facilities plan, the board should also analyze whether redistricting for the city's public schools is necessary and develop a plan to ensure students attend properly sized facilities.

Technology Enhancement

The level and sophistication of technology throughout the school district is increasing under the board of trustees, including instructional technology. The transformation has occurred in large part within the current superintendent's initiatives to integrate technology into the curriculum and with the help of federal grants of approximately \$24 million.

As part of an effort to incorporate technology into the district's overall educational and operational strategy, the board of trustees approved a multi-year technology plan in early 1998. Plan development was overseen by an advisory committee, which transitioned into the current technology committee. The committee is a cooperative effort of representatives from the school district, University of Connecticut, and the private and nonprofit sectors, and has taken the lead in monitoring the technology plan's implementation.

Five primary components necessary for an efficient and effective technology system are addressed in the district's technology plan. The main strategic initiatives include hardware, software, professional development, networking, and service/maintenance. The plan also delineates five "critical success factors" that together form the foundation and strategy for technology for the school district. The factors include:

- access to technology tools;
- staff skills and competencies;
- integrated technology in instruction and school management;
- quality and timely support;
- leadership.

Technology committee. As mentioned, representatives from the school district, the private sector, the state university system, and private and non-profit sectors make up a technology committee. The committee originally was formed to address the school district's need for an overall technology strategy prior to the board of trustees. A plan was developed with the assistance of an outside consultant, and ultimately presented to the board of trustees once the board was established.

After the board of trustees approved the plan, the committee turned its focus to meeting the plan's objectives. The committee developed an implementation plan, which includes action steps, entities responsible for implementation, projected and actual completion dates, and specific measures to determine successful implementation for each major objective. At present, the technology committee reviewing the new superintendent's new technology initiatives, while the superintendent is familiarizing himself with the district's overall technology plan.

Program review committee staff attended monthly technology committee meetings during the course of this study and made several observations. The technology committee consists of dedicated professionals, but lacked overall direction or legitimacy from the district/board. The committee was self-directed in its efforts, and the meetings attended usually did not include anyone from the district with policy or decisionmaking authority. The program review committee believes this is due to the transition between administrations, which occurred in April. Minutes from prior technology committee meetings show, in fact, an assistant superintendent and a director from the school district having attended those meetings.

The technology committee is beginning to regain its direction now that the school district's new executive director for technology has begun chairing the committee. Among her first agenda items are to reestablish the purpose of the technology committee, particularly in light of the district's recent technology initiatives, coordinate the district's internal and external partners for technology, advise on policy issues, and report on success.

Technology integration is a big part of the current academic and administrative initiatives with large resource and student achievement implications. The program review committee believes a clearer focus for the technology committee is important to implement and monitor the technology plan adopted by the board.

The board also needs to have a clear understanding of the vision, implementation plan or strategy, and progress towards implementing its technology plan. The program review committee believes this is not being done in a comprehensive manner. For example, until recently, no formal updates have been given to the board since early 1998 on the implementation of the technology plan. Further, the technology plan adopted by the board is set to expire in 2001. Given the rapid changes taking place in technology and the high level of technological initiatives being introduced within the district, the board needs to maintain a current technology strategy.

Year 2000. The operational audit identified several deficiencies in the district's Year 2000 (Y2K) compliance efforts. As noted in Appendix D, the audit found no comprehensive Y2K plan had been developed for the school district and indicated an analysis of the school system's computer hardware, operating systems, and software was necessary. To help address the cited deficiencies, the school district formally assigned an internal staff person as project manager for Y2K planning in January 1998.

The project manager created a Year 2000 Readiness Team for the purpose of developing a strategy ensuring the district's Y2K compliance. The readiness team works in conjunction with a similar body at the city level and is responsible for planning and implementation. A steering committee also exists at the board level to monitor the district's progress regarding Y2K.

compliance. The steering committee consists of school and city staff, and private sector representatives; it is chaired by the board of trustees' chairman. The chairman has noted that Y2K compliance is the district's main business initiative and the district's systems are being tested and brought into compliance (as best as possible) on an on-going basis.

Infrastructure. The school district is currently working toward completion of a major technology infrastructure project establishing local area networks (LANs) within each school and a wide area network (WAN) to connect the computer systems among schools, the city's libraries, and the school district's central office.

The project includes schools being "wired" to develop the computer networks. Each classroom and school office throughout the district will have been provided access to computer lines (approximately 7,000 stations) before the start of school in early September. Classrooms have hook-ups for four computers each. The computers will all have access to services such as the Internet and e-mail. This is a major overhaul of -- and improvement over -- the district's previous technology capability.

Funding. The bulk of the funding for the technology upgrade program is from a federal program called "E-Rate" through the Federal Communications Commission. The program provided approximately \$8 million to the school district to complete the project. An additional \$1 million was provided by the state education department, and another \$112,000 from the city. The state and city funding was used to leverage the federal funding. Another federal grant of approximately \$15 million is also expected as part of the E-Rate program.

Additional system services. The improved technology infrastructure and "connectivity" between schools and the central office opens the door for increased system services. For example, the district is using its increased technology capabilities to implement a new student attendance software system. The system will provide schools and the central administration with an automated accounting of students' attendance, class schedules, and records.

The district's enhanced technology systems also allow for Internet access to the SmartStream financial accounting system described above. Schools can access the system without using outdated and inefficient modem communication. As a result, the transfer of financial information should be greatly increased with the new technology system.

Summary of Findings

- *The overall level of technology within the school district is increasing under the board of trustees, both instructionally and administratively.*
- *Implementation of the technology plan, adopted by the board in early 1998, is overseen by a technology committee composed of district, private, university, and non-profit representatives.*
- *The technology committee has lacked overall direction from the school district this year, primarily due to the change in administrations.*

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- *The school district's new executive director for technology began chairing the technology committee in October with a focus on reestablishing the committee's purpose.*
 - *Regular reporting to the board of trustees on the overall implementation status of the technology plan is lacking; the current plan is in place until 2001.*

Recommendations

Periodic updates should be given to the board of trustees regarding the status of the board's technology plan, including how the district's current initiatives are linked with the plan. The board of trustees should also determine whether revisions to the current technology plan are necessary, and update/revise the plan before the plan's expiration in 2001.

Human Resources

Over 3,400 persons are employed by the Hartford school system. Besides the teaching function, within which is significant variety of positions, there are a myriad of other jobs necessary to the system, ranging from finance to building maintenance. Given the critical purpose of the district -- the education of Hartford's children -- individual accountability and institutional support in the form of a functioning human resources system, are integral to success. Components of an effective human resources system include:

- 1) clear articulation of what is expected from employees, and from the employee/employer relationship;
- 2) fair and meaningful assessment of employee performance; and
- 3) commitment to continuous professional development on the part of the employee and employer.

Current contracts. As noted earlier in the report, with the passage of Special Act 97-4, the State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools took over the administration of 12 different collective bargaining agreements. When the trustees began operation of the Hartford school system in mid-1997, only two of the twelve bargaining units actually had current contracts in place—the teacher and the principal units. The other units were operating under contracts that had expired, in most cases a year earlier. The board of trustees has remedied this problem, and all the contracts are current.

Job descriptions. According to the current human resources director, in November 1997 when he started, most district job descriptions were either outdated or nonexistent. He cited the problem of postings announcing job vacancies conflicting with outdated job descriptions, causing confusion. Revamping job descriptions has been a major effort in the human resources area. As of October 21, 1999, 226 new job titles were either approved or in the reworking process. Examples of the different functional areas involved are: Curriculum and Instruction;

Information Technologies; Food Services; Health services/education; and Psychological services.

Performance evaluation. C.G.S. Section 10-151b requires teacher evaluations be conducted in accordance with guidelines established by the State Board of Education. At present, most Hartford teachers are evaluated with an assessment tool in use since 1988. The evaluation instrument, however, is being revised to reflect recent changes in state guidelines.

Until recently, the pertinent state guidelines for evaluations were the Connecticut Teaching Competencies (CTC), made up of 15 key attributes adopted in 1984. The State Board of Education recently issued new guidelines called Connecticut's Common Core of Teaching (CCT). The CCT focuses on two areas: 1) foundational skills and competencies that are common to all teachers from pre-kindergarten through Grade 12; and 2) discipline-based professional standards that represent the knowledge, skills, and competencies that are unique for teachers of different disciplines. While the district is in the process of adapting its current evaluation instrument to the new state guidelines, other significant changes are also afoot to revamp teacher evaluations.

Pilot program. For the past few years, there have been efforts to develop an alternative evaluation process for teachers, including attempts to actually pilot a new system at selected schools. Most recently, in the last eight months, the Human Resources department has taken the lead for revamping teacher evaluations. There is a committee composed of five administrators and teachers, working under the direction of a human resource manager. Generally, the main differences between the current evaluation process and the anticipated process are:

- the new evaluation process will be integrated with professional development—both in terms of opportunity and responsibility; and
- teacher performance assessments will be tied to their students' performance, as well as the performance of their schools and the district.

Under the pilot program, each teacher must develop a "Professional Growth Compact" (PGC). The compact is an individualized statement of goals and action steps, but reflects goals of the particular school and district. The pilot is currently being used at West Middle and Burns elementary schools, and is planned for use at Hartford Public High School. One item the committee is currently working on is incorporating accountability measures into the PGC concept. The current expectation is to present the new evaluation method to the board of trustees next spring, with a three-year implementation plan.

Work is also being done on the evaluation processes for non-teacher employees.

Summary of Findings

- *It is critical to the purpose of the school district -- educating children -- that there be a fair and effective personnel evaluation system, with support for professional*

development needed to be able to meet changing expectations, and consequences for unacceptable results.

- *Steps are underway to develop and implement an effective personnel evaluation system*

Recommendation

The program review committee recommends the board of trustees require formal periodic reports on the development and implementation of the personnel performance evaluation instrument.

SYSTEM OVERSIGHT

The district lacked updated policies, regulations, and bylaws when the board of trustees began its term in mid-1997. Upon its appointment, the board of trustees recognized the need to update and revise the policies and administrative regulations governing the district and the board of education.

The board of trustees has revamped its entire policies and administrative manual, with a final version nearly completed. A revised set of bylaws governing the board's conduct has also been adopted. The board's policies manual and operating bylaws were evaluated and found to be clearly written and comprehensive.

It is evident from the information and analysis presented throughout this report that the board of trustees has primarily focused its efforts on developing and implementing structures and controls to guide the school district's administrative operations – as required by Special Act 97-4. Now that such changes have been established, the board must focus on ensuring the proper systems and processes are being developed to implement its various policies and regulations. This effort becomes further warranted given the board's revamped policies and regulations are near completion and a permanent superintendent was hired by the board in April 1999 to carry out those policies.

Structures and procedures to implement the board's policies in areas such as social promotion, parental involvement, attendance, and extended day/year are either being developed or revised by the current superintendent. As such, it is important for the board to receive regular updates on how well its policies are being implemented.

The program review committee believes more formal reporting back to the board needs to occur to help ensure proper oversight of the implementation progress. One of the main ways to oversee policy implementation is through a standardized reporting process, which the board does not seem to have except for the monthly financial reports presented at each board meeting and general reports made by the superintendent. The board collects its information through a variety of mechanisms, including regular board meetings and informational meetings. Informational meetings are used by the board (and the general public) as the primary way to receive information from the administration on specific topics or policy areas. Although informational meetings serve a valuable purpose, they are ad hoc in nature and cannot feasibly cover the board's numerous policies and regulations. For this reason, the committee believes a more formal and standardized reporting structure is necessary.

The board is aware more formal and frequent reporting is needed. The overall improvement of the district's management information system is being examined as a means of increasing the flow of information to the board. As part of this effort, the operational audit steering committee is working on developing and increasing the internal reporting capacity of the school district as its various automated systems become more developed.

Another way for the board to ensure proper implementation and oversight of its policies is through a formal performance evaluation of the superintendent. The evaluation is the primary mechanism used to determine how well the board's policies are being implemented and provides built-in accountability to the system. The superintendent's contract calls for an annual performance evaluation to occur before the end of each year of the contract, which runs from April 1, 1999, through March 31, 2002.

The board has also established a formal set of roles and responsibilities for the superintendent, which are included in the superintendent's contract. These standardized roles and responsibilities, along with the board's newly revised policies manual and annual goals and objectives, should enhance system oversight and the evaluation of the superintendent's yearly performance.

Summary of Findings

- *The board has nearly completed a revamped/updated policies and regulations manual governing the school system.*
- *The primary focus of the trustees has been the development of an organized system of operational/administrative structures and controls; main focus should now be on implementing the board's various policies outlined in its new policies manual, along with the district's recently initiated academic programs.*
- *Formal reporting to the board on the implementation of its policies seems ad hoc and not standardized.*
- *The superintendent's contract calls for annual performance reviews. Clear roles, responsibilities, and policies as recently developed by the board should enhance the overall performance evaluation process.*

Recommendation

The board of trustees should develop a standardized reporting mechanism for oversight purposes. At minimum, the board should enhance its oversight role by establishing a quarterly calendar of specific reports submitted by the superintendent regarding implementation progress of the board's various policies and the district's academic programs. The board should also develop a cumulative annual report for the school district outlining the district's yearly progress and successes.

The program review committee believes the board and general public would benefit from a more standardized reporting process in addition to what is currently presented at the board's regular and informational meetings. Several purposes would be served by having the board determine which reports it deems necessary, particularly for its major policy initiatives such as parental involvement, attendance, social promotion, and extended day/year, and receiving those reports quarterly. First, the school district would have to focus its data collection efforts around the information needs of the board. The board would determine the reports it wants and when they would be due, while the superintendent would decide the key performance measures/indicators to include in the reports presented to the board. Second, a standardized reporting mechanism offers a formal structure for overall management analysis. Periodic reports on the board's policy initiatives would help ensure the board is receiving the basic, up-to-date information it needs for proper oversight and analysis without having to hold numerous meetings to collect the information. The program review committee believes the reporting recommendation would augment the informational meeting process and does not preclude the board from holding such meetings. Third, the annual report would provide a useful vehicle for the board/school district to present its yearly accomplishments and successes to interested parties.

Sustainability

The program review committee expressed interest at its September public hearings about ways to ensure changes made under the board of trustees are sustained in the future, independent of a particular board of education or superintendent. Table V-1 offers some ways to continue the district's progress. Several of the initiatives were originally contained in Special Act 97-4 and could be continued through legislation, while others would be administrative changes not necessarily needing legislation. The factors highlighted in the table are not exhaustive; rather they offer some of the various ways to maintain positive changes occurring within the school district. The program review committee makes no recommendation about any of these possibilities. It is important to note, though, that the city of Hartford is currently engaged in a charter revision review that could significantly change the framework within which these and other options would operate.

Table V-1. Hartford Public Schools: Positive Change Sustainability Factors		
Factor	Pros	Cons
Legislative Options		
Continue collective bargaining provision of Special Act 97-4; gives board direct access to union membership and changes arbitration criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses negotiation efforts on best interests of children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible opposition from unions and/or management
Require frequent updates of long range facilities plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires district to review facilities status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource intensive
Require second full-scale opera-		

tional audit after board's term to determine efficiency/effectiveness of changes made under trustees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies efficiencies after systems fully established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personnel and fiscal resources to implement recommentd.
Continue advisory council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides small forum for board, supt., constituencies to discuss issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members needed Undefined role
Continue state involvement through monitor process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitors serve as outside check on district's progress Help ensure accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources necessary Local opposition possible
Require schools to complete and maintain NEASC accreditation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures schools meet regionally-accepted standards Standardization across district 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource-intensive and time consuming process Master plan needed
Require sunset provision on various legislative changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reasserts local control after specified time period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local opposition possible to extending state involvement/treating Hartford differently
Administrative/Municipal Options		
Require formal training for new board members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assists members with role, responsibilities, and board operations prior to term Available from various sources (e.g. CABE, United Way) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board members <i>may</i> not participate if training is voluntary
District to regularly disclose financial info (e.g., monthly status reports, annual audit results)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows full broad review and analysis of financial data Information already available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None foreseen
Periodic update of board policies and procedures by board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires board to regularly review its policies Ensures current policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None foreseen
Continue to seek technical assistance from SDE/others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows district to use state and other as resource 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local opposition possible
School District Governance		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change way school board selected in Hartford Board appointed by mayor, city council, or jointly Board appointed by independent panel Other 	<p>See Appendix I for comments from Hartford Board of Trustees chairman and Connecticut Assoc. of Boards of Education</p>	
Source: Program Review Committee		

School governance. One significant issue being discussed is what governing structure will take the place of the board of trustees once its term expires on June 30, 2002. Although current provisions of Special Act 97-4 require the system returns to a locally elected board, alternative structures are being discussed. The State Board of Education also noted at its October decision meeting for extending the trustees' term that it was not too early for the trustees to begin thinking about the transition process following the board's term, as well as the type of governing body to replace the board of trustees.

Several options regarding the governing structure for the school district have been discussed by the board of trustees, and are included in Appendix I. It should be noted, the board has endorsed an appointed school board made up of Hartford residents.

The governing structure is also a topic planned for discussion by Hartford's Charter Revision Commission. In fact, the board of trustees is scheduled to address the commission in early December and present its views regarding the Hartford public school system governance issue. The commission is scheduled to complete its work and issue a report in March 2000. A referendum, if necessary, could be held in November 2000.

As a matter of reference, according to the Education Commission of the States, 96 percent of the 15,000 school districts nationwide have locally-elected school boards. Several states have given control of local school districts to individual mayors. Cities such as Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, and Detroit have school districts under mayoral control. The mayor is responsible for appointing board members and top administrators. In Connecticut, only New Haven has a school board appointed by the mayor; all other municipalities (excluding Hartford) have locally-elected school boards.

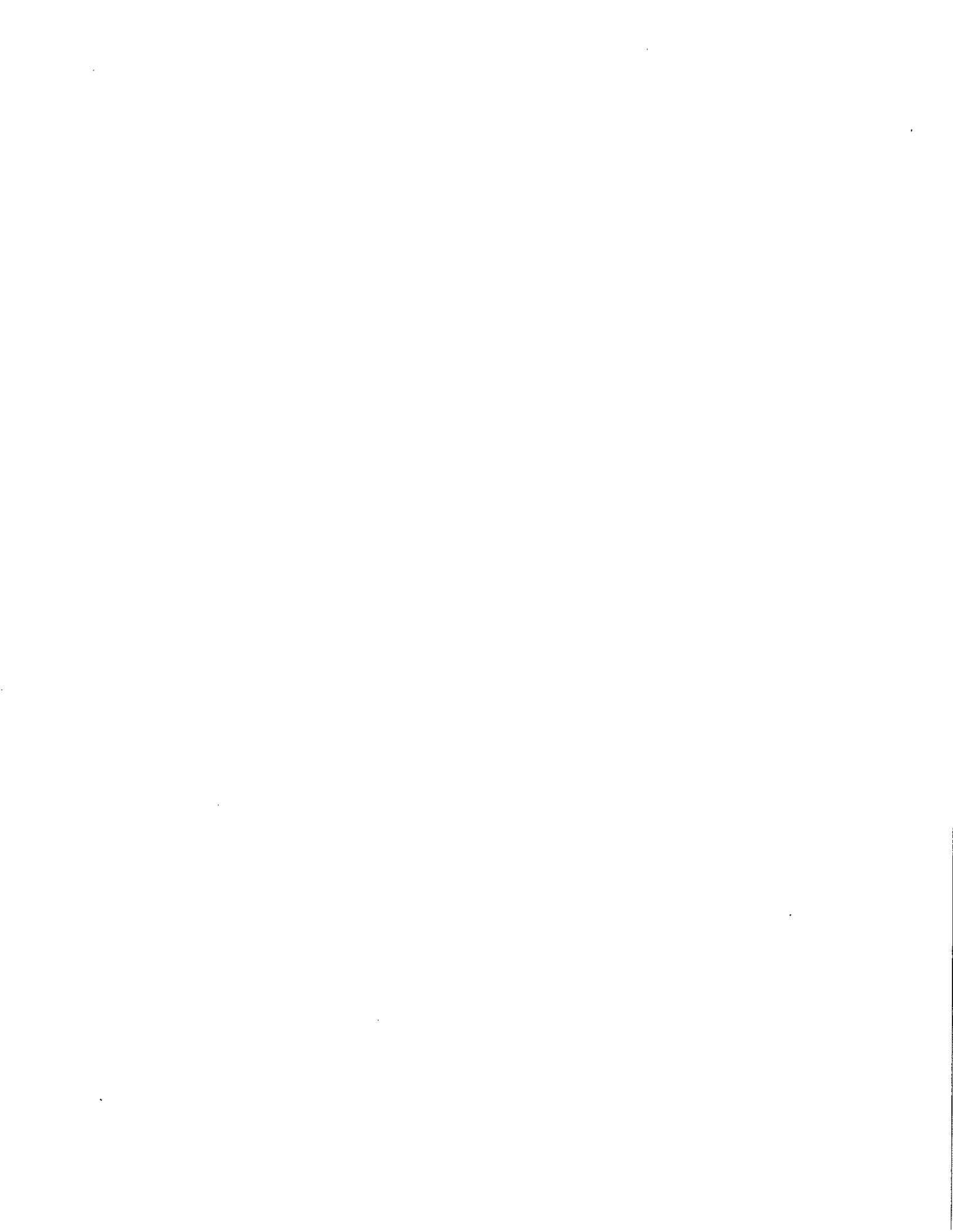
Legislative options. The program review committee also heard during this study that the state should not fully relinquish its responsibilities to the Hartford school system upon the term expiration of the board of trustees. Several possibilities as to how the state could maintain its responsibilities to the district were identified. First, the state could conduct another study similar to the one leading to the development of the Hartford Improvement Plan and the original 48 improvement recommendations. Such a study could be done within several years after the board's term expires, and would examine the changes made to the educational system under the direction of the board. State involvement could also include the state education department continuing its technical assistance role to the school district, thus providing the district with an additional resource. Further, the state monitor positions within SDE could be continued to provide added accountability to the system.

Other possibilities to help ensure sustained change could be to have another independent audit of the district's administrative operations conducted within a certain time period after the board completes its term. The audit would examine the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the operational changes made under the trustees' direction. By having the audit completed after the board's term would help ensure the recommendations from the first audit, and the operational changes made by the board, have been fully implemented.

Given the overriding goal of returning control of the educational system back to the city and its residents, the legislative factors identified in Table V-1 could be time-limited through a sunset provision. Such a provision could help ensure various provisions within Special Act 97-4 -- or any other legislative initiatives -- and the state's involvement in the school district are maintained, but only for a limited time period. After that period, full local control would occur.

Administrative options. Independent of any state legislation, new school board members in Hartford could benefit from required training upon becoming a board member. The training, offered through resources such as the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, could assist new members on the function(s) of a school board and individual members' overall duties, responsibilities, and role. A new school board could also present regular information to the public about its finances, facilities, and operations as a way to increase accountability.

APPENDICES



APPENDIX A

State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools Membership (as of December 1999)

MEMBER	POSITION	GENERAL BACKGROUND	TERM
Robert Furek	Chairman	Business Executive	June 1997-- Present
Richard Weaver-Bey	Vice Chairman	Business Owner	June 1997-- Present
Marie Spivey	Secretary	Business/Health	June 1997-- Present
Lorraine Aronson	Trustee	State Government (Education)	June 1997 – Present
Rev. Henry Frascadore	Trustee	Educator/Administrator	June 1997 – Present
Rolando Martinez	Trustee	Nonprofit Agency Director	December 1998 – Present
Diane Alverio	Trustee	Business Owner	June 1997 – November 1998
Ana Maria Garcia	Trustee	Nonprofit Agency Director	June 1997 – May 1998

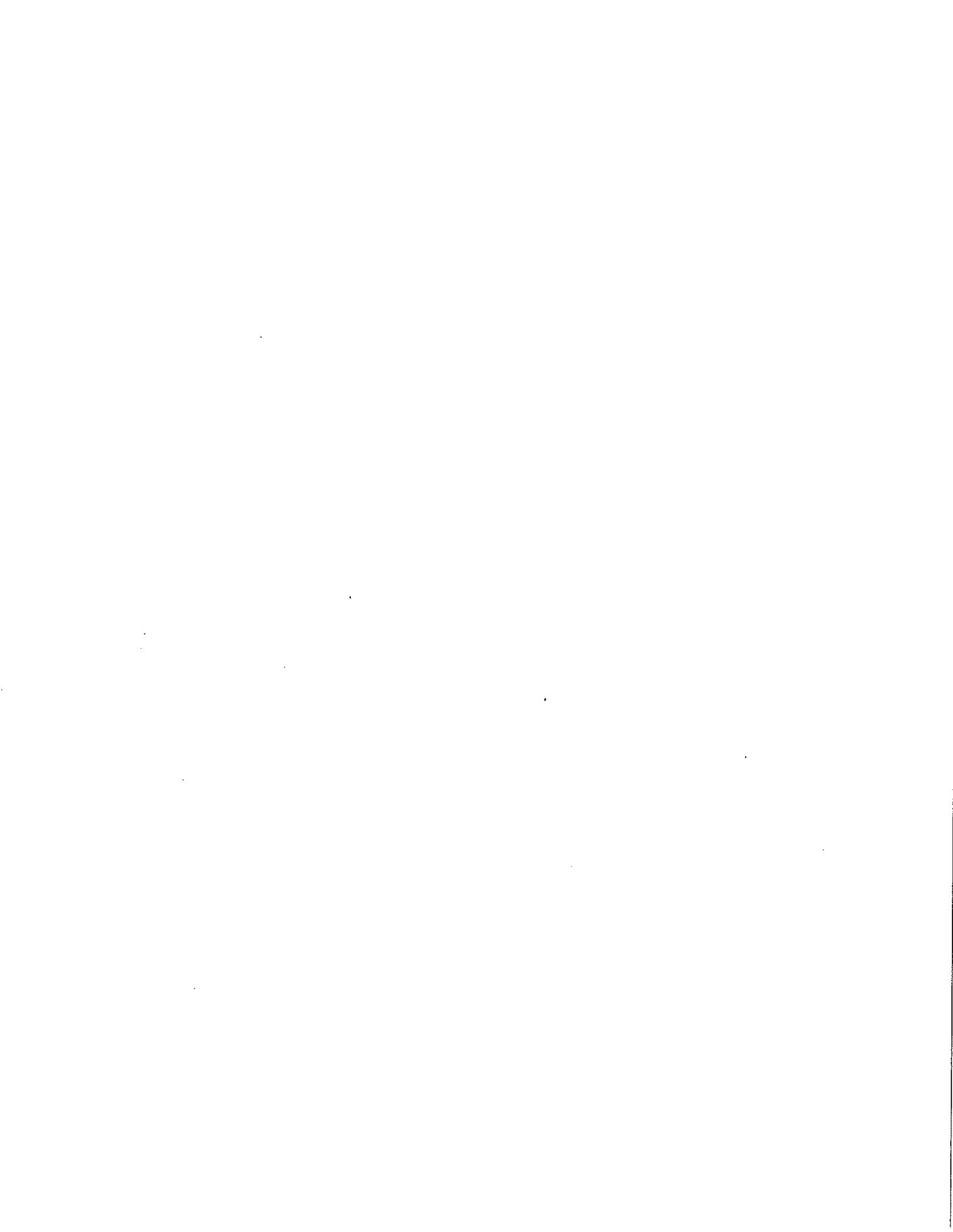


APPENDIX B

State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools Advisory Council Membership (as of December 1999)

MEMBER	POSITION
Dr. Zoe Athanson	Principal, Kennelly Elementary School
Elka Ford	Teacher, Dwight Elementary School
Michelle Johnson	Parent Representative
Ronald Quagliaroli	Teacher, Quirk Middle School
Joe Wall	Principal, Hartford Public High School
Dr. Donald Weinholtz	University of Hartford
Hyacinth Yenne	Parent Representative

Note: The parent representatives were chosen from the organizations comprising the Hartford Parent Network. The principals were selected based on a lottery of individuals expressing interest in serving on the council. Elka Ford serves on behalf of the Hartford Federation of Teachers, and Ronald Quagliaroli serves by virtue of being Hartford's 1998 Teacher of the Year. Dr. Weinholtz's appointment fulfills the legislative requirement that the council include a representative from institutions of higher education.



APPENDIX C



STATE BOARD OF TRUSTEES FOR HARTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

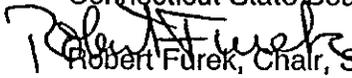
153 Market Street, 8th Floor, Hartford, Connecticut 06103

Telephone (860) 297-8410 Fax (860)722-8502

Robert M. Furek, Chairman
Richard Weaver-Bey, Vice Chair
Marie M. Spivey, Secretary

Lorraine M. Aronson
Reverend Henry C. Frascadore
Rolando Martinez

September 21, 1999

TO: Connecticut State Board Of Education
FROM:  Robert Furek, Chair, State Board of Trustees for Hartford Public Schools
SUBJECT: Request for an Extension of Term to June 30, 2002

Special Act 97-4, "An Act Concerning the Hartford Public Schools," offers the State Board of Trustees the option to request an extension of their management of the Hartford Public School System until June 30, 2002. This request to the State Board of Education should be made on or before January 1, 2000. Possible conditions that may warrant term extension are outlined in the legislation:

Such request shall be based on such factors as the need for additional time to improve student achievement and sufficiently address the Hartford Improvement Plan...and the findings and recommendations of the fiscal and operations audit....
(Section 2)

This memorandum serves as our request to you for an extension based on each of these areas mentioned above, and in addition, to fulfill other requirements of S.A. 97-4. Our request is based on the following points:

1. Based on the findings described in the Quarterly Progress Reports prepared by the Commissioner of Education and the State Monitors, much more remains to be accomplished to improve student achievement. In statements made in the November 1998 report, the Commissioner summarized his remarks: "...The Connecticut State Department of Education is encouraged by, but not satisfied with, the progress of the Hartford Public Schools." The Trustees faced particular challenges, as capsulated by the Commissioner in the same report:

Given that the Trustees began in June 1997 with limited knowledge of a school system that had been in a spiraling decline for several years, and that there was a clear need to replace the superintendent in May 1998, the stabilization of the system and the improvements of the last year are even more noteworthy. This progress has come with a great deal of effort, but the pace of change has not been satisfactory to anyone – especially the Trustees. The message I continue to give the Trustees is good work, keep it up and speed it up, and stay focused on the vision and tasks you have identified.

While we believe significant strides have been made in the areas of finance and operations, it was not until a new superintendent, Anthony S. Amato, was hired in April 1999 that we had the leadership necessary to *fully* initiate the programmatic goals and objectives presented to the public in 1998, and again for the 1999-2000 academic year. Mr. Amato is attempting to reform a system where twenty of our schools were recommended for improvement, according to 1997-98 Title I evaluation results; and although Scholastic Assessment Test and Advanced Placement participation and scores have risen, the cumulative dropout rate for the Class of 1998 was 51 percent. Many new initiatives have been underway since April to improve student achievement in accordance with the Commissioner's Improvement Plan and report recommendations. Some of these include literacy and numeracy enhancement programs during the regular day, after-school, during spring vacation and a summer session; adoption of nationally recognized school reform initiatives in every elementary school (Success For All and Direct Instruction); and integration of technology into the curriculum in every school. All of these academic improvements have just begun. Our work in the coming months and years will focus on fully implementing and evaluating these improvements so that every Hartford student is demonstrating success at high levels.

2. On the administrative and financial front, we ended FY 1999 with a zero balance, a remarkable achievement for a system whose financial affairs were in such disarray only one year before. Equally important, we opened in September with supplies in all our schools and classrooms. We have settled 11 collective bargaining agreements with our employees. But many operational challenges remain. A joint City/Board team that includes the City's auditors and local corporate partners is managing many of the financial and facilities improvements recommended in the fiscal and operations audits. In the past year, of the 98 recommendations made in these studies, 10 have been closed, 37 are in progress, 16 are under review and 35 have not been prioritized. Monthly priority project updates are reviewed to determine the additional actions necessary to address these areas. The report prepared by Chief State's Attorney John M. Bailey will also be added to the work of this committee. Support provided from the General Assembly and our partners offered the needed resources for this massive undertaking, but clearly more needs to be done over the next few years to address our charge in S.A. 97-4 to manage resources efficiently and effectively, as well as to ensure that financial and operational reforms are well-rooted in the system.
3. Major facilities improvements are underway, including 17 roof repair and replacement projects, but a comprehensive plan for providing every student with a safe, properly sized, and properly equipped facility will begin when the findings of the long-range facilities study are reviewed later this fall. A joint City/Board team will conduct this review to determine policy directions for the future of our Hartford schools. This team has been meeting monthly to examine existing facilities projects and the progress made to complete the long-range study. The extension of the Board's term will provide the needed consistent oversight by the Board and the City of a new Hartford Capital Improvement Plan.
4. Six elementary schools began the process of accreditation last year, in accordance with state statute that we ensure that all elementary and middle schools join the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. Our superintendent has extended this by ensuring that all our *preschool* programs follow the accreditation process of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Given the school system's experience with accreditation of its three high schools, it is likely that accreditation-driven

improvements for the elementary and middle schools will consume significant resources, both financial and human. Consequently, the accreditation effort will require the continued attention of the trustees and the superintendent this year and beyond.

5. A number of education programs have been initiated in this school year. In addition, Superintendent Amato has recruited key staff in an effort to bring dynamic change into the curriculum of the Hartford School system. These people and their efforts need to be given the assurance of continuity and stability in order for full system-wide implementation to be achieved.

Although the course outlined here is demanding, as the governing body for Hartford's public schools, we can attest that Hartford parents, teachers, administrators, and community partners remain fully committed to our collective aim to dramatically raise the academic achievement of our students. Our work is not yet complete. Were we to end our tenure now—at this critical juncture—we believe that we would not be fulfilling our responsibility to Hartford's children in keeping with our promise. We are mindful, too, of our relationship to the city as a governmental entity and we believe that an extension of Board of Trustee oversight will better enable city leadership to consider school system governance as part of their review of the city charter. For all of these reasons, we ask that you grant the extension provided for under S.A. 97-4. With your approval, we resolve to continue to keep "Hartford On the Rise."

In closing, I wish to express gratitude to the State Board of Education, Commissioner Sergi and the entire staff of the State Department of Education for the extraordinary commitment to improving the Hartford school system. On behalf of the State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools, I thank you all for your time, your energy, your creativity and your support.

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford

TO BE PROPOSED:

October 6, 1999

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 2 of Special Act No. 97-4, *An Act Concerning the Hartford Public Schools*, grants the request by the State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools to extend its term and responsibility for the management of the Hartford Public Schools through June 30, 2002, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Approved by a vote of 7.0 this sixth day of October, Nineteen Hundred Ninety-nine.

Signed: _____


Theodore S. Sergi, Secretary

APPENDIX D
Operations Audit Recommendations Status (as of 10/99)

	<u>Closed</u>	<u>In Progress</u>	<u>Under Review</u>	<u>Not Prioritized</u>
<u>Financial Management</u>				
1. Management reporting in place		X		
2. Develop and distribute formal policies on preparation of financial reporting and processing			X	
3. Evaluate operational management reporting requirements and develop reports		X		
4. Master reporting schedule with due dates and priorities "tickler files"		X		
5. Hire accounting manager to oversee financial operations of grants and special funds	X			
6. Improve communication with school and central admin. for establishing new grants, grant appvl., and funds recpt.		X		
7. Establish electronic transfer of funds to treasurer's office				X n/a
8. Provide guidance regarding soliciting/receiving funds in policies and procedures		X		
9. Identify all sources of cash with expect due dates		X		
10. Compare information on cash forecasts to records of receipts	X			
11. Improve petty cash procedures within school. Research use of procurement card program			X	
12. Establish controls and review activity for special activities revolving funds			X	
<u>Budget and Planning</u>				
1. Review actuals by line item when establishing budgets	X			
2. Communication of budget amendments and allocations changes to Cost Center managers	X			
3. Detail special funds budget based on estimate funding		X		
4. Budget reallocation prior to budget approval		X		
5. Cost center responsibilities clearly defined and comm.				X
6. Quarterly budget reports to Board of Trustees	X			
7. Cost center managers on-line access to budget	X			
8. Evaluate purpose, structure, and need of existing cost centers		X		
9. Evaluate moving non-budget and planning functions such as payroll correction and code assign. to payroll/HR			X	
10. On-line approval for intra-line allocation/transfers				X
11. Improved reporting - budget to actual including encumbrances, etc.	X			
12. Updated policies/procedures for budget, cost center managers, and central office		X		
<u>Procurement</u>				
1. Streamline purchasing process. Combine activity of HPSS and city purchasing depts. to simplify process		X		
2. Transfer requisition review and vendor setup to			X	

HPSS accounting

- 3. Provide HPSS staff access to vendors set up in system X
- 4. Review current division of educ./noneduc. Purchases X
- 5. Eliminate paper handoffs of receiving rpts. with new sys. X

Procurement continued

	<u>Closed</u>	<u>In Progress</u>	<u>Under Review</u>	<u>Not Prioritized</u>
6. Implement formal review process for open purchase orders	X			
7. Redesign requisition form/system template to include specification fields				X
8. Improve communication bt. Requisitioners and purch staff	X			
9. Develop/distribut purch/bid policies and procedures		X		
10. Re-evaluate purchasing agreements	X			
11. Vendor feedback from purchasing dept and end users		X		
12. Develop policies/procedures to evaluate vendors				X
13. Update/distribute non-purchase orders policy	X			
14. Consider implementing procurement card program				X
15. Create small-dollar order process w/in new fin mgt procss.			X	

Information Technology

1. Establish IT senior management position				X
2. Consider estab joint IT organization w/ city				X
3. Benchmark HPSS against peer systems re: staffing	X			
4. Develop comprehensive Y2K plan	X			
5. Implement and track Y2K plan		X		
6. Implement single e-mail system at city and HPSS				X (sep.e-mails)
7. Establish strong project management function		X		
8. Dev formal security plan re: increased connectivity w/ city				X
9. Prepare a computer security policy plan	X			
10. Communicate computer security policy to all employees			X	
11. Implement anti-virus software on all PCs and servers		X		
12. Clearly define/comm roles/resp for support of SmartStream		X		
13. Est formal service level agmt between HPSS and city				X
14. Develop business continuity plan		X		
15. Est formal controls re: computer security,cnge mgt,opertns				X
16. Est formal help desk; consider merging with city		X		
17. Implement procedures to notify IT re: employee trans/leaves		X		

Special Funds

1. Create spec funds dept for pre/post award grants admin.			X	
2. Est special funds financial accounting mgr position	X			
3. Evaluate requirements for prog evaluations/qualif of staff		X		
4. Dev financial reports for proj mgrs to monitor fund balances	X			
5. Transfer resp for reviewing ordn grant expends to proj mgrs	X			

Warehouse

1. Examine need and use of school supply warehouse	X			
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Payroll

1. Redesign payroll function; examine current staff qualifications		X		
2. Reconcile info from substitue phone system and substitute payroll data and roster teachers' sick/vacation time			X	

3. Ensure necessary controls re: time and check distribution X

Facilities/Construction/Property Management

- 1. Long range facilities planning X
- 2. Utilize new construction comm for construction admin X
- 3. Est policies/procedures for eval change orders and claims X
- 4. Plans shared/monitored on regular basis X
- 5. Implement preventative mantce program integrate in LRFP X

- 6. Annual inventory verification and tagging
- 7. Vendor bills sent to accts payable rather than some to B/G
- 8. Convene TF to consider solutions to vandalism
- 9. Conduct random security inspections; report breakdowns

Closed In Progress Under Review Not Prioritized

X
X
X
X

Enrollment Management

- 1. Review forcast assumptions with third party
- 2. Dev/issue administrative rules/regs re: allocation formulas
- 3. Define attendance issues in policy manual
- 4. Reconsider consultation process req to enter child to class with maximum count
- 5. Imp training for teachers to comply w/ enroll/atnd procedures
- 6. Incorp attendance reporting into evaluation process
- 7. Automate student attendance reporting
- 8. Id specific employee at schools resp for attendance accuracy
- 9. Initiate internal audit function to monitor enrollment controls
- 10. Acquire new tech to mng spec educ roster/automate reports
- 11. Assess staffing for special education

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Human Resources

- 1. Translate empl contribution vision into useful/specific guidance
- 2. Complete job descriptions
- 3. Establish clear performance objectives focused on outcomes
- 4. Recognize high achievement levels through program development
- 5. Institute targeted training (legal,safety,harassment,supv,process)
- 6. Improve accountability/shared respon for results (contract neg)
- 7. Redesign HR department and upgrade HR positions
- 8. Need staff (training, employee comm,HR system,labor relations)
- 9. HR exposure to variety of needs within schools by being there with some form of official responsibility (emp relations,comm,tng)
- 10. Unemployment claims; prepare proper challenges
- 11. New employee orientation program
- 12. Initiate proactive morale building activities
- 13. Rotate security guards annually as slated in security policy

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APPENDIX E
State Department of Education
Hartford Improvement Plan: 48 Recommendations

A. Accountability for Improved Student Achievement

Employees at every level of the Hartford Public Schools and observers from every possible perspective reach a strong consensus that a higher and more consistent level of accountability is the single most important step in the process of improving student performance. This means new and stronger mechanisms for holding everyone more accountable for high levels of achievement in each school and, more specifically, holding district-level and support personnel accountable for providing teachers and administrators with the materials and resources they need, and holding parents and students accountable for arriving at school each day ready and willing to learn. These new levels of accountability require new forms of consequences for failure and new vehicles for recognizing and rewarding success.

It is therefore recommended that:

1. The Hartford Board of Education develop a set of policies and procedures that, through a new system of accreditation and probation, recognize high-performing schools and outline clear consequences for schools that are failing to make progress in improving student achievement.
2. Roles and responsibilities of the Board of Education, the Superintendent and the principals, and the School Governance Teams be further clarified to assure that the Board of Education focuses on policy and on monitoring overall systemwide improvement; the Superintendent and principals focus on implementing policy, hiring, supervising and evaluating staff; and School Governance Teams focus on mobilizing support and monitoring progress at the school level.
3. Every building principal make the improvement of student learning the primary focus of all school activity.
4. Policies and procedures for significantly increasing attendance and decreasing dropouts and truancy be updated and implemented.
5. There be systemwide adoption of updated personnel evaluation policies and procedures, with appropriate training by September 1997.
6. A "warranty of essential skills" policy be adopted by the Hartford Board of Education wherein any student can return, at no charge, for necessary remedial work, and wherein any employer or institution of higher education can refer a former Hartford Public Schools student, also at no charge, for necessary remedial work.
7. School and district Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) data, as well as other test, attendance, dropout and graduate follow-up data, be analyzed annually and serve as the basis for school improvement efforts.

B. Curricular Expectations

The critical ingredient for assuring that all students have the opportunity to learn is a common, coherent and accepted set of grade-level and course expectations. Teachers throughout the system need clear and consistent direction on what should be taught and the materials needed to teach it. In too many cases there is no such clear curricular direction within the Hartford Public Schools. The current draft of the district's Academic Area Outcomes is a first step in establishing common curricular expectations, but much remains to be done before Hartford's teachers have the necessary curriculum documents to ensure that all students have the same opportunity to learn what is valued. Similarly, inadequate attention has been paid to the provision of high quality, meaningful professional development.

It is therefore recommended that:

8. Hartford's Academic Area Outcomes document be revised by June 1997 to reflect a clear statement of key grade-level outcomes in each curriculum area, and be published and broadly disseminated to teachers, parents and the community as the district's statement of expectations for students.
9. K-12 curriculum guides be developed for each subject area, aligned with CMT and CAPT objectives, articulated K-12, and based on model guides in use in other Connecticut districts.
10. All staff members receive copies of the appropriate curriculum guides and awareness training on their content and use prior to the opening of the 1997-98 school year.
11. A small group of business and education experts be assembled to report quickly on increasing the availability and use of technology to enhance instruction, and to develop a comprehensive three-year plan to significantly increase instructional use of computers, calculators and other technological equipment.
12. A comprehensive three-year plan for ongoing, targeted professional development should be developed and implemented to strengthen teachers' and administrators' capacity to implement the updated curriculum. This plan should include, but not be limited to:
 - awareness sessions on new curriculum expectations;
 - instructional strategies for better meeting the needs of all students;
 - techniques for incorporating technology into instruction; and
 - mechanisms for significantly increasing professional interaction among teachers.

C. Initiatives Designed to Raise Expectations:

In any community, a school system's high schools are recognized as the flagships of the enterprise. This is not because they do more than any other level of schooling, nor because they are more effective, but because they represent the culmination of all the work done in elementary and middle schools. In

addition, our bottom-line, product-oriented workplace understandably judges an entire system's health on the basis of its high school graduates. But it is rare for a school system to have effective high schools unless students enter from high quality middle schools that truly prepare students for a meaningful and rigorous high school experience. Similarly, the ultimate strength of any school system depends heavily on the effectiveness of the foundation - especially the reading foundation - established in its elementary schools. Competency and confidence in reading is the single most critical skill to success in school and in life. That is why expectations for student success and accomplishment must be raised throughout the system.

It is therefore recommended that:

13. A plan be developed to require algebra for graduation beginning with the high school graduating class of 2001 - currently in the 8th grader.
14. All high school students - as early as 9th grade - be strongly encouraged to take the PSATs and the SATs, and that appropriate preparation be provided within and beyond regular coursework;
15. A significant number of Advanced Placement courses - with increasing enrollments - be added to the curriculum at all three high schools over the next three years.
16. The full implementation of the three career academies, as well as Connecticut's Eight Career Clusters, be completed during the 1997-98 school year at all three high schools.
17. Changes be instituted to make each of Hartford's schools more student-centered, caring and more personal communities through teams, clusters, houses, and/or keeping teachers and students together for more than one year, and to ensure that every student has an adult partner or mentor, whether a teacher, a coach, a nurse, a corporate mentor, or a big brother or sister.
18. Character development programs that emphasize personal responsibility for learning and behavior, and responsibility to others be initiated in grades 5 through 8.
19. Peer assistance programs be broadly established to help address teen pregnancy, and tobacco, drug and alcohol abuse in grades 7 through 12.
20. Alternative education programs be provided for middle and high school students unable or unwilling to be successful in the mainstream program.
21. Each elementary school be required to develop a unique program or schoolwide theme - open to all children in the city - as programs/schools of choice. Such programs should be designed to increase student motivation and parent involvement and be similar to the successful models of East Harlem and New Haven.
22. Reading achievement be made the primary mission of Kindergarten through grade 4 classes in every elementary school, supported by necessary instructional support and an "army" of retired teachers recruited to read with first and second graders.
23. The Hartford Board of Education establish a formal and ongoing program of student recognition for outstanding academic, artistic and athletic

accomplishments and demonstrations of community service and citizenship.

D. Special Education, Bilingual Education and Compensatory Education

Nowhere in the system are the fragmentation of effort and inefficiencies derived from turf more apparent than in the day-to-day operation of special education, bilingual education and the Title I program. Clearly, state and federal regulations have contributed to this fragmentation. However, each program tends to be an entity unto itself, and in far too few cases do these programs systematically support the core academic expectations that must apply to all students. In addition, in terms of time and effort, the regulatory load of administering and operating these programs at the school level often detracts from accomplishing the core mission of the school.

It is therefore recommended that:

24. Efforts begin immediately to reduce the number of students receiving special, separate or pull-out services, or out-of-district placement by providing more effective accommodated instruction in regular classrooms and by expanding within school program alternatives.
25. Immediate action be taken, at the school and central office levels, to reduce the fragmentation of effort that results from separate planning, delivery, and evaluation of these categorical programs and to assure that the academic goals of these programs be identical to those of the mainstream program.
26. Title I personnel, working collaboratively with others, assume responsibility for developing of systemwide "Summer Learning Kits" to ensure that learning does not take a vacation during the summer.
27. Significant increases in summer school programming and enrollment be made to provide remedial and enrichment experiences throughout the summer.

E. Early Childhood and School Readiness

Nearly every report and review of America's public schools arrives at the same conclusion: the single most cost-effective, long-term, high-impact improvement is the provision of preschool and all-day kindergarten experiences for all young children - particularly children who grow up in poverty. We know that Head Start and similar experiences pay rich dividends, and we know that students who start school behind rarely catch up. Teachers are nearly unanimous in their frustrations dealing effectively with children who arrive unprepared for school and unready to learn.

It is therefore recommended that:

28. All revenue sources be reviewed so that more resources can be allocated to the expansion of preschool programs with the goal of providing, either privately or publicly, programs for every three- and four-year-old in Hartford.
29. Data collection mechanisms be established and implemented to annually and accurately report on the number of three- and four-year old children served and not served by early childhood/preschool programs.
30. Structured and regular opportunities be established to better connect preschool providers with Hartford's Kindergarten and first grade teachers.
31. Materials for parents of young children detailing practical strategies for preparing their children for school be developed or assembled and widely distributed throughout the community.
32. A community-based collaboration of hospitals, corporate sponsors and community-based organizations be initiated to provide an appropriate "care package" of books, information and toys for new parents, followed up by home visits by school social workers to homes with one-, two- and three-year-old children.

While these recommendations represent important actions to improve early childhood programs, this initiative is clearly one that requires significant new resources. These resources, for Hartford and the rest of the state, will be requested from the Governor and the General Assembly in the coming months.

F. Parent and Community Involvement

Parents are our children's first and most important teachers. The quality of any given school system is directly related to the support expressed, concerns, and involvement of parents. We have heard from school personnel about the difficulties of fostering parent involvement, and from parents about the barriers to their involvement they feel they face, including their sense that they are not welcome in their children's schools. In addition, the greater Hartford community is a largely untapped resource for volunteer assistance.

It is therefore recommended that:

33. The Hartford Board of Education adopt and implement a strong policy statement regarding parent involvement within the Hartford Public Schools that addresses making schools more inviting to parents, making it easier for parents to get access to schools and school personnel, and opening the schools more widely to the community.
34. School plans be developed to increase teacher-to-parent communication, including no less than monthly written or oral reports from the school;
35. A single Coordinating Council for Parents that serves as an umbrella for the diverse parent groups in the city be established and staffed.
36. Parent representation on each of the School Based Governance Teams be increased.
37. Parent training, with a significant outreach component, be provided through adult education programs.

38. Adult basic education and high school completion programs run in elementary schools during the school year day and as part of summer parent/student program continue to expand.

G. Collective Bargaining Agreements

One of the commonly expressed concerns about the Hartford Public Schools is the perception that collective bargaining agreements include provisions that interfere with efforts to best serve students and improve student achievement. In fact, some of the harshest criticism of the Hartford Public Schools regards the role and perceived power of the various unions. Contract provisions, union policies, and management practices and/or inaction must all be scrutinized with the goal of better serving students.

It is therefore recommended that:

39. Separate "conversations" between the Hartford Board of Education and representatives of each of the district's bargaining units be conducted. The purpose of these discussions would be to identify contract language, policies or practices that are deemed to interfere with maximizing student achievement and to mutually agree, wherever possible, to adjust such language, policies or practices in the cooperative spirit of truly putting students first. Mediators could be used, if necessary, to facilitate these conversations.

H. Financial Management, Facilities, and Long-Range Planning

For too long, crisis management and the lack of continuity among top-level, district management has resulted in a serious neglect of critical long-range planning efforts, including those for facilities, budgets and other noninstructional programs. This is particularly serious in terms of the maintenance of existing facilities, the purchase of technology, and long-term space needs based on enrollment projections. In addition, school buildings are a unique community resource that are underutilized.

It is therefore recommended that:

40. A joint committee of school and city officials be charged with developing a comprehensive, long-range enrollment projection and facilities report that provides detailed maintenance, construction, renovation and bonding needs for the next ten years.
41. A detailed three-year plan for the enhanced use of technology for non-instructional purposes be developed, funded and implemented so that such functions as reporting, record keeping, scheduling, transcript maintenance, and purchasing can be conducted far more efficiently.

42. The Hartford Public Schools and the Hartford city government complete the implementation of the joint financial management systems already initiated.
43. The issues of school safety and cleanliness, community use of schools, family resource centers, and school-based health clinics be high priorities of all facilities planning efforts.
44. Grants and other resources be sought to provide after-school and summer tutoring, enrichment and recreation programs throughout the city, using high school and college students and the help of community-based organizations, and housed in the classrooms, gyms, libraries and computer labs that are vacant when school is not in session; and
45. A cost-benefit analysis of transferring noninstructional functions and responsibilities to the City or to a nonprofit private concern be completed.
46. The Hartford Public Schools secure outside expertise to conduct a comprehensive budget analysis to identify cost savings that could be reallocated to instructional supplies, materials, and equipment.

V. Coordinating Corporate, University and Regional Partnerships

The challenge faced by the Hartford Public Schools is not one of attracting the support and generous assistance of the Greater Hartford corporate and university communities, but rather one of focusing and coordinating this support to have the greatest impact on student achievement. What is clear is that both the corporate and the university communities are ready, willing and able to continue their human and financial support in the form of grants, tutoring programs, training efforts and more. What is equally clear is that this support is spread very unevenly across the district and is not consistently focused on clearly identified student needs.

It is therefore recommended that:

47. A unit be established within the Central Office and charged with providing coordination and leadership that strengthens partnership programs.

Responsibilities should include the following:

- ensuring that successful corporate tutoring programs be extended to every elementary school in the city;
- creating stronger collaborations with the city's cultural community, including The Hartford Stage, The Hartford Symphony, The Hartford Ballet, the Wadsworth Atheneum, Real Art Ways, The Old State House, etc.;
- deploying the people and products of the Hartford Urban Education Network and similar groups;
- providing internships for students;
- encouraging and coordinating the donation of material and equipment, including computers;

- soliciting additional support from the corporate, university and other communities; and
- being responsible for interdistrict cooperative programs, magnet schools, and other regional efforts that help to reduce racial, ethnic and economic isolation, including the completion of current plans for the four regional magnet schools.

W. A New Education Fund

Unlike New Haven and Bridgeport, Hartford has no private philanthropic fund dedicated solely to public K-12 education and designed to support specific projects and meet specific needs within the school community. It is time for the generosity of the city's private and corporate citizens to have a formal mechanism - outside of normal governmental channels - to provide targeted assistance to the Hartford Public Schools!

It is therefore recommended that:

48. The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving and the Hartford Public Schools explore the creation of a Hartford Public Education Fund, possibly operating out of the HFPG, to provide an external source of funding for innovative initiatives.

APPENDIX F

**Actions
to Improve
The Hartford Public
Schools
1999-2000**

State Board of Trustees for
the Hartford Public Schools

August 3, 1999

State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools

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Richard Weaver-Bey (Vice Chair)

Marie Spivey (Secretary)

Lorraine Aronson

Reverend Henry Frascadore

Rolando Martinez

Legislative charge to the State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools:

- ‘ . . . to be responsible for the governance, management and fiscal operations of the Hartford school district, all in order to
- ◆ increase student achievement,
 - ◆ enhance the quality, adequacy and equality of educational opportunities, and
 - ◆ allocate and manage resources efficiently and effectively.’

— Connecticut Special Act 97-4

The Board of Education complies with all applicable federal, state and local laws prohibiting the exclusion of any person from any of its educational programs or activities, or the denial to any person of the benefits of any of its educational programs or activities, because of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, age, or disability, subject to the conditions and limitations established by law.

Foreword

This year, the Hartford Public Schools will go through a transformation that will place education at the center of Hartford's cultural life.

When I arrived here in April, I immediately instituted a series of changes designed to make improvements in seven critical areas: academic achievement, financial responsibility, parental involvement, school-based management, professional development, school choice and technology. In just a few short months, we implemented Spring and Summer Power Hours, the Parent Power Institute, Reading Power Hours and more. We will continue to implement the very latest teaching strategies to increase academic performance, especially in reading and math. And now with our fiscal house in order for the first time in years, doing business with the district means streamlined financial operations, faster payments and greater savings for the district.

As we begin this first great year, we will introduce an unprecedented level of technology in the classroom that will make Hartford one of the most connected school systems in the country. No matter what a child's economic status, tomorrow's success requires that every child learns computer technology.

And finally, let us look to parent and community involvement as the barometer of our success. Together, we can raise our city beyond the stars. Hartford is on the rise.

Introduction

The purpose of this publication is to bring together key points of all documents developed to identify and address the problems faced by the Hartford Public Schools. As such, this will become our primary reference document, consolidating the goals and objectives of earlier work without losing any of the substance, urgency or detail of the previous efforts. The documents include:

- "We Believe in Tomorrow: A Framework for the Strategic Direction of the Hartford Public Schools" (adopted by the Hartford Board of Education in June 1994);
- "Working Together for Higher Achievement in Hartford's Schools," the Hartford school improvement plan to carry out the 48 recommendations issued by the Commissioner of Education and adopted by the former Hartford Board of Education in 1996-97;
- the State Board of Trustees' goals for 1998-99;
- the superintendent's new initiatives;
- Special Act 97-4, "An Act Concerning the Hartford Public Schools," and
- the recommendations of the Commissioner's Quarterly Progress Reports to date.

Mission of the Hartford Public Schools

The Hartford Public School System must be a community of active learners which nurtures self-confidence, respect and excellence in all its members. Within such a community, all students:

- master communication, computation, analytical and problem-solving skills;
- develop their physical and artistic potential;
- acquire strong ethical values; and
- learn to act creatively, responsibly, and effectively in meeting the challenges of a diverse and changing world.

— From "We Believe in Tomorrow: A Framework for the Strategic Direction of the Hartford Public Schools" (adopted by the Hartford Board of Education in June 1994)

Goals and Objectives

Initiative

1 School and District Management and Accountability

Goal

To provide a governance system and administrative structure that:

- (a) supports the effective delivery of high-quality instruction and high levels of student achievement;
- (b) implements a system of supervision, evaluation and staff development that maximizes the effectiveness of all Hartford Public Schools personnel; and
- (c) ensures high levels of student and staff accountability.

1999-2000 Objectives

- (1-A) Hire a chief fiscal officer.
- (1-B) Build capacity for site-based management and shared decision making at every school.
- (1-C) Implement new Board policy manuals and monitor for revisions.
- (1-D) Complete the implementation and evaluation of the pilot of the new teacher evaluation instrument.
- (1-E) Implement use of the new supervisory evaluation instrument.

F-5

(continued)

1

Initiative 1 School and District Management and Accountability (continued)

- (1-F) Train staff members to use new noninstructional systems, e.g., financial and purchasing.
- (1-G) Ensure that all school personnel are provided with job descriptions and annual evaluations.
- (1-H) Develop and implement a plan for principals to serve as educational leaders.
- (1-I) Continue to centralize selected noninstructional functions.
- (1-J) Continue to clarify and articulate the roles and responsibilities of the Board, superintendent and administrators.
- (1-K) Continue to focus collective bargaining efforts to remove barriers to student achievement.

2 Curriculum and Course Offerings

Goal

To ensure a high-quality curriculum that establishes clear content and high expectations for every grade, every course and every child.

1999-2000 Objectives

- (2-A) Implement a literacy and numeracy program for all students, PK-12.
 - Continue the literacy and numeracy enhancement and test sophistication program.
- (2-B) Complete professional development on literacy and numeracy for all staff members.
- (2-C) Develop curriculum guides for all disciplines and begin to develop grade-level and course assessments of students that are aligned with the curriculum guides.
- (2-D) Provide professional development on the curriculum guides for all staff members.
- (2-E) Continue to ensure a curriculum free of bias (e.g., cultural, gender).
- (2-F) Implement plans that will result in more students demonstrating success in reading, writing, algebra, foreign languages, the PSAT, the SAT, Advanced Placement courses, CMT and CAPT.
- (2-G) Pilot new social studies and science programs in spring 2000.

Initiative

3 Instruction, Assessment and School Climate

Goal

To create a positive climate and ensure high-quality instruction and high levels of student achievement.

1999-2000 Objectives

- (3-A) Continue to allocate and support appropriate assistance and resources to the 11 schools in the Level 1 range according to the 1997-98 Overall School Index.*
- (3-B) Ensure continued accreditation for all of Hartford's high schools, and continue the accreditation process for the elementary and middle schools.
- (3-C) Implement a PK-8 grade-level continuous criterion-referenced assessment process in literacy and numeracy, and begin a similar process for the core academic areas.
- (3-D) Implement and evaluate the Early Success and Soar to Success Programs.
- (3-E) Publicize student performance and attendance data at the school and district levels.
- (3-F) Implement strategies to improve attendance and school climate.
- (3-G) Implement dropout and truancy reduction plans.

* The Overall School Index (OSI) is a component of the Connecticut Title I Evaluation Model developed by the Connecticut State Department of Education. It reflects progress toward the state goals across time, across the score scale, across content areas and across grades. The results of the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) are used to calculate the OSI. The OSI ranges from 0-100 in bands: Level 1 (0-38); Level 2 (39-76); and Level 3 (77-100). For Level 1 schools, the adequate yearly progress is to reach Level 2 status. In 1997-98, 11 schools that administered the CMT were identified in this range: Barbour, Batchelder, Betances, Burr, M.D. Fox, Hooker, Kinsella, Milner, Moylan, Sanchez and SAND.

Initiative

4 Professional Development

Goal

To provide all employees with high-quality professional development that supports instructional improvement.

1999-2000 Objectives

- (4-A) Develop and implement a multiyear comprehensive staff development plan.
- (4-B) Provide staff development opportunities that focus on instructional quality in reading, language arts, mathematics and all support functions.
 - Complete professional development on the literacy and numeracy programs for all staff members.
- (4-C) Continue to train administrators to serve as effective educational leaders (see 1-H).
- (4-D) Provide professional development on the curriculum guides for all staff members (see 2-D).
- (4-E) Define and provide the training needed by staff members working in distinct programs — special education, bilingual education and others (see 7-G).
- (4-F) Provide professional development on the new social studies programs (spring 2000).

Initiative

5 Early Childhood

Goal

To provide programs and services that ensure all children come to first grade ready to learn.

1999-2000 Objectives

- (5-A) Implement the 1999-2000 preschool grant and ensure the creation of additional state-funded placements for 3- and 4-year-olds in early childhood programs.
- (5-B) Analyze and report data on 3- and 4-year-olds.
- (5-C) Develop a process to identify and register 3- and 4-year-olds for the first day of school.
- (5-D) Implement programs that provide educational materials and services to parents and young children.
- (5-E) Implement a rigorous early childhood curriculum that includes literacy, numeracy, technology, second language learning and the arts.
- (5-F) Create opportunities for preschool providers and K-1 teachers to align their curriculums.

Initiative

6 Technology

Goal

To integrate technology throughout the instructional program and to enhance the efficiency of noninstructional functions.

1999-2000 Objectives

- (6-A) Implement the Hartford Public Schools Technology Plan adopted January 1998, as budgeted.
- (6-B) Continue to enhance the instructional and noninstructional use of technology.
- (6-C) Design a technology laboratory in every high school for the reconditioning of computers donated by corporations and other sources.
- (6-D) Distribute reconditioned computers to the community and begin to provide free technology connectivity in every Hartford home associated with a Hartford public school.
- (6-E) Implement a ninth grade laptop program in every high school.
- (6-F) Implement Jostens Learning® in all K-8 schools.
- (6-G) Implement a school-to-career technology program for high school students.

Initiative

7 Student Support

Goal

To ensure a seamless and coordinated array of student services and support programs that provide for individual student needs and respond to the diversity of the student body.

1999-2000 Objectives

- (7-A) Open five thematic schools by September 2000.
- (7-B) Develop and implement a districtwide extended-day and extended-year program that is aligned with the regular school-year curriculum.
- (7-C) Develop "full-service" schools where comprehensive support services are available to students and their families.
- (7-D) Evaluate the impact of the charter school and magnet school options available to Hartford students.
- (7-E) Implement and evaluate the plans and/or programs to enhance alternative education, theme-based schools and career academies.
- (7-F) Improve and enhance the capacity to provide appropriate and effective accommodations for students with special needs in regular classrooms.
 - Develop a strong intervention/prevention referral protocol to improve services to general students in need of special services.
 - Reduce referrals to special education.
 - Increase the number of special education students returning to general education.

F-9

Initiative 7 Student Support (continued)

- (7-G) Define the distinct special education, bilingual education, alternative education and adult education programs in the district and provide needed training, resources and materials.
 - Develop a training protocol for all special education staff members.
 - Improve compliance with special education mandates.
 - Restructure the Hartford Transitional Learning Academy (HTLA) to better serve individual student needs.
 - Develop and implement a comprehensive bilingual education program.
 - Restructure the adult education program to better educate older students.
- (7-H) Recognize students for achievement, citizenship and peer assistance.
 - Develop a life skills character education program systemwide that is infused into the existing physical education and health programs and support services, e.g., guidance and social work.
 - Develop districtwide service learning programs to encourage community-based service learning project development and to continue to foster student citizenship.
- (7-I) Ensure compliance with Title IX.

Initiative

8 Parent and Community Support

Goal

To maximize parent and community engagement with each school and the district as a whole.

1999-2000 Objectives

- (8-A) Develop and implement school-based plans for significantly increasing parent/teacher communication and parent participation in school activities.
- (8-B) Conduct school-based and districtwide activities and programs to enhance ongoing parental involvement.
- (8-C) Plan and conduct annual reading, writing and mathematics nights at every elementary and middle school.
- (8-D) Provide training for parents on strategies that can be used at home to improve their child's academic skills.
- (8-E) Focus partnership efforts on improving student achievement.
 - Improve and enhance school-based collaborations with community agencies.
- (8-F) Provide training for parents and community partners involved in extended-day and extended-year programs.
- (8-G) Provide parent education at all levels, i.e., adult basic education, high school diploma completion, GED, ESL and higher education programs.

Initiative

9 Fiscal Management

Goal

To develop and implement a comprehensive and effective system of fiscal management for all funds and grants in the school system.

1999-2000 Objectives

- (9-A) Develop a spending plan for all funds for the 1999-2000 school year.
- (9-B) Develop a 2000-01 budget that integrates general and special funds.
- (9-C) Continue to implement a comprehensive plan of action (audit response) to improve overall fiscal management and accountability.
- (9-D) Report monthly the status of all funds, with year-end projections.
- (9-E) Develop written policies and procedures for all aspects of fiscal management.

Initiative

10 Facilities Management

Goal

To ensure that every student will attend a safe, properly sized and properly equipped facility.

1999-2000 Objectives

- (10-A) Report the findings of the comprehensive long-range facilities project and implement a comprehensive plan of action that:
 - improves overall facilities management and accountability; and
 - ensures that every student will attend a safe, properly sized and properly equipped facility.
- (10-B) Address overcrowding in schools based on enrollment projections and other information from the long-range plan.
- (10-C) Implement the facilities and educational plan for Hartford Public High School.
- (10-D) Replace school roofs and repair the most serious facility problems.
- (10-E) Improve accountability of managers and staff members through the implementation of a computerized work order and preventive maintenance system, and a proper inventory control system.

Partners*

F-12

Advisory Council
Audit Implementation Steering Committee
Capital Community-Technical College
Capitol Region Education Council (CREC)
Capital Region Workforce Development Board
Central Connecticut State University
Citizens' Committee for Effective Government
City of Hartford (Mayor, Council, Manager, Police,
City Departments)
Colleges/universities engaged in professional develop-
ment with Hartford staff members
Coordinating Council for Philanthropy
Hartford Areas Rally Together
Hartford Federation of Teachers
Hartford Foundation for Public Giving
Hartford Parent Network
Jeter, Cook and Jepson
Local businesses and community organizations
MetroHartford Chamber of Commerce
New England Association of Schools and Colleges
(NEASC)
Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory
at Brown University

(continued)

13

Partners* (continued)

PriceWaterhouse Coopers
Saint Joseph College
School Building Committee
School Improvement Teams
School Readiness Council
Scully & Wolf
State Department of Education
Trinity College
United Technologies Corporation
United Way of the Capital Area
University of Connecticut
University of Hartford

* Please note that this list of partners is not complete. These examples of resources are included to emphasize the expectation of substantial outside assistance.

14

Progress to Date in Our Schools

- Student achievement, as measured by the Connecticut Mastery Test and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test, has continued to improve in most Hartford schools, and exemption rates have decreased throughout the district.
- The percentage of Hartford graduates taking the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) and the combined SAT score averages have increased at each high school. The number of Advanced Placement (AP) course offerings, the percentage of students taking AP tests, and the achievement results have also increased at each high school. More graduating seniors have also taken other college-level courses as part of their high school program.
- A superintendent who successfully implemented a plan to increase student achievement in his former district has been appointed. The search committee was comprised of the Advisory Council and members of the State Board of Trustees. A professional search firm helped to conduct the search.
- Members of the State Board of Trustees and the administration have reviewed and revised several sections of the Board policy manual.

Progress to Date (continued)

- Corporate and municipal support has been provided to assist the district with a variety of fiscal and operational recommendations — updating job descriptions, Year 2000 compliance, Title IX compliance, transfer to a newer version of the joint financial system for the City of Hartford and the Board, and a new capital improvement and facilities work order process. Assistance has also been provided to support school improvement teams and principals.
- Community support through foundations, organizations, local colleges and universities and concerned citizens has been provided to improve school facilities, coordinate summer programs, tutor students, train staff members and recognize student achievement.
- The State Board of Trustees and the superintendent have redefined their roles and responsibilities.
- Almost all collective bargaining agreements have been revised to better facilitate academic reforms in the district and to reward high levels of performance.
- The superintendent's literacy and numeracy enhancement and test sophistication programs have been incorporated into the regular academic program, extended-day programs, and spring vacation and summer programs.
- Regular assessment of students' academic progress has taken place during the academic year and the district's summer program.

- A policy to end social promotion has been adopted, and assistance is currently being provided to students in need of additional instructional support, e.g., extended-day and extended-year learning opportunities.
- Professional development and instructional materials have been provided to staff members to implement the new literacy and numeracy programs. Training to integrate technology into the curriculum also has been provided.
- Comprehensive school reform models, Success for All[®] in particular, have been adopted at every elementary school. Administrators have received training in these models, and staff members will be trained prior to the start of this academic year. Receipt of new instructional materials and supplies has begun, again, prior to the start of the 1999-2000 academic year.
- The accreditation process began last year with six elementary schools. Bulkeley High School is fully accredited.
- Hartford's local charter schools, Breakthrough and the Sport Sciences Academy, will expand their academic programs, and two new interdistrict magnet schools will open this year — the Greater Hartford International Academy and the Trinity Science, Mathematics and Technology High School Resource Center.
- Fifty-two students from other districts are projected to attend Hartford public and charter schools this year.
- Full-day and full-year early childhood programs (to serve approximately 670 children) are currently being developed for the 1999-2000 academic year. This includes preparation for national accreditation.

(continued)

Progress to Date (continued)

- Facilities improvements have begun to expand the instructional use of technology. Technology integration will begin this year with Jostens Learning[®], a ninth grade laptop program, and other innovations.
- A Parent Summer Institute has demonstrated district-level support for parent leadership in school reform by providing parents with strategies to increase parent/teacher communication, to extend their own learning, and to assist their children with academic skills. A program will be designed and implemented this year to continue to address these goals.
- Improved financial accounting and finance operations resulted in a more informative budget development process for 1998-99, monthly financial statements provided to the State Board of Trustees that exhibit the use of general and special funds, the reconciliation of expenditures from prior years, and cost savings for the district.
- Preliminary findings from the long-range facilities project (scheduled for completion this fall) have been used to prioritize needed improvements, including 17 roof replacement and repair projects.

APPENDIX G

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARDS

MISSION AND EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT LEARNING

CURRICULUM

INSTRUCTION

ASSESSMENT ON STUDENT LEARNING

SUPPORT STANDARDS

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

1

MISSION AND EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT LEARNING

1. The school has a mission statement which flows from the educational community's beliefs about education, states the purpose and goals of the school and is reflective of the unique culture of the school.
2. The school has established measurable expectations that reflect the mission statement and set high academic standards for students.
3. The school's faculty and administration, with participation from parents, students, central office personnel and other constituencies of the school, establish, accept and support the mission statement and expectations.
4. The mission statement and expectations are congruent with those of the district and reflect current local, state and national standards.
5. The mission statement and expectations guide the school's planning and decision-making about policies, procedures and programs as well as the social, academic and intellectual development of the students.
6. The faculty and administration set a clearly defined cycle for the review and revision of the mission and expectations to adapt to the changing needs of students and present any revisions to the educational community.

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

2

CURRICULUM

1. The school's written curriculum is aligned with the school's stated expectations for students' academic achievement and developmental needs.
2. Each curriculum learning area clearly articulates learning standards which support the expectations and ensures that all students have sufficient opportunity to achieve.
3. The curriculum is intellectually challenging, is developmentally appropriate and allows for the hands-on application of knowledge.
4. Effective curriculum coordination and articulation takes place in the school as well as with all receiving and sending schools.
5. There is a systematic and ongoing process for curriculum development, review and revision, which takes into account stated academic expectations and assessments of student performance.
6. The school's library technology and media services program supports and is integrated into the school's curriculum and instructional practices, and the library staff participates in the school's curriculum and instructional decisions.
7. The school commits sufficient time, fiscal resources and staffing for the development and implementation of the written curriculum
8. The school provides professional development opportunities to assist in the development, understanding and implementation of the written curriculum.

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

3

INSTRUCTION

1. Classroom instruction embodies the school's stated beliefs about teaching and learning, reflects current research on effective teaching strategies and is designed to enable all students to meet the school's expectations for academic achievement.
2. Instruction addresses the individual needs of students, enables all students to have successful experiences and promotes independent life-long learning.
3. Appropriate instructional materials and services are available for all programs including those for students identified with special needs and students whose abilities present unique needs.
4. Teaching facilitates learning by including practices that are exploratory, individualized, self-directed, authentically based and integrated across the disciplines.
5. Instruction promotes the development and application of higher order thinking skills and problem solving techniques.
6. Instruction fosters appropriate behavioral standards, responsible citizenship and an appreciation of diversity.
7. Technology supports instruction and improves student learning.
8. The school provides professional development opportunities to improve instructional practices, resulting in increased student achievement.
9. The discussion of instructional practice is a significant part of the professional culture of the school.
10. The school commits sufficient time, fiscal resources and staffing to support effective instruction.
11. Supervision of faculty is focused on the improvement of student learning.
12. Students are active learners and have the opportunity to assess their own learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARD

4

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

1. The school utilizes an assessment system that embodies the mission statement and expectations for academic achievement and measures its progress in meeting those expectations.
2. An appropriate variety of classroom assessment strategies, reflective of current assessment research, is integrated with instructional practices.
3. The faculty and administration discusses and utilizes student assessment results in the review, evaluation and revision of the curriculum and the improvement of instructional strategies.
4. The identified learning standards for each curricular learning area are the basis for assessing each student's progress. (see Curriculum #2)
5. The school provides a variety of reporting procedures to communicate the methods of student assessment and the results of individual student progress to parents.
6. The school provides professional development opportunities which foster effective assessment practice and strategies.
7. The school commits sufficient time, fiscal resources, materials, technology, supplies and staffing to support effective assessment procedures.
8. The school systematically interprets and reports the level of attainment of its stated expectations for academic achievement to the community.

SUPPORT STANDARD

5

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

1. The principal provides leadership, facilitates the development and maintenance of a vision and establishes a focus on student learning and growth.
2. The school's administration, faculty and support staff are sufficient in number, appropriately certified and share the collegial responsibility for implementing the mission and expectations of the school and effectively meeting the needs of the students.
3. There is a program of professional development which is collaboratively planned, supports the school's mission and expectations and enables the faculty to strive to improve teaching and learning.
4. The school has a planned orientation program for new administrators, faculty and support staff.
5. The school climate is positive, respectful, safe and orderly, and it encourages pride, growth, renewal and constructive risk-taking among students and staff.
6. There is evidence of mutual respect, common purpose and shared support among all members of the school community.
7. The school regularly acknowledges, celebrates and displays the work, contributions and achievements of students and school personnel.
8. The school establishes developmentally appropriate rules, expectations and consequences for student behavior and school attendance, which are clearly articulated to the entire school community.
9. The school encourages and supports a process of clear, consistent and meaningful communication within the building and between school and home.
10. The school welcomes parents and involves them in meaningful and effective activities to support the academic achievement and the emotional and social growth of their children.
11. The school has clearly defined crisis/emergency response plans, and all occupants of the building are familiar with these procedures.
12. The school has a clearly defined process for the evaluation and supervision of faculty, staff and administration which is utilized for continual improvement of the quality of the educational program.

SUPPORT STANDARD

6

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

1. Student support services are designed to enable each student to participate in and benefit from the educational programs within the school and to support the school's mission and expectations.
2. Student support services personnel interact and work cooperatively with other school staff and community resources to address the academic, social, emotional and physical needs of students and to enhance student learning opportunities.
3. The physical areas provided for student support services are appropriate to the particular service.
4. Parents are kept informed about the range of available student support services and are involved in the coordination of services as they pertain to their children.
5. Services are in place to ensure the health and well being of the students, and information pertinent to the learning process and/or essential for safety is communicated to the appropriate faculty and staff.
6. The school maintains all student, administrative and personnel records in a confidential and secure manner consistent with federal, state and local law or regulation.
7. The school's library technology and media services program has an appropriate space to ensure the accessibility of its technology and materials by students and teachers and is staffed by qualified personnel who are trained and supervised by a certified library/media specialist.
8. The school's library technology and media services program has a wide range of print, non-print and electronic materials and equipment which is appropriate to an elementary school, supportive of the curriculum, accessible to students and teachers, and reflective of a global and multi-cultural society. Materials and equipment are adequately maintained, catalogued and updated.
9. The school's library technology and media program has clearly defined objectives which ensure that student needs for research and learning are met.
10. The school's faculty, staff and administration are familiar with the objectives of the school's library technology and media services program and are directly involved in the selection of materials, equipment and resources to complement and improve teaching and learning.
11. The school has policies in place for the Internet and for the selection and removal of print and non-print multi-media materials.

SUPPORT STANDARD

7

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR LEARNING

1. The community, through its school board, provides educational leadership, sets and disseminates policy, and ensures an adequate and reliable revenue source.
2. The community, through its school board, provides appropriate school programs, personnel, professional development programs, facilities, equipment, technological support, materials and supplies for student learning.
3. The school and the school district have an ongoing planning process which addresses capital improvement needs as well as future program, staffing and facility needs.
4. The faculty and administration of the school are actively involved in the development of the school's budget which is supportive of the school's mission and expectations.
5. Appropriate relationships with the community-at-large foster partnerships, develop and strengthen communication and encourage mutual cooperation and good citizenship.
6. The school invites parental involvement, encourages ongoing and effective home-school communication and provides avenues to address parents' questions and concerns.
7. The school building and grounds provide a setting for an appropriate, positive and safe learning environment.
8. There is a planned, on-going program of building and site maintenance to ensure the health and safety of the occupants and proper documentation is on file to indicate the school's compliance with local, state and federal law or regulations.
9. If food services are provided, the area, menu and equipment ensure that the well being of students is a priority.
10. If transportation is provided, appropriate procedures are in place to ensure the safety of the students.

APPENDIX H
HARTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Fiscal Year 1999-2000 Proposed Budget Comparison

September 7, 1999

Description	Account	FY 1998-99 Adopted Budget	FY 1998-99 Actual Expenditures	Original Proposed Budget FY1999-2000	Adopted Budget FY1999-2000 (pending City resolution)	Difference (Adopted Budget FY1999-2000 less FY1998-99 Actual Expenditures)
Certified Administrators	10	1,061,891	1,367,269	1,327,167	1,463,770	96,501
Certified Asst Admin	11	1,804,445	1,624,644	2,046,183	2,636,311	1,011,667
Instructional Admin	12	6,565,906	6,816,473	7,800,002	7,744,785	928,312
Instructional Staff	13	105,635,538	101,158,384	104,726,592	103,728,279	2,569,895
Certified Support Staff	14	4,111,136	4,359,402	4,629,553	4,586,901	227,499
Certified Benefits	19	1,548,743	2,470,512	1,839,948	1,839,948	(630,564)
Certified Salaries Total		120,727,659	117,796,684	122,369,445	121,999,994	4,203,310
Non Certified Admin	20	472,202	460,434	593,328	704,617	244,183
Non Certified Asst Admin	21	723,078	764,703	771,960	833,256	68,553
Support Staff	22	2,599,688	2,512,310	2,860,017	2,713,125	200,815
Clerical & Tech Staff	23	5,148,779	5,119,494	5,280,012	5,422,005	302,511
Medical Staff	24	1,650,887	1,569,585	1,767,081	1,767,081	197,496
Paraprof. & Security	25	7,556,487	7,753,034	8,199,304	8,114,822	361,788
Custodial Staff	26	6,823,423	6,649,362	6,918,000	6,878,491	229,129
Carpenters & Electricians	27	1,134,153	1,158,694	1,346,967	1,346,967	188,273
Mechanical & Plumbers	28	618,863	665,602	886,396	886,396	220,794
Non Certified Benefits	29	383,685	299,250	387,105	387,105	87,855
Non Certified Salaries Total		27,111,145	26,952,468	29,010,170	29,053,865	2,101,397
Instructional Improvements	32	385,601	809,642	440,625	443,424	(366,218)
Professional Services	33	1,114,195	2,036,485	2,519,156	2,544,156	507,671
Educational Purchased Services Total		1,499,796	2,846,127	2,959,782	2,987,581	141,454
Water & Sewage	41	131,850	129,833	163,105	163,105	33,272
Maint Supplies & Services	42	228,100	189,100	241,103	241,103	52,003
Maintenance Contracts	43	1,883,892	2,017,311	2,915,867	2,707,167	689,856
Rental-Equip & Facilities	44	3,170,733	2,618,680	1,986,966	2,240,167	(378,513)
Building Improvements	45	344,618	166,568	1,084,618	477,299	310,731
Non Educ Purchased Svcs Total		5,769,193	5,121,492	6,391,659	5,828,841	707,349
Transportation	51	6,521,973	6,423,749	6,981,223	7,046,223	622,474
Communications	53	887,103	1,053,403	947,191	947,682	(105,721)
Advertising	54	33,000	41,210	55,000	55,000	13,790
Printing & Binding	55	275,963	80,770	273,579	370,679	289,909
Tuition	56	9,232,433	9,286,524	10,097,620	10,097,620	811,096
Travel & Conferences	58	135,307	116,096	216,556	223,726	107,630
Misc Services	59	342,301	186,776	349,100	349,100	162,324
Systemwide Purchased Svcs Total		17,428,080	17,188,528	18,920,269	19,090,030	1,901,502
Instructional & Other Supplies	61	2,869,502	2,840,739	3,402,624	3,406,382	565,643
Utilities	62	5,299,076	5,133,343	5,530,246	5,530,246	396,903
Food Service Supplies	63	3,020	1,676	3,020	3,020	1,344
Text & Library Books	64	1,178,786	2,068,284	2,080,946	1,466,366	(601,918)
Misc Supplies	69	366,908	679,203	430,887	480,887	(198,316)
Supplies & Materials Total		9,717,292	10,723,245	11,447,723	10,886,900	163,655
Equipment	73	460,093	1,435,818	1,435,795	1,080,795	(355,023)
Outlay Total		460,093	1,435,818	1,435,795	1,080,795	(355,023)
Organizational Dues	81	51,302	51,817	64,420	65,155	13,338
Legal Judgements	82	598,715	1,166,870	700,000	60,000	(1,106,870)
Moving Expenses	83			10,000	10,000	10,000
Other Operatg Expenses	89	651,183	721,409	1,529,288	941,288	219,879
Other Misc Expenditures Total		1,301,200	1,940,096	2,303,708	1,076,443	(863,653)
Fund 1003 General Budget Total		184,004,458	184,004,458	194,838,551	192,004,450	7,999,992



APPENDIX I

Charter Revision

Robert Furek, Chair, State Board of Trustees
Robert Rader, Director, CT Association of
Boards of Education

Background:

A special Task Force has been formed to hold hearings to solicit commentary on the subject of revising the current charter of the City of Hartford. The mission of the Task Force is to recommend, if warranted, revisions to the Charter to the Hartford City Council. If Council approves the recommended revisions, they will be forwarded to the voters for final approval or rejection.

While the main focus of the work of the Task Force is examining the responsibilities and powers of the office of Mayor, the Task Force will also address Charter provisions that relate to the Board of Education.

The State Board of Trustees has been invited to provide its views on provisions related to the Board of Education, specifically its views regarding an elected or an appointed Board of Education. The Task Force has invited the Trustees to appear at 5:30 p.m. on December 8 in Council Chambers.

Current provisions for the Hartford Board of Education are:

The Board of Education shall consist of nine (9) members elected for a period of five (5) years. Candidates for the Board shall be nominated through the primary process. Vacancies on the Board shall be filled by the appointment of a person of the same political party as his/her predecessor.

The City Council, by a vote of at least 6 members, can remove a member of the Board of Education.

While the City Manager has the authority to review all city department budgets, in the case of the education department the city manager has only the power to revise the total expenditures not any specific spending category.

The city's purchasing agent shall contract and purchase all supplies required by any department except he/she shall not purchase educational and scientific supplies, etc., for the use of the Department of Education.

The Department of Public Works shall not have charge over buildings under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education.

The Director of Parks and Recreation does not have supervision over playfields and playgrounds under the supervision of the Department of Education.

The employees of the Department of Education shall not be subject to the Civil Service provisions for the establishment of a standing committee for school building projects.

The alternatives to be considered through charter revision include an elected versus an appointed Board of Education.

The case for an elected Board:

An elected Board is traditional and the model followed by the vast majority of school boards in CT.

An elected Board requires that those elected be responsive to the electorate and, as a result, at least in theory, to be more accountable to the electorate.

An elected Board, when it functions correctly, can generate a sense of involvement and participation among the electorate.

An elected Board can provide an effective check on the misuse of power or on ineffective performance.

The case against an elected Board:

The effectiveness of an elected Board depends on the participation of the electorate. If voter turnout is small, individuals can engineer elections with the support of a limited but loyal group of voters, e.g. recent school board primaries and general elections have generated voter turnout of merely 5% of the electorate. As few as 800 votes in a primary could qualify an individual for a slot in the general election, 1800 votes out of an electorate of approximately 45,000 could elect an individual to the Board. Voters are disenfranchised, disengaged or uninformed and the election process is undermined as a result.

The election process tends to politicize the process and the Board by electing people who see themselves representing a political party, or a group, or a particular philosophy. Rather than putting the interests of the children first, some Board members may see the Board's role as patronage to or being responsive to the economic or philosophical interest of a specific group or political party.

An effective Board, particularly a Board responsible for an under-performing school district, should be composed of individuals who have the necessary skills to manage the improvement program, e.g. communications, familiarity with educational issues, budgeting and finance. An elected Board, since the process assumes the popular selection of individuals, does not assure that all the required skills will be present on the Board.

Despite the election of many talented and concerned individuals, elected Boards have presided over the massive failure of the Hartford Public School System.

The case for an appointed Board:

With an appointed Board, the chances are enhanced that the Board will contain the necessary skills and expertise to address the school system's problems and challenges. It can result in the appointment of the best qualified people.

An appointed Board can be filled with non-partisan participants who are motivated solely by what is best for the children. As a consequence, the Board can be more insulated from constituent pressures that plague an elected Board.

Properly constructed, an appointed Board can assure adequate representation of the city's electorate. If the Board is appointed by the mayor, accountability to the electorate might be enhanced. The mayor will be responsible for the Board's actions and for the school system's performance. The mayor's plans for the Board might become an important issue in the campaign raising both public awareness and accountability.

The case against an appointed Board:

Because the Board is not directly elected, the electorate may feel powerless and become disenfranchised.

Unless there are some checks and balances, a determined mayor could make poor and even disruptive appointments.

Other issues:

There are indications that the Task Force may seek to revise the Charter as it relates to current separations regarding purchasing, buildings and grounds, and human resources.





STATE BOARD OF TRUSTEES FOR HARTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Reverend Henry C. Frascadore
Rolando Martinez

December 22, 1999

Legislative Program Review & Investigations Committee
State Capitol
Room 506
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Dear Senator Fonfara and Representative Wasserman, Co-Chairs, and members of the Program Review and Investigations Committee:

On behalf of the entire State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools, I offer our compliments to you and your staff regarding your recent review of our efforts to improve opportunities and outcomes for Hartford students. We wish in particular to recognize the extraordinary contribution of Brian Beisel to this task. Brian's commitment of time and energy, his dedication to fairness and accuracy and his unfailingly thoughtful analysis are a tribute to your Committee's process. Brian's approach to this undertaking exemplified the kind of city/state partnership that has been instrumental in moving the school system forward.

The report will give us additional guidance in shaping our activities as we enter the next phase of our tenure. Thank you again.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert M. Furek".

Robert M. Furek, Chair

cc: Lorraine Aronson
Brian Beisel

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STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



February 8, 2000

Michael L. Nauer
Director
Legislative Program Review and
Investigations Committee
State Capitol, Room 506
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Dear Mr. Nauer:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the findings and recommendations made by your Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee (LPRIC) staff in the report on the State Board of Trustees for the Hartford Public Schools. The state monitors reviewed the report and have found that your LPRIC staff recommendations concur with the findings recorded in our quarterly reports to the Governor and the General Assembly. Attached is a chart prepared by the state monitors that aligns the LPRIC staff recommendations with the 1999-2000 goals of the State Board of Trustees. This chart was presented to Superintendent Anthony S. Amato and his cabinet for discussion at the monthly Hartford Public Schools/State Department of Education (HPS/SDE) meeting in January.

Many of your recommendations focus on the need for the Trustees to receive regular reports on the implementation of academic and noninstructional administrative initiatives, and on the requirements of Special Act 97-4 – the accreditation of elementary and middle schools, the implementation of fiscal and operational audit recommendations, and the Advisory Council. Recent observations by the state monitors demonstrate that the trustees, central office officials, Audit Implementation Steering Committee, and staff members of the State Department of Education are incorporating the recommendations into existing action plans. The following represent some of the current efforts directed at several of the report's recommendations:

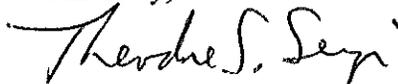
- The chief of staff for the Hartford Public Schools and staff members of the Audit Implementation Steering Committee are working together to develop a reporting system for the State Board of Trustees and a strategy for prioritizing and reporting on the Commissioner of Education's 48 recommendations (incorporated in the district's 1999-2000 goals and objectives; see attachment).
- Central office administrators and the director of the Commission on Public Elementary Schools for the New England Association of Schools and Colleges have met to discuss the necessary components for a comprehensive written strategy to accredit all of the district's elementary and middle schools. This is a regular agenda item for the monthly HPS/SDE meetings with Superintendent Amato.
- The Technology Advisory Committee for the Hartford Public Schools has developed a status report on implementation efforts to address the critical success factors outlined in the technology plan as a first step toward the revision of the plan.

- The chair of the State Board of Trustees and members of the Advisory Council have reviewed the LPRIC staff recommendations and are beginning to develop a list of areas that will require policy directives in the coming months. Parents on the council have begun to prepare a written agenda for review by the Trustees and the Superintendent prior to their monthly meetings.
- A presentation by the Audit Implementation Steering Committee (AISC) to the State Board of Trustees is scheduled for later this month. Periodic AISC updates will be provided at the Trustees' informational meetings and monthly status reports will be forwarded to each Trustee. City and school officials have been developing the internal capacity to manage the automated financial system; updates have been folded into the monthly AISC priority project reviews. School finance officials and AISC are also developing written financial processes and procedures manuals.
- The AISC chief of staff has also been facilitating the development of a capital improvement process between the finance and facilities departments of the City of Hartford and the Hartford Public Schools to implement the recommendations of the long-range facilities plan.
- The Commissioner and the state monitors have designated the September/October quarterly progress report as the annual report on the progress and condition of the Hartford schools.

Your report also presented possible vehicles for sustaining the structural changes that have taken place in the Hartford Public Schools. The Education Committee of the General Assembly, members of the State Board of Trustees, Superintendent Amato and I had an opportunity to discuss many of these options last week. Clearly, a transition plan needs to be developed to move from a state-appointed board to a locally appointed or elected board of education. Some of the necessary steps to establish an appropriate transition process include (a) considering the recommendations of the commission reviewing Hartford's charter to clarify Hartford's school governance structure; (b) determining which of the specific mechanisms in Special Act 97-4 would continue to ensure improvement in student achievement and the district's operational systems; and (c) ascertaining the future role of the State Department of Education with regard to monitoring progress and providing technical assistance.

We will include in future quarterly reports on the Hartford Public Schools efforts made by the State Board of Trustees, Superintendent Amato and local partnerships to address the LPRIC staff recommendations. Thank you for a very thorough analysis of the Hartford Public Schools and for many useful recommendations.

Sincerely,



Theodore S. Sergi
Commissioner

Attachment

INITIATIVES FOR IMPROVING THE HARTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SOURCES OF THE INITIATIVES		12/99 STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM REVIEW & INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE	
Initiatives/Goals/Objectives 1999-2000	1994 Strategic Goals	Commissioner's 48 Recommendations (1996)	S.A. 97-4 Goals
<p>I. School and District Management and Accountability</p> <p>Goal: To provide a governance system and administrative structure that:</p> <p>(a) supports the effective delivery of high-quality instruction and high levels of student achievement;</p> <p>(b) implements a system of supervision, evaluation and staff development that maximizes the effectiveness of all Hartford Public Schools personnel; and</p> <p>(c) ensures high levels of student and staff accountability.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <p>(1-A) Hire a chief fiscal officer.</p> <p>(1-B) Build capacity for site-based management and shared decision making at every school.</p> <p>(1-C) Implement new Board policy manuals and monitor for revisions.</p> <p>(1-D) Complete the implementation and evaluation of the pilot of the new teacher evaluation instrument.</p> <p>(1-E) Implement use of the new supervisory evaluation instrument.</p> <p>(1-F) Train staff members to use new noninstructional systems, e.g., financial and purchasing.</p> <p>(1-G) Ensure that all school personnel are provided with job descriptions and annual evaluations.</p> <p>(1-H) Develop and implement a plan for principals to serve as educational leaders.</p> <p>(1-I) Continue to centralize selected noninstructional functions.</p> <p>(1-J) Continue to clarify and articulate the roles and responsibilities of the Board, superintendent and administrators.</p> <p>(1-K) Continue to focus collective bargaining efforts to remove barriers to student achievement.</p>	<p>We will implement site-based management and shared decision making in each school.</p> <p>We will align our administrative resources to ensure adequate supervision, evaluation, incentives and staff development so that each school is held accountable for student performance outcomes.</p>	<p>2. Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Board, Superintendent, Principals and School Governance Teams.</p> <p>5. Update and adopt personnel evaluation policies and procedures, with appropriate training.</p> <p>39. Hold conversations with collective bargaining units to identify and adjust contract language, policies or practices that do not maximize student achievement.</p>	<p>Board through the superintendent and SDE determine which of the 48 recommendations have been satisfactorily implemented, which recommendations are still relevant, and then prioritize those implementation purposes.</p> <p>Establish specific indicators and timeframes; determine costs associated with implementation; and determine how the recommendations align with the district's goals and strategies.</p> <p>Quarterly status report on the implementation of the recommendations, beginning March 2000 (include level of implementation—fully, partially, no progress).</p> <p>Periodic reports on the development and implementation of the personnel evaluation instruments.</p> <p>Board develop a standardized reporting mechanism for oversight purposes: at minimum, establishing a quarterly calendar of specific reports regarding implementation various polices and programs.</p> <p>Board develop a cumulative annual report outlining the district's yearly progress and success. State monitors develop an annual report detailing the board's cumulative progress in meeting its stated goals and objectives and implementation of its specified polices and procedures over the course of the previous year.</p>

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INITIATIVES FOR IMPROVING THE HARTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SOURCES OF THE INITIATIVES		12/99 STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM REVIEW & INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE
Initiatives/Goals/Objectives 1999-2000	1994 Strategic Goals	S.A. 97-4 Goals
<p>2. Curriculum and Course Offerings</p> <p>Goal: To ensure a high-quality curriculum that establishes clear content and high expectations for every grade, every course and every child.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <p>(2-A) Implement a literacy and numeracy program for all students, PK-12.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue the literacy and numeracy enhancement and test sophistication program. <p>(2-B) Complete professional development on literacy and numeracy for all staff members.</p> <p>(2-C) Develop curriculum guides for all disciplines and begin to develop grade-level and course assessments of students that are aligned with the curriculum guides.</p> <p>(2-D) Provide professional development on the curriculum guides for all staff members.</p> <p>(2-E) Continue to ensure a curriculum free of bias (e.g., cultural, gender).</p> <p>(2-F) Implement plans that will result in more students demonstrating success in reading, writing, algebra, foreign languages, the PSAT, the SAT, Advanced Placement courses, CMT and CAPT.</p> <p>(2-G) Pilot new social studies and science programs in spring 2000.</p>	<p>We will establish performance-based standards, which will specify what every student will know and be able to do in order to graduate.</p> <p>We will develop community and responsible citizenship by a) teaching all students a language other than their native language, b) providing opportunity and encouragement for students to perform community service, and c) recruiting, hiring and developing our own work force as a model of diversity.</p>	<p>Enhance quality, adequacy and equality of educational opportunities.</p> <p>Implement the Hartford Improvement Plan developed by the Commissioner of Education and adopted by the Hartford Board of Education in 1996.</p>
<p>8. Revise and republish academic area outcomes.</p> <p>9. Develop K-12 curriculum guides for each subject area aligned with CMT/CAPT assessments.</p> <p>10. Disseminate curriculum guides and provide training for all staff members.</p> <p>13. Develop and implement a plan to require algebra for graduation.</p> <p>14. Strongly encourage students to take the PSAT and SAT; Provide appropriate preparation.</p> <p>15. Increase the number of Advanced Placement courses and enrollments in the three high schools.</p>	<p>8. Revise and republish academic area outcomes.</p> <p>9. Develop K-12 curriculum guides for each subject area aligned with CMT/CAPT assessments.</p> <p>10. Disseminate curriculum guides and provide training for all staff members.</p> <p>13. Develop and implement a plan to require algebra for graduation.</p> <p>14. Strongly encourage students to take the PSAT and SAT; Provide appropriate preparation.</p> <p>15. Increase the number of Advanced Placement courses and enrollments in the three high schools.</p>	<p>Enhance quality, adequacy and equality of educational opportunities.</p> <p>Implement the Hartford Improvement Plan developed by the Commissioner of Education and adopted by the Hartford Board of Education in 1996.</p>

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INITIATIVES FOR IMPROVING THE HARTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SOURCES OF THE INITIATIVES		12/99 STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM REVIEW & INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE
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<p>3. Instruction, Assessment and School Climate</p> <p>Goal: To create a positive climate and ensure high-quality instruction and high levels of student achievement.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <p>(3-A) Continue to allocate and support appropriate assistance and resources to the 11 schools in the Level I range according to the 1997-98 Overall School Index.</p> <p>(3-B) Ensure continued accreditation for all of Hartford's high schools, and continue the accreditation process for the elementary and middle schools.</p> <p>(3-C) Implement a PK-8 grade-level continuous criterion-referenced assessment process in literacy and numeracy, and begin a similar process for the core academic areas.</p> <p>(3-D) Implement and evaluate the Early Success and Soar to Success Programs.</p> <p>(3-E) Publicize student performance and attendance data at the school and district levels.</p> <p>(3-F) Implement strategies to improve attendance and school climate.</p> <p>(3-G) Implement dropout and truancy reduction plans.</p>	<p>We will develop methods to demonstrate and assess student competence and creativity in a variety of ways.</p>	<p>Increase student achievement in Hartford.</p> <p>Ensure that all Hartford elementary and middle schools join NEASC through the association's accreditation process.</p> <p>Implement the Hartford Improvement Plan developed by the Commissioner of Education and adopted by the Hartford Board of Education in 1996.</p>
<p>1. Develop policies and procedures for accreditation and probation of schools; Recognize high-performing schools and outline clear consequences for schools failing to make progress to improve student achievement.</p> <p>3. Make improvement of student learning the primary focus of all school activity.</p> <p>4. Update and implement policies and procedures to increase attendance, decrease truants and dropouts.</p> <p>7. Analyze student performance and attendance data annually – basis for school improvement efforts.</p> <p>12. Develop and implement a three-year professional development plan to strengthen capacity to implement the updated curriculum.</p> <p>17. Create "student-centered" schools.</p> <p>22. Establish reading achievement as the primary mission of K-4 classes; Provide necessary instructional support.</p>	<p>Ensure a comprehensive written strategy is developed for the accreditation of the entire district's elementary and middle schools in conjunction with NEASC, SDE and any other resources identified by the board. Components of the strategy should include an action plan, timetable, financial and staff resources projected to complete the process, and a plan for professional development and technical assistance for schools.</p>	

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SOURCES OF THE INITIATIVES	
1994 Strategic Goals	Commissioner's 48 Recommendations (1996)
Initiatives/Goals/Objectives 1999-2000	S.A. 97-4 Goals
<p>4. Professional Development</p> <p>Goal: To provide all employees with high-quality professional development that supports instructional improvement.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <p>(4-A) Develop and implement a multiyear comprehensive staff development plan.</p> <p>(4-B) Provide staff development opportunities that focus on instructional quality in reading, language arts, mathematics and all support functions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complete professional development on the literacy and numeracy programs for all staff members. <p>(4-C) Continue to train administrators to serve as effective educational leaders (see 1-H).</p> <p>(4-D) Provide professional development on the curriculum guides for all staff members (see 2-D).</p> <p>(4-E) Define and provide the training needed by staff members working in distinct programs – special education, bilingual education and others (see 7-G).</p> <p>(4-F) Provide professional development on the new social studies programs (spring 2000).</p>	<p>We will align our administrative resources to ensure adequate supervision, evaluation, incentives and staff development so that each school is held accountable for student performance outcomes (also listed with Initiative #1).</p>
<p>5. Early Childhood</p> <p>Goal: To provide programs and services that ensure all children come to first grade ready to learn.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <p>(5-A) Implement the 1999-2000 preschool grant and ensure the creation of additional state-funded placements for 3- and 4-year-olds in early childhood programs.</p> <p>(5-B) Analyze and report data on 3- and 4-year-olds.</p> <p>(5-C) Develop a process to identify and register 3- and 4-year-olds for the first day of school.</p> <p>(5-D) Implement programs that provide educational materials and services to parents and young children.</p> <p>(5-E) Implement a rigorous early childhood curriculum that includes literacy, numeracy, technology, second language learning and the arts.</p> <p>(5-F) Create opportunities for preschool providers and K-1 teachers to align their curriculums.</p>	<p>2. Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Board, Superintendent, Principals and School Governance Teams.</p> <p>10. Disseminate curriculum guides and provide training for all staff members.</p> <p>12. Develop and implement a three-year professional development plan to strengthen capacity to implement the updated curriculum. (These recommendations are also listed with Initiatives # 1, 2 and 3.)</p>
	<p>Implement the Hartford Improvement Plan developed by the Commissioner of Education and adopted by the Hartford Board of Education in 1996.</p> <p>Enhance quality, adequacy and equality of educational opportunities. (These goals are also listed with Initiatives #1 and 2).</p>
	<p>Implement the Hartford Improvement Plan developed by the Commissioner of Education and adopted by the Hartford Board of Education in 1996.</p>

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<p>6. Technology</p> <p>Goal: To integrate technology throughout the instructional program and to enhance the efficiency of noninstructional functions.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (6-A) Implement the Hartford Public Schools Technology Plan adopted January 1998, as budgeted. (6-B) Continue to enhance the instructional and noninstructional use of technology. (6-C) Design a technology laboratory in every high school for the reconditioning of computers donated by corporations and other sources. (6-D) Distribute reconditioned computers to the community and begin to provide free technology connectivity in every Hartford home associated with a Hartford public school. (6-E) Implement a ninth grade laptop program in every high school. (6-F) Implement Jostens Learning@in all K-8 schools. (6-G) Implement a school-to-career technology program for high school students. 	<p>We will integrate technology throughout our Pre-kindergarten - Adult Education curricula and assure equal access by all students to such technology.</p>	<p>Implement the Hartford Improvement Plan developed by the Commissioner of Education and adopted by the Hartford Board of Education in 1996.</p>
	<p>11. Assemble business and education experts to report quickly on increasing the availability and use of technology to enhance instruction; Develop a three-year plan to significantly increase instructional use of technology.</p> <p>41. Develop and implement a three-year technology plan for noninstructional use to improve efficiency in functions such as record keeping, scheduling, transcript maintenance and purchasing.</p>	<p>Periodic updates to the board regarding the status of the district's technology plan, including how the district's current initiatives are linked to the plan.</p> <p>Determine whether revisions to the current plan are necessary and update/revise the plan before its expiration in 2001.</p>

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Initiatives/Goals/Objectives 1999-2000	Commissioner's 48 Recommendations (1996)
1994 Strategic Goals	S.A. 97-4 Goals
<p>7. Student Support</p> <p>Goal: To ensure a seamless and coordinated array of student services and support programs that provide for individual student needs and respond to the diversity of the student body.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <p>(7-A) Open five thematic schools by September 2000.</p> <p>(7-B) Develop and implement a districtwide extended-day and extended-year program that is aligned with the regular school-year curriculum.</p> <p>(7-C) Develop "full-service" schools where comprehensive support services are available to students and their families.</p> <p>(7-D) Evaluate the impact of charter school and magnet school options available to Hartford students.</p> <p>(7-E) Implement and evaluate the plans and/or programs to enhance alternative education, theme-based schools and career academies.</p> <p>(7-F) Improve and enhance the capacity to provide appropriate and effective accommodations for students with special needs in regular classrooms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a strong intervention/prevention pre-referral protocol to improve services to general students in need of special services. ▪ Reduce referrals to special education. ▪ Increase the number of special education students returning to general education. <p>(7-G) Define the distinct special education, bilingual education, alternative education and adult education programs in the district and provide needed training, resources and materials.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a training protocol for all special education staff members. ▪ Improve compliance with special education mandates. ▪ Restructure the Hartford Transitional Learning Academy (HTLA) to better serve individual student needs. ▪ Develop and implement a comprehensive bilingual education program. ▪ Restructure the adult education program to better educate older students. <p>(7-H) Recognize students for achievement, citizenship and peer assistance.</p>	<p>We will bring Pre-kindergarten - Adult curricula, school staff, and student services into alignment so that programs will be well integrated and mutually reinforcing as students progress from school to school, both within the city and throughout the region.</p> <p>6. Adopt a "warranty of essential skills" policy wherein any student can return for remedial work.</p> <p>16. Fully implement the three career academies, as well as Connecticut's Eight Career Clusters at all three high schools.</p> <p>18. Implement character development programs (Grades 5-8).</p> <p>19. Establish peer assistance programs to help address teen pregnancy and substance abuse (Grades 7-12).</p> <p>20. Provide alternative education programs for students unable or unwilling to be successful in the mainstream program (Grades 7-12).</p> <p>21. Establish theme-based elementary programs/schools of choice - open to all children in the city - to increase student motivation and parent involvement.</p> <p>23. Establish a formal and ongoing student recognition program.</p> <p>24. Reduce the number of students receiving special services by providing more effective accommodated instruction in regular classrooms and by expanding in-school program alternatives.</p> <p>25. Coordinate categorical programs and align with mainstream academic goals.</p> <p>26. Develop system-wide summer learning kits.</p> <p>27. Increase summer school programming and enrollment to provide remedial and enrichment experiences.</p> <p>44. Seek grants and other resources to provide after-school and summer programs.</p>
<p>Implement the Hartford Improvement Plan developed by the Commissioner of Education and adopted by the Hartford Board of Education in 1996.</p>	

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Initiatives/Goals/Objectives 1999-2000	1994 Strategic Goals	Commissioner's 48 Recommendations (1996)	S.A. 97-4 Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a life skills character education program systemwide that is infused into the existing physical education and health programs and support services, e.g., guidance and social work. ▪ Develop districtwide service learning programs to encourage community-based service learning project development and to continue to foster student citizenship. <p>(7-1) Ensure compliance with Title IX.</p>			
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<p>8. Parent and Community Support</p> <p>Goal: To maximize parent and community engagement with each school and the district as a whole.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <p>(8-A) Develop and implement school-based plans for significantly increasing parent/teacher communication and parent participation in school activities.</p> <p>(8-B) Conduct school-based and districtwide activities and programs to enhance ongoing parental involvement.</p> <p>(8-C) Plan and conduct annual reading, writing and mathematics nights at every elementary and middle school.</p> <p>(8-D) Provide training for parents on strategies that can be used at home to improve their child's academic skills.</p> <p>(8-E) Focus partnership efforts on improving student achievement.</p> <p>(8-F) Improve and enhance school-based collaborations with community agencies.</p> <p>(8-G) Provide training for parents and community partners involved in extended-day and extended-year programs.</p> <p>(8-H) Provide parent education at all levels, i.e., adult basic education, high school diploma completion, GED, ESL and higher education programs.</p>	<p>We will require each school to develop a plan that ensures maximum parent and community involvement and support for high-quality learning and personal growth.</p>	<p>31. Prepare and distribute materials for parents of young children that detail practical strategies for preparing children for school.</p> <p>33. Adopt and implement a strong parent involvement policy.</p> <p>34. Develop school plans to increase parent-teacher communication, including monthly written or oral reports from the school.</p> <p>35. Establish and staff a single Coordinating Council for Parents.</p> <p>36. Increase parent representation on school governance teams.</p> <p>37. Develop parent training and outreach through adult education programs.</p> <p>38. Expand adult basic education and high school completion programs at elementary school sites.</p> <p>47. Establish a central office unit to strengthen partnerships.</p> <p>48. Explore the creation of a Hartford Public Education Fund to provide an external source of funding for innovative initiatives.</p>	<p>Provide a mechanism for parent, teacher and community involvement in schools.</p> <p>Establish a seven-member advisory council to assist the State Board of Trustees and the Superintendent.</p> <p>Implement the Hartford Improvement Plan developed by the Commissioner of Education and adopted by the Hartford Board of Education in 1996.</p>
		<p>Ensure coordination of the various parental, community, and school improvement approaches being implemented; performance regarding parental involvement measured against the parental involvement standards adopted by the board.</p> <p>Advisory Council – reestablish its role; develop and coordinate a clear agenda of major issue areas; appoint a chairperson; develop meeting minutes; make written requests for information to the superintendent; ensure responses to requests from the administration.</p>	

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<p>9. Fiscal Management</p> <p>Goal: To develop and implement a comprehensive and effective system of fiscal management for all funds and grants in the school system.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <p>(9-A) Develop a spending plan for all funds for the 1999-2000 school year.</p> <p>(9-B) Develop a 2000-01 budget that integrates general and special funds.</p> <p>(9-C) Continue to implement a comprehensive plan of action (audit response) to improve overall fiscal management and accountability.</p> <p>(9-D) Report monthly the status of all funds, with year-end projections.</p> <p>(9-E) Develop written policies and procedures for all aspects of fiscal management.</p>	<p>42. Complete the implementation of the HPS/City joint financial management system.</p> <p>45. Research cost-benefits of transferring noninstructional functions and responsibilities to the City or to a nonprofit private concern.</p> <p>46. Secure outside expertise to conduct a comprehensive budget analysis to identify cost savings for instructional supplies, materials and equipment.</p>	<p>Allocate and manage resources efficiently and effectively.</p> <p>Determine the amount of local funds needed to meet the needs of the school district.</p> <p>Conduct a fiscal and operations audit; address the findings and implement the recommendations.</p> <p>Prompt disposition of all purchasing requests (responsibility of the Hartford City Manager).</p>
		<p>Each member of the State Board of Trustees receive a copy of the monthly status reports distributed to the audit steering committee.</p> <p>Board hold informational meetings (at least semi-annually) to provide the board and the general public with a full progress report on the implementation status efforts of the operational audit.</p> <p>Ensure that all financial management processes and procedures are formally documented in a written manual(s) for use by school and central office personnel.</p> <p>Develop internal capacity to take ownership of the automated financial management project upon its full implementation. At minimum this should include assigning a project manager/team to oversee the system; provide necessary resources for continued project development and support; and provide staff training as needed.</p>

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<p>10. Facilities Management</p> <p>Goal: To ensure that every student will attend a safe, properly sized and properly equipped facility.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <p>(10-A) Report the findings of the comprehensive long-range facilities project and implement a comprehensive plan of action that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improves overall facilities management and accountability; and ▪ Ensures that every student will attend a safe, properly sized and properly equipped facility. <p>(10-B) Address overcrowding in schools based on enrollment projections and other information from the long-range plan.</p> <p>(10-C) Implement the facilities and educational plan for Hartford Public High School.</p> <p>(10-D) Replace school roofs and repair the most serious facility problems.</p> <p>(10-E) Improve accountability of managers and staff members through the implementation of a computerized work order and preventive maintenance system, and a proper inventory control system.</p>	<p>We will ensure that every child will attend a safe, properly sized and equipped educational facility.</p>	<p>40. Develop a comprehensive, long-range enrollment projection and facilities report.</p> <p>43. Establish priorities for facilities planning efforts, such as school safety and cleanliness, community use of schools, family resource centers, and school-based health clinics.</p>
	<p>Develop and implement a long-term school facilities program.</p> <p>Renovate Hartford Public High School.</p>	<p>Ten-year facilities plan: devise a short- and long-term implementation strategy; analyze need for redistricting; ensure students attend properly sized facilities.</p>

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