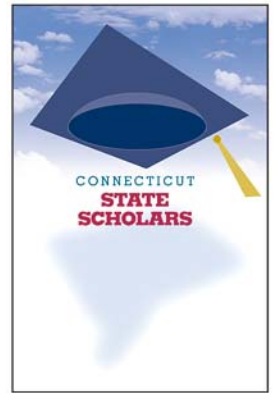


Connecticut State Scholars Fact Sheet



What is the State Scholars Program?

Connecticut State Scholars is a simple, low-cost, high-impact strategy that motivates students to complete rigorous high school courses that prepare them for college and careers. Research shows a direct correlation between challenging high school coursework and success in the modern workforce, the military and postsecondary education. The State Scholars Initiative began when concerned businesspeople, educators and researchers noticed that many high school students were not enrolling in or completing essential academic courses such as algebra II, chemistry and advanced English.

The Role of the Business Community

This initiative could not be possible without the support and encouragement of the business community. The Connecticut State Scholars program is unique because business leaders deliver the message directly to the students that high school coursework does matter to their future academic, career and business success. Businesspeople make presentations to eighth graders immediately before the students select their high school courses. The business volunteers help the students understand the career options and the future earnings benefits of taking lab sciences, algebra II and other tougher courses. The role for the business community continues throughout the four years of high school with continuous work with the school system on specific programs that provide academic support to students who have chosen the Connecticut State Scholars course of study. This support will help ensure that the participating students succeed in the more difficult classes.

The Need for Rigorous Coursework

Bureau of Labor Statistics projections show that 80% of the 50 fastest-growing jobs will require education beyond high school and that 40% of all new jobs will require at least an associate's degree. Even for those jobs that do not require postsecondary education, employers are seeking employees who are proficient in reading, math and science; who can solve problems; work in teams; and communicate effectively. Most importantly, they are looking for employees who can learn new technical skills throughout their lives. And yet a large percentage of high school students graduate without the solid academic foundation they need to succeed in higher education and the rapidly evolving workplace.

- Nearly half of postsecondary students must take remedial coursework in college. Students taking remedial coursework are less likely to complete their degree than students who come to college prepared.
- A U.S. Department of Education study found that taking rigorous classes was a more accurate predictor of student success than grades, test scores or class rank, especially among minority students.
- Three studies have found that students, who completed algebra II, were 40% more likely to receive their degrees than those students who only completed geometry.

The Connecticut State Scholars Course of Study

To graduate as a Connecticut State Scholar, a student must complete the following courses with a grade of C or better:

- 4 credits in English
- 3 credits in math (algebra I, geometry, algebra II or equivalent integrated math)
- 3 credits in lab sciences (biology, chemistry, physics)
- 3.5 credits in Social Studies (U. S. history, world history, world geography, economics, government)
- 2 credits in the same world language

Benefits to Students

The Connecticut State Scholars program is open to all students, and designed especially for the majority of students who are not working up to their potential. With information and encouragement from business leaders and community volunteers, middle and high school students are encouraged to choose the Connecticut State Scholars course of study. When students graduate as Connecticut State Scholars, they are more likely to be:

- Ready for post-secondary education without needing remedial courses.
- Academically prepared for college, technical school, the military or job training.
- Equipped with the ability to continue learning.
- A stronger candidate for certain types of financial aid and scholarships.

Employers, colleges, universities and technical schools care about an applicant's overall education, not just a grade-point average. They prefer people who have completed a demanding course of study in high school. They value a C in a difficult class more than an A in an easy one.

Benefits to Connecticut

Students who complete the Connecticut State Scholars courses will be better prepared for the future. As jobs increasingly require higher skill levels, this program will effectively prepare students for post secondary education and employment. Employers will benefit from a more highly skilled workforce, supporting Connecticut's economic vitality and strengthening local communities.

The Pilot Districts

Based on a successful national model, the pilot program of Connecticut State Scholars will be launched first in the communities of Danbury and New Haven and at Vinal Technical High School in Middletown.

The Business & State Agency Partners

Connecticut State Scholars is managed by the Connecticut Business & Industry Association (CBIA) in cooperation with the Office of the Governor; the state Departments of Education and High Education; the Greater Danbury Chamber of Commerce; The Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce; The United Illuminating Company; GE Commercial Finance; Dow Chemical Company; the Bilco Company; and the Housatonic Valley Economic Development Partnership.

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