

**(F) General (55 total points)**

**State Reform Conditions Criteria**

**(F)(1) Making education funding a priority (10 points)**

The extent to which—

- (i) The percentage of the total revenues available to the State (as defined in this notice) that were used to support elementary, secondary, and public higher education for 2009 was greater than or equal to the percentage of the total revenues available to the State (as defined in this notice) that were used to support elementary, secondary, and public higher education for 2008; and
- (ii) The State's policies lead to equitable funding (a) between high-need LEAs (as defined in this notice) and other LEAs, and (b) within LEAs, between high-poverty schools (as defined in this notice) and other schools.

*In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.*

Evidence for (F)(1)(i):

- Financial data to show whether and to what extent expenditures, as a percentage of the total revenues available to the State (as defined in this notice), increased, decreased, or remained the same.

Evidence for (F)(1)(ii):

- Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers.

**(F)(1): MAKING EDUCATION FUNDING A PRIORITY**

**Introduction**

Education funding in Connecticut is and has always been a priority. Traditionally, when compared with other states Connecticut is among the highest spenders in elementary and secondary education. The latest information from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) shows that for 2005-06, Connecticut had the third highest per pupil expenditures for both total expenditures as well as for instruction. Under capital outlay for school facilities, Connecticut was the highest in the country.

Not only does Connecticut have a long-standing tradition of supporting education at the highest levels, the state has been equally sensitive to the issue of funding equity. Since the late 1970's our major education funding formulas have been predicated upon districts' ability to raise local tax dollars to support public education as well as needs of subgroups of students, particularly in terms of poverty, English language learners (ELL) and academic performance. Below is a summary of the results of our equalized education funding formulas by District Reference Groups ("DRG").

<b>Table (F)(1)(i)(a): 2008-2009 Connecticut Data by District Reference Group</b>						
<b>DRG</b>	<b>Number of School Districts</b>	<b>October 2008 Student Enrollment</b>	<b>Enrollment Percent of Total</b>	<b>2008-09 State Grant Payments</b>	<b>State Grant Percent of Total</b>	<b>State Grant per Pupil</b>
A	9	30,470	5.61%	24,565,773	0.86%	\$ 806
B	21	99,638	18.35%	146,270,347	5.14%	1,468
C	30	39,636	7.30%	129,764,468	4.56%	3,274
D	24	86,296	15.89%	279,508,802	9.83%	3,239
E	34	25,677	4.73%	126,264,666	4.44%	4,917
F	17	29,953	5.51%	186,477,510	6.56%	6,226
G	15	68,560	12.62%	432,433,932	15.21%	6,307
H	9	65,823	12.12%	355,950,746	12.52%	5,408
I	7	97,048	17.87%	1,162,579,255	40.88%	11,979
<b>Totals</b>	166	543,101	100.00%	\$2,843,815,499	100.00%	\$5,236

Despite the economic challenges that continue to plague Connecticut and much of the nation, from year to year we continue to increase revenues for elementary and secondary education, including a \$126.6 million increase in fiscal year 2009.

**(F)(1)(i) Revenues Available to Support Education**

The percentage of total revenues that Connecticut made available to support elementary, secondary and public higher education for 2008 and 2009 were virtually flat at 23 percent. Overall, from 2008 to 2009, the state’s support in these areas increased by almost \$126.6 million, or 3.25 percent. Additionally, during this time period, the State did not waiver from its deep commitment to maintaining the infrastructure for public education. For example, through the Connecticut State Department of Education’s (CSDE) school construction grant program, approximately \$650 million in each year of the biennium was provided to the school districts for building improvements and new construction. Despite the increase in education revenues, due to Connecticut’s economic downturn in 2009 and various state and federal safety net requirements, the state did have a slightly disproportionate increase in many of its welfare and social services programs (i.e., Medicaid, Medicaid Part D, Husky (children’s medical care) and housing for the homeless), which effectively rendered education expenditures as flat for this time period.

<b>Table (F)(1)(i)(b)</b>		
<b>State Revenues for Elementary, Secondary and Public Higher Education as a Percentage of Total State Revenues</b>		
	<b>FY2008</b>	<b>FY2009</b>
A. State Revenues for Elementary, Secondary and Public Higher Education	\$3,892,795,885	\$4,019,380,727
B. Total State Revenues	\$16,627,447,407	\$17,234,854,884
C. Education Revenues as a Percent of Total Revenues (Item A/Item B)	23.41%	23.32%

**(F)(1)(ii) Equitable funding between high need LEAs and other LEAs and within LEAs between high poverty schools and other schools**

For fiscal year 2009-10, almost \$2.9 billion has been appropriated to the CSDE for grant programs supporting elementary and secondary education, including preschool programs and construction activities (see FY 10 and FY 11 Department of Education Budget in Appendix (F)(1)(a) for further detail). Of that amount, nearly \$2.6 billion (87 percent) is distributed through an equalizing formula in which the distribution is affected by towns' ability to support education (i.e., town "wealth") and student need.

Under state equalization, the wealthier the town and lower the student need, the lower the state funding. Conversely, the poorest towns with the highest student need will generally receive the highest rates of state support. While there are a number of wealth definitions in our funding formulas, all of our wealth definitions are predicated on two underlying premises. First, wealth is determined based on a town's property tax base and the income of its residents. Second, the property tax base is the value of taxable real and personal property (net grand list) at 100 percent fair market value and is called the equalized net grand list.

Property tax base is used because it is the form of wealth taxed by Connecticut towns. Both definitions of wealth also use income because the income that taxes are paid from has an important effect on town taxing capacity. Student need is measured through the numbers and concentrations of poverty, English language learners and, in some instances, student performance.

**Connecticut's Major Equalized Funding Formulas**

For 2009-10, there are nine state grants totaling nearly \$2.6 billion whose distribution is driven by equalization. The nine grants fit into two major funding distributions: Education Cost Sharing (ECS) and Categorical Reimbursements.

***Education Cost Sharing (ECS)***

The ECS grant, which has been in existence since 1989-90, continues to be Connecticut's primary education equalization aid program. With funding set at \$1.9 billion in 2009-10, ECS will continue to represent the largest state contribution to public elementary and secondary education. Under the fully-funded ECS formula, LEAs are entitled to a percentage of the state's foundation multiplied by an LEA's "need students." (See CGS 10-262i in Appendix (F)(1)(b)). The foundation is currently set at \$9,687 per student. Need

students represent resident students weighted for Title I poverty and English language learners. The percentage of the foundation that a town is entitled to is based on town wealth. For 2009-10, the percentage of the foundation that the state funds ranges from 9 percent for the wealthiest town to 91 percent for the poorest town.

Table (F)(1)(ii)(a) reveals the effect of ECS equalization by comparing the wealthiest-lowest need and poorest-highest need District Reference Groups (DRGs). Local education agencies (LEAs) are grouped into DRGs based on the characteristics of students' families. LEAs in a DRG have similar incomes, percentages of families below the poverty level, percentages of single-parent families, percentages of families with non-English home language, percentages of parents with a bachelor's degree and percentages of families in white collar or managerial occupations. DRG A represents those LEAs with the highest income and education levels and the lowest poverty levels. Conversely, DRG I has the lowest income and educational levels and the highest poverty. Coincidentally, the seven LEAs that compose DRG I are also the same LEAs that would fall under the definition of High-Need LEAs when using Title I poverty as a percent of the age 5-17 population. While no LEA in Connecticut serves 10,000 children in poverty, there are seven LEAs in which Title I poverty constitutes at least 20 percent of the student population.

<b>Table (F)(1)(ii)(a)</b>				
<b>2009-10 ECS Grant per Pupil for DRG A, DRG I/High-Need LEAs and Statewide Average</b>				
<b>DRG</b>	<b># LEAs</b>	<b># Resident Students (October 2008)</b>	<b>ECS grant per pupil</b>	<b>DRG I to DRG A and State Ratios</b>
A (Wealthiest)	9	30,578	\$358	
I (High-Need LEAs)	7	96,582	\$7,551	21 to 1
State	166	553,066	\$3,417	

The ratio of the ECS grant per-pupil difference between the wealthiest and poorest DRG is in excess of 21 to one. On a per-pupil basis, the ECS grant per pupil in the high-need LEAs (DRG I) is more than double the state average.

***Categorical Reimbursements***

The state has a number of categorical grants that reimburse LEAs for local tax dollars expended in eligible program areas. These grants include adult education, school construction, public and non-public pupil transportation and health services to private not-for-

profit schools. (See CGS 10-71, CGS 10-285a, CGS 10-266m and CGS 10-217a in Appendix (F)(1)(b)). The state-support percentage assigned to an LEA will depend on LEA wealth and the range of state support percentages. In every case, the higher the wealth rank, when sorted in descending wealth order, the lower the state-support percentage. Table (F)(1)(ii)(b) below provides the current ranges of state-support percentages for 2009-10.

<b>Table (F)(1)(ii)(b)</b>		
<b>Proportion of State Categorical Reimbursement by LEA Wealth Ranking</b>		
	<b>Start Range (Highest Wealth Rank)</b>	<b>End Range (Lowest Wealth Rank)</b>
Pupil Transportation	0%	60%
School Construction	20%	80%
Adult Education	0%	65%
Health Services	10%	90%

***Targeted State Aid***

For 2009-10, in addition to the nearly \$2.6 billion in equalized state education aid, another \$367 million in targeted grants is available for purposes such as magnet schools, school readiness, Head Start, family resource centers, interdistrict cooperation and attendance programs, breakfast initiatives and summer- and after-school programs. (See CGS sections 10-264l, 10-16p(c), 10-16n, 10-4o, 10-266aa, 10-266w, 10-74d, 10-266p, 10-266t, 10-265m and CGS 10-16x in Appendix (F)(1)(b)). While the distribution formulas under these programs are not necessarily equalized, the goals of these programs are targeted to the students in the state’s poorest and neediest LEAs.

***Targeted State Aid for High Poverty Schools***

In Connecticut, state funding formulas are generally LEA-based rather than school-based. The effects of heavy equalization and targeted aid at the LEA level ensure that the neediest schools, located within the poorest LEAs, will receive the appropriate and

commensurate share of state funding. However, there are two important state funding initiatives targeted at the poorest schools rather than at the LEA level: School Breakfast and Early Childhood Education. (See CGS 10-266w and CGS 10-16p(d) in Appendix (F)(1)(b)).

Connecticut supplements the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) funded breakfast programs in those schools where at least 40 percent of the lunches served are free or at reduced price based on family income. For 2009-10, the state anticipates supporting over 10 million breakfasts in 408 high-poverty schools. Connecticut also funds early childhood programs to the 19 communities with the highest numbers or concentrations of poverty and remedial performance. In that program, the state provides funding at the community level for more than 9,700 3- to 5-year-olds. In addition, there are also early childhood grants for those communities that are not among the 19 LEAs already funded and that have elementary schools where at least 40 percent of the lunches served are free or at reduced price or are among the 50 poorest districts. Under that program, for 2009-10, the state will fund an additional 800 3- to 5-year-olds in 64 towns.

***The Effects of Equalized State Funding Formulas***

For 2008-09, the \$2.85 billion of equalized and targeted aid represents more than 95 percent of state elementary and secondary education aid. The eligibility and distribution of these funds take into account wealth, student need and the desire to allocate a disproportionate share of state aid to those towns that can least afford to support education given their level of poverty and student need.

<b>Table (F)(1)(ii)(c)</b>		
<b>State Funding per Pupil for DRG A, DRG I and Statewide 2003-04 and 2008-09</b>		
<b>DRG</b>	<b>2003-04</b>	<b>2008-09</b>
A (High Wealth/Low Need)	932	806
I (Low Wealth/High Need)	8,454	11,980
State	3,936	5,276
DRG I to DRG A Ratio	9.07	14.86
DRG I to State Ratio	2.15	2.27

Table (F)(1)(ii)(c) reveals the wide funding differential between the wealthiest and poorest DRGs and how state funding continues to increase the share to the poorest and neediest LEAs, from nine times to nearly 15 times during the past five years. Additionally, the gap between the high-need LEAs (DRG I) and the state average continues to widen. As can be seen in Table (F)(1)(ii)(d), in 2008-09 Connecticut funded the poorest DRGs' share of education in excess of 62 percent compared to only 4.4 percent for the wealthiest LEAs, a difference of more than 14 times.

<b>Table (F)(1)(ii)(d)</b>			
<b>2008-09 Revenue Shares for Education Expenditures for DRG A, DRG I and Statewide</b>			
<b>DRG</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Local</b>	<b>Federal/Other</b>
A (High Wealth/Low Need)	4.41%	94.13%	1.46%
I (Low Wealth/High Need)	62.50%	27.21%	10.29%
Statewide	30.43%	64.53%	5.04%
DRG I to DRG A Ratio	14.17%	0.29%	7.05%
DRG I to State Ratio	2.05%	0.42%	2.04%

**Appendices Referenced in Section (F)(1)**

- Appendix (F)(1)(a) FY 10 and FY 11 Department of Education Budget
- Appendix (F)(1)(b) Connecticut General Statutes on School Funding

**(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools (40 points)**

The extent to which—

(i) The State has a charter school law that does not prohibit or effectively inhibit increasing the number of high-performing charter schools (as defined in this notice) in the State, measured (as set forth in Appendix B) by the percentage of total schools in the State that are allowed to be charter schools or otherwise restrict student enrollment in charter schools;

(ii) The State has laws, statutes, regulations, or guidelines regarding how charter school authorizers approve, monitor, hold accountable, reauthorize, and close charter schools; in particular, whether authorizers require that student achievement (as defined in this notice) be one significant factor, among others, in authorization or renewal; encourage charter schools that serve student populations that are similar to local district student populations, especially relative to high-need students (as defined in this notice); and have closed or not renewed ineffective charter schools;

(iii) The State’s charter schools receive (as set forth in Appendix B) equitable funding compared to traditional public schools, and a commensurate share of local, State, and Federal revenues;

(iv) The State provides charter schools with funding for facilities (for leasing facilities, purchasing facilities, or making tenant improvements), assistance with facilities acquisition, access to public facilities, the ability to share in bonds and mill levies, or other supports; and the extent to which the State does not impose any facility-related requirements on charter schools that are stricter than those applied to traditional public schools; and

(v) The State enables LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools (as defined in this notice) other than charter schools.

*In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State’s success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.*

Evidence for (F)(2)(i):

- A description of the State’s applicable laws, statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.
- The number of charter schools allowed under State law and the percentage this represents of the total number of schools in the State.
- The number and types of charter schools currently operating in the State.

Evidence for (F)(2)(ii):

- A description of the State’s approach to charter school accountability and authorization and a description of the State’s applicable laws,

statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.

- For each of the last five years:
  - The number of charter school applications made in the State.
  - The number of charter school applications approved.
  - The number of charter school applications denied and reasons for the denials (academic, financial, low enrollment, other).
  - The number of charter schools closed (including charter schools that were not reauthorized to operate).

Evidence for (F)(2)(iii):

- A description of the State’s applicable statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.
- A description of the State’s approach to charter school funding, the amount of funding passed through to charter schools per student, and how those amounts compare with traditional public school per-student funding allocations.

Evidence for (F)(2)(iv):

- A description of the State’s applicable statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.
- A description of the statewide facilities supports provided to charter schools, if any.

Evidence for (F)(2)(v):

- A description of how the State enables LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools (as defined in this notice) other than charter schools.

**(F)(2) ENSURING SUCCESSFUL CONDITIONS FOR  
HIGH-PERFORMING CHARTER SCHOOLS AND OTHER INNOVATIVE SCHOOLS**

**Introduction**

In an effort to close the state’s achievement gap and ensure that all students have the opportunity to access high-quality programs based on their educational needs and interests, Connecticut supports a robust Public School Choice initiative that has been in existence for over 50 years. (See Table (F)(2)(a) for details). Connecticut currently offers a series of public school choice options that includes charter schools and innovation schools as well as interdistrict magnet schools, the Open Choice Program, the Interdistrict Cooperative Grant Program, Connecticut Technical High Schools and Regional Agricultural Science and Technology Education Centers. (See

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**Connecticut Race to the Top Phase 2 Application**

Appendix (F)(2)(a) for more detail on these programs). Connecticut's public school choice programs have increasingly engaged in partnerships with public or independent institutions of higher education, including community colleges, to prepare students for post-secondary educational opportunities. Choice programs also allow the State of Connecticut to advance the integration of its students. In Hartford, specifically, public school choice is an effective tool for meeting the Supreme Court Order in the matter of Sheff v. O'Neill to educate the children of Hartford in less-segregated settings. (See section (A)(1)(i) for additional details on the Sheff v. O'Neill lawsuit).

High academic achievement is a fundamental expectation in schools of choice as market dynamics indicate that few students will voluntarily choose a school that does not challenge students to achieve at high levels. As detailed below, public charter schools and interdistrict magnet schools routinely outpace the standardized test scores of the nearby central city and typically meet or exceed statewide averages in mathematics, reading and writing. Open choice programs, by offering students the opportunity to learn side-by-side with students of other cultures and economic strata, provide a setting where school-wide achievement is typically high and where students feel they can better succeed. In addition, public school choice programs have been found to directly and positively affect levels of parental involvement, student attendance, achievement, motivation and community engagement.

Students who attend public schools of choice are much more likely to stay engaged and less likely to drop out compared to students attending schools in local LEAs. The following factors likely contribute to student retention: school theme; smaller size; sense of community among students of similar interests; and specific interventions by schools to prevent dropping out. Interdistrict magnet and charter schools collectively have nearly one-third of the dropout rate of their comparison urban local high school. The way in which charter and magnet high schools address students at risk of dropping out of school is a part of the iterative site review process by the CSDE. Common methods or programs to prevent drop out include the *Responsive Classroom* and *Positive Behavioral Support* models.

**Table (F)(2)(a)**  
**Summary of Connecticut's 2009-2010 Public School Choice Program**

<b>Public School Choice Grant</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Number of Participating Districts</b>	<b>Total State Funds</b>
Charter Schools	5,170	85	\$48,081,000
Magnet Schools	23,037	141	\$153,000,000
Open Choice	1,875	62	\$14,960,000
Regional Agricultural Science and Technology Education Centers	3,043	149	\$4,560,565
Connecticut Technical High School System	10,579	162	125,141,00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>43,704</b>	<b>(n/a)</b>	<b>\$345,742,565</b>

Interdistrict magnet schools are the cornerstone of the Public School Choice initiative in Connecticut and, like charter schools in other states across the nation, play a significant role in numerous districts. Connecticut now supports 61 magnet schools across the state. However, charter schools are growing in popularity and now play an expanding role in accomplishing the goals of Connecticut's education reform agenda. In fact, significant reforms to Connecticut's charter law were approved by the General Assembly and signed into law by the Governor during the 2010 legislative session as part of a comprehensive education reform bill, Public Act 10-111, described more thoroughly in Section (A)(1)(i). With regard to Section (F), the bill makes the following significant changes to current law:

- Eliminates the enrollment caps for high-performing charter schools;
- Permits the State Board of Education to approve state and local charter schools, regardless of available appropriations;
- Makes the charter school facility grant permanent; and
- Authorizes the development of "innovation schools" in priority school districts.

Further detail on these important changes that are relevant to Section (F) are embedded in the subsections that follow.

**(F)(2)(i): Charter School Statutes and Potential Barriers to Growth**

The Connecticut State Board of Education (SBE) is authorized to grant charters for both state and local charter schools in accordance with the provisions laid out in Section 10-66bb of the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS), originally enacted by the state legislature in 1996. (See CGS 10-66aa to 10-66ll in Appendix (F)(2)(b)). Pursuant to this statute, a charter school is defined as a public, nonsectarian school established under a charter granted pursuant to the provisions of Connecticut law, organized as a nonprofit entity which acts as a public agency and operates independently of any local or regional local board of education in accordance with the terms of its charter and the provisions of the statutes.

State statute provides for the operation of both state and local charter schools. Pursuant to 10-66aa of the CGS, a “state charter school” is a new public school authorized by the SBE. CGS 10-66aa defines a “local charter school” as a public school or part of a public school that is converted into a charter school and is approved by the local or regional board of education of the LEA in which it is located and authorized by the SBE. In the 2009-10 school year, 18 state charter schools operated in Connecticut. There are currently no local charter schools in operation.

***Barriers to Growth Removed***

Connecticut does not have an explicit cap on the number of state or local charter schools that may operate in the state. Previously, the SBE could only approve state and local charter schools “within available appropriations.” However, pursuant to Section 12 of Public Act No. 10-111, the SBE may now approve charter schools regardless of available appropriations. This is a significant change in the approval process for charter schools given that previously, potential charter school operators were prohibited from coming forward for approval unless a significant appropriation from the legislature had been made. Now these operators may come to the SBE for approval and then work with the legislature as well as other potential funding sources such as local and regional school boards to generate the funding needed to open the school.

Section 12 of Public Act No. 10-111 also removed enrollment caps for high-performing charter schools. State law restricts the enrollment levels of all new state charter schools to 250 students (300 students in schools that offer grades K-8) or 25 percent of the

enrollment of the LEA in which the state charter school is located, whichever is less. (See CGS 10-66bb(c) as amended by Section 12 of Public Act 10-111 in Appendix (A)(1)(c)). Previously, those state charter schools with “a demonstrated record of achievement” could, upon application to and approval by the SBE, enroll up to 85 students per grade, within available appropriations. However, passage of Section 12 of Public Act 10-111 now *requires* the SBE, upon application by a charter school with a demonstrated record of achievement, to waive *all* enrollment restrictions, regardless of available appropriations. (See the full text of Public Act 10-111 in Appendix (A)(1)(c)).

***Charter Funding: A Potential Barrier to Growth that Remains***

While Public Act 10-111 made significant progress in improving conditions for charter school growth in Connecticut, an existing potential barrier to growth for state charter school remains in the way that these schools are funded. For local charter schools, state statute requires the local or regional board of education of the LEA where a student enrolled in a local charter school resides to pay to the fiscal authority for the charter school for each such student the amount specified in its charter, including the reasonable special education costs of students requiring special education. (See CGS 10-66ee(b) in Appendix(F)(2)(b)). However, the primary funding source for each state charter school is a per pupil grant from the state for \$9,300. (See CGS 10-66ee(c)(1) in Appendix(F)(2)(b)). This line item in the budget must be adjusted accordingly every year to accommodate the needs of the state charter schools; if it is not adjusted, the schools may only grow based on the number of seats that fiscal year’s budget may allow.

To address this dilemma and other concerns regarding funding for public school choice programs, the SBE formed in March 2010 an Ad Hoc Committee to Study Funding School Choice Programs. This task force, made up of a variety of stakeholders, convened in May and will work to develop recommendations in time for the next legislative session to address the financial obstacles confronted by charter schools and other choice programs. By creating a new and more equitable funding structure, charter schools will thrive as a robust public school choice opportunity in Connecticut (See March 3, 2010 Resolution of the SBE in Appendix (F)(2)(c)).

***Opportunities for Cooperation***

Charter schools may enter into cooperative arrangements for the provision of school accommodation services, programs or activities in the same manner that local or regional school boards may do so. (See CGS 10-66ee(m) in Appendix (F)(2)(b)). This provision allows charter schools to share school facilities and offer a stronger educational program, including Advanced Placement courses, a full college counseling program and a robust athletics and extracurricular program.

**Appendices Referenced in Section (F)(2)(i)**

- Appendix (A)(1)(c) Public Act No. 10-111
- Appendix (F)(2)(a) Public School Choice In Connecticut 2010-2011
- Appendix (F)(2)(b) Connecticut General Statutes on Charter Schools
- Appendix (F)(2)(c) March 3, 2010 Resolution of the SBE

**(F)(2)(ii) Approval and Accountability of Charter Schools**

Section 10-66bb of the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) governs the application process for new charter schools. A summary of the process for approval of both a state and a local charter school is described below. While each type of charter school has a slightly different approval process, in both processes, applicants must submit a plan to promote a diverse student body and a means to assess student performance. (See CGS 10-66bb(d) in Appendix (F)(2)(b) for a complete list of the charter school application requirements). In approving charter school applications, the SBE shall give preference to applicants that will serve students who live in the state’s priority school districts or in an LEA where 75 percent or more of the enrolled students are members of racial or ethnic minorities. (See CGS 10-66bb(c) in Appendix (F)(2)(b)). Over the past three years, three charter school applications have been approved. (See Table (F)(2)(ii)(a) below for a summary of the outcomes of applications for Connecticut charter schools over the past five years).

***Summary of State Charter School Approval Process***

An application for the establishment of a state charter school shall be submitted to the SBE for approval and filed with the local or regional board of education in the LEA in which the charter school is to be located. The SBE shall: review the application; hold a public hearing on the application in the LEA in which such state charter school is to be located; solicit and review comments on the application from the local or regional board of education for the LEA in which such charter school is to be located and from the local or regional boards of education for LEAs that are contiguous to the LEA in which such school is to be located; and vote on a complete application not later than 75 days after the date of receipt of such application.

The SBE may condition the opening of such school on the school’s meeting certain requirements that the Commissioner of Education determines to be necessary and may authorize the Commissioner to release the charter when the Commissioner determines such requirements are met. Charters shall be granted for a period of up to five years and may allow the applicant to delay its opening for a period of up to one school year in order for the applicant to fully prepare to provide appropriate instructional services. (See CGS 10-66bb(f) in Appendix(F)(2)(b)).

**Summary of Local Charter School Approval Process**

An application for the establishment of a local charter school shall be submitted to the local or regional board of education of the LEA in which the local charter school is to be located. The local or regional board of education shall: review the application; hold a public hearing in the LEA on the application; survey teachers and parents in the LEA to determine if there is sufficient interest in the establishment and operation of the local charter school; and vote on a complete application not later than 60 days after the date of receipt of such application.

If the application is approved, the local board shall forward the application to the SBE. The SBE shall vote on the application not later than 75 days after the date of receipt of such application. The SBE may condition the opening of such school on the school's meeting certain requirements determined by the Commissioner of Education to be necessary and may authorize the Commissioner to release the charter when the Commissioner determines such requirements are met. The SBE may grant the charter for a period of up to five years and may allow the applicant to delay its opening for a period of up to one school year for the applicant to fully prepare to provide appropriate instructional services. (See CGS 10-66bb(e) in Appendix(F)(2)(b).

**Table (F)(2)(ii)(a):  
State of Connecticut Charter School Applications 2006 through 2010**

	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Number of Applications Made in State	0	6 *	1 **	0	0
Number of Applications Approved	0	1	1	1	0
Number of Applications Denied***	0	1	3	0	0
Number of Charter Schools Closed	0	1	0	0	0

**Notes:**

- \* Six state charter school applications were made in the 2006-07 school year; one was approved and one was denied. Four applications were made at the end of the 2006-07 school year. These applications were reviewed in the 2007-08 school year; one was approved and three were denied.
- \*\* One state charter school application was made in the 2007-08 school year. It was reviewed and approved in the 2008-09 school year.
- \*\*\* In 2006-07, one charter school application was submitted after the due date. In 2007-08, two charter school applications were denied for the following deficiencies: financial, governance, curriculum and student assessment. The third school was denied due to deficiencies related to curriculum and student assessment.

***Monitoring and Accountability of Charter Schools***

Connecticut law requires that charter schools demonstrate their success and comply with the law to operate. (See CGS 10-66bb(g) and CGS 10-66bb(h) in Appendix F-2(b)). In fact, the SBE may deny the renewal of a charter or revoke a charter if a school fails to adequately demonstrate student progress or comply with applicable laws and regulations. Therefore, as a matter of agency policy, the CSDE regularly monitors all of the state charter schools currently in operation in Connecticut to ensure that the statutory requirements laid out in 10-66bb(g) and (h) are being met. As a part of these monitoring activities, charter schools undergo informal visits on a yearly basis, as laid out in Table (F)(2)(ii)(b) below. The Commissioner has the authority, pursuant to Section 10-66bb(h) of the CGS, to place a school on probation if, at any time: (1) the school has failed to (A) adequately demonstrate student progress, (B) comply with the terms of its charter or with applicable laws and regulations, (C) achieve measurable progress in reducing racial, ethnic and economic isolation, or (D) maintain its nonsectarian status; or (2) the governing council has demonstrated an inability to provide effective leadership to oversee the operation of the charter school or has not ensured that public funds are expended prudently or in a lawful manner. A charter school placed on probation must file a corrective action plan and comply with the plan for the probationary period, which may be up to one year. (See CGS 10-66bb(h) in Appendix(F)(2)(b)). The probationary period may be extended for an additional year. The Commissioner must notify parents or guardians of students attending the charter school of the reasons for the

school’s probationary status and may require the school to file interim reports on matters relevant to the probation. (See CGS 10-66bb(g) in Appendix (F)(2)(b)).

<b>Table (F)(2)(ii)(b) Monitoring and Accountability Activities Required by the CSDE</b>					
<b>Site Visits and Reports</b>	<b>1st Year</b>	<b>2nd Year</b>	<b>3rd Year</b>	<b>4th Year</b>	<b>5th Year</b>
Informal site visit	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Review of school fundamentals visit and report	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Corrective action plan follow-up and report	No	Yes	If needed	If needed	If needed
Comprehensive site visit and report	No	No	Yes	No	No
Renewal site visit	No	No	No	Round I	Round II

**Charter Renewal**

The SBE may renew charters for up to five years, upon application, in accordance with Section 10-66bb(g) of the CGS. The SBE may commission an independent appraisal of a charter school’s performance as part of this renewal and consider the results of any such appraisal in determining whether to renew a charter. (See CGS 10-66bb(g) in Appendix (F)(2)(b)). The SBE may decline to renew a charter if (1) sufficient student progress has not been demonstrated; (2) the governing council has not been sufficiently responsible for the operation of the school or has misused or spent public funds in a manner detrimental to the educational interests of its students; or (3) the school has not been in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. (See CGS 10-66bb(g) in Appendix (F)(2)(b)).

As a matter of agency policy, CSDE staff members conduct site visits to charter schools seeking renewal. The purpose of the visit is to determine compliance with the requirements of CGS section 10-66bb(g) in an effort to provide recommendations to the Commissioner and the SBE about the charter school seeking renewal. In addition to verifying the responses detailed in the charter renewal application submitted to the CSDE and ensuring that the charter school is complying with the law, CSDE staff members review the educational model and curriculum of the charter school, interview school stakeholders and evaluate how the charter school is accomplishing its mission.

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**Connecticut Race to the Top Phase 2 Application**

### ***Charter Revocation***

Pursuant to CGS section 10-66bb(i), the SBE may revoke a charter if a school has failed to: (1) comply with the terms of probation, including the failure to file or implement a corrective action plan; (2) demonstrate satisfactory student progress, as determined by the commissioner; (3) comply with the terms of its charter or applicable laws and regulations; or (4) manage its public funds in a prudent or legal manner. Unless an emergency exists, the SBE must provide the governing council of the charter school a list of the reasons for the revocation and an opportunity to demonstrate compliance with all the requirements for the retention of its charter. (See CGS 10-66bb(i) in Appendix (F)(2)(b)). If an emergency exists, the SBE may revoke the charter and provide the governing council with a subsequent opportunity to demonstrate compliance.

### ***Charter School Closure, Non-Renewal and Revocation History***

Cross Cultural Academy of Arts and Technology, which opened its doors in September 2006, serving 50 students in grades 5-6, was forced to close on May 4, 2007, due to insufficient funds. The school was unable to maintain expenses within its budget and was unable to secure private donations required for its continued operation. Its board relinquished its charter to the CSDE on May 25, 2007.

Four additional state charter schools have closed since 1999:

- The SBE revoked Village Academy's (New Haven) charter in the first week of school in 1999-2000.
- Ancestors Community High School (Waterbury) closed at the end of school year 2000-01.
- Charter Oak Preparatory Academy (New Britain/Hartford) closed on February 1, 2002.
- The SBE did not renew Brooklawn Academy's (Fairfield/Bridgeport) charter in 2003.

### ***Annual Reporting***

The governing council of a charter school must annually submit a school profile to the Commissioner of Education as required of each local and regional school board in the state. (See CGS 10-66cc(a) in Appendix (F)(2)(b)). In addition, pursuant to CGS section 10-66cc(b), the governing council of a charter school must annually submit to the Commissioner of Education: (a) the educational progress of students in the school; (b) the financial condition of the school, including a certified audit statement of all revenues and expenditures; (c) accomplishment of the mission and any specialized focus of the charter school; and (d) the racial and ethnic

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### **Connecticut Race to the Top Phase 2 Application**

composition of the student body and efforts taken to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of the student body. (See CGS 10-66cc(b) in Appendix(F)(2)(b)).

***Charter School Student Population***

As mentioned above, pursuant to CGS section 10-66bb(c), the SBE is instructed to give preference to applicants for charter schools that will serve students who reside in a priority school district, pursuant to CGS section 10-266p, or in an LEA where 75 percent or more of the enrolled students are members of racial or ethnic minorities and to applicants for state charter schools that will be located at a work-site or that are institutions of higher education. In Connecticut, 15 of 18 charter schools (83 percent) are located in priority school districts. In determining whether to grant a charter, the SBE shall also consider the effect of the proposed charter school on the reduction of racial, ethnic and economic isolation in the region where it is to be located, the regional distribution of charter schools in the state and the potential of over-concentration of charter schools within an LEA or in contiguous LEAs. (See CGS 10-66bb(c) in Appendix (F)(2)(b)).

Pursuant to CGS section 10-66bb(d), each charter school application shall include, among a number of other requirements, a description of the student admission criteria, a process to promote a diverse student body, ensure that the school complies with the provisions of CGS section 10-15c and that it does not discriminate on the basis of disability, athletic performance or proficiency in the English language, provided the school may limit enrollment to a particular grade level or specialized educational focus. (See Appendix (F)(2)(d) for a table with data on student enrollment of high-need students in the charter schools and traditional public schools in Bridgeport, Hartford and New Haven).

***Student Achievement***

The monitoring process described above is designed to give the Commissioner and SBE sufficient information and authority for proper oversight of the charter school initiative and to give individual charter schools the opportunity to demonstrate the accomplishment of their unique educational mission and the stability of their organization. The two tables below are a representative sampling of 2009 student achievement comparisons in grade 8 and grade 10 among three of the highest-need Connecticut cities and

their corresponding charter schools. With the exception of grade 8 writing and grade 10 science in Bridgeport charter schools, all charter schools in grades 8 and 10 included in the sampling below exceed the student achievement performance gains of their LEA counterparts in each content area: mathematics, reading, writing and science.

<b>Table (F)(2)(ii)(c): Charter School Host LEAs/Charter Schools</b>					
<b>LEA/ Charter School</b>	<b>Number of Students Tested</b>	<b>Mathematics % At/Above Proficiency</b>	<b>Reading % At/Above Proficiency</b>	<b>Writing % At/Above Proficiency</b>	<b>Science % At/Above Proficiency</b>
<b>Grade 8, 2009 Student Achievement Report</b>					
<b>Bridgeport</b>	1332	55.1	46.5	64.1	40.0
3 Bridgeport Charter Schools	154	77.8	51.5	62.7	44.3
<b>Hartford</b>	1466	53.8	51.4	63.5	38.3
1 Hartford Charter School	23	87.0	91.3	91.7	62.5
<b>New Haven</b>	1128	65.1	58.5	61.4	44.7
2 New Haven Charter Schools	103	97.2	70.7	92.0	64.3
<b>Grade 10, 2009 Student Achievement Report</b>					
<b>LEA /Charter School Note:</b> <i>There are currently no Hartford charter schools serving high school students.</i>	<b>Number of Students Tested</b>	<b>Mathematics % At/Above Proficiency</b>	<b>Science % At/Above Proficiency</b>	<b>Reading % At/Above Proficiency</b>	<b>Writing % At/Above Proficiency</b>
<b>Bridgeport</b>	1083	35.5	32.0	44.2	57.4
1 Bridgeport Charter School	35	42.9	29.7	57.1	75.7
<b>New Haven</b>	1204	46.2	42.8	56.4	67.9
2 New Haven Charter Schools	81	72.0	72.9	82.1	87.8

**Appendices Referenced in Section (F)(2)(ii)**

- Appendix (F)(2)(b) Connecticut General Statutes on Charter Schools
- Appendix (F)(2)(d) Data Table on High-Need Student Enrollment in Charter Schools

**(F)(2)(iii) Equitable funding for charter schools**

Pursuant to section 10-66ee(c)(1) of the CGS, the per pupil grant for charter school students for the 2009-10 school year is \$9,300. The state pays this grant directly to the fiscal authority of the state charter school. (See CGS 10-66ee(c) in Appendix (F)(2)(b)). The local or regional board of education for the LEA where the student that attends a charter school resides is required to pay for special education costs for that student. (See CGS 10-66ee(c)(2) in Appendix (F)(2)(b)). In addition, the local or regional board of education of the LEA where the charter school is located is required to provide transportation services for students of the charter school who live in the LEA, unless the charter school makes other arrangements for such transportation. For students attending a charter school in an LEA other than where that student resides, a local or regional board of education may provide transportation services and if it elects to provide such transportation, shall be eligible for reimbursement for the reasonable costs of such transportation. (See CGS 10-66ee(f) in Appendix (F)(2)(b)).

Charter schools in Connecticut are required to receive, in accordance with federal law and regulations, any federal funds available for the education of any pupils attending public schools. (See CGS 10-66ee(i) in Appendix F-2(b)). Charter schools are also eligible, to the same extent as local and regional boards of education, for any competitive state grants and grants pursuant to sections 10-17g and 10-266w of the CGS. (See CGS 10-66ee(g) in Appendix (F)(2)(b)). These state grants include funding for technological improvements, capital, student nutrition, family resource centers, reading and reducing racial isolation. Charter schools may also raise additional private income. (See CGS 10-66ee(j) in Appendix (F)(2)(b)).

During the 2008-09 school year, charter schools, on average, received \$10,508 per student in state funding, including grants in addition to the above referenced charter school grant. Conversely, the average funding received by a local and regional school board from the state was \$5,276 per pupil. Therefore, in the 2008-09 school year, on average the charter school per pupil grant from the state represented more than 199 percent of what was provided to traditional public schools from the state. The fact that the state-funded charter schools operated on a substantially higher rate of state support is not unique to 2008-09. As shown in the table below, since their inception in 1997-98, charter schools have consistently received higher rates of state support than traditional public schools.

<b>Table (F)(2)(iii)(a): State Funding per Pupil for Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools</b>					
<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>(1) Charter Schools Funding per Pupil</b>	<b>(2) Average Traditional Public School Funding per Pupil</b>	<b>(3) Charter School Funding as a % of Traditional Public School (Col 1/Col 2)</b>	<b>(4) Charter Schools' Enrollment</b>	<b>(5) Traditional Public Schools' Enrollment</b>
1997-98	\$5,313	\$3,103	171.22%	1,117	513,489
1998-99	\$5,199	\$3,477	149.53%	1,870	522,337
1999-2000	\$5,397	\$3,775	142.97%	2,139	530,300
2000-01	\$5,864	\$3,794	154.56%	2,428	537,421
2001-02	\$5,819	\$3,922	148.37%	2,594	543,825
2002-03	\$8,248	\$3,962	208.18%	2,237	548,245
2003-04	\$7,898	\$3,936	200.66%	2,279	552,299
2004-05	\$7,733	\$4,342	178.10%	2,692	552,403
2005-06	\$7,760	\$4,711	164.72%	2,927	551,387
2006-07	\$9,478	\$4,951	191.44%	3,580	548,827
2007-08	\$8,802*	\$5,191	169.56%	4,019	544,477
2008-09	\$10,508	\$5,276	199.17%	4,479	539,045

\*The dip in the 2007-08 Charter figure reflects the availability of \$5 million for capital improvements in 2006-07 and 2008-09.

Of note, when special education and home-to-school transportation revenue are eliminated for 2008-09 (two mandates that do not apply to the charter schools), the charter school expenditure per pupil reflected 244 percent of what was funded to traditional public schools from **state** streams: \$10,062 for charter schools as compared to an average of \$4,123 for traditional public schools.

When adding federal, local and other revenues to state funding, on a per pupil basis, charters schools are funded at almost 106 percent of the traditional public schools per pupil expenditures: \$13,191 for charter schools as compared to an average of \$12,465 for traditional public schools, as broken down by revenue source in Table (F)(2)(iii)(b) below. In Table (F)(2)(iii)(b) below, the “school

district contribution” for traditional public schools identifies funding from local tax dollars. The “other revenue” for traditional public schools includes tuition revenue and miscellaneous revenue. For charter schools, the school district contribution includes in-kind services from the LEA in which the state charter school is located. Other revenues sources for charter schools include: miscellaneous income, including interest income, retained earnings and private donations.

<b>Table (F)(2)(iii)(b): Comparison of 2008-09 per Pupil Expenditures by Revenue Source Excluding Special Education and Transportation</b>			
	<b>Charter Schools</b>	<b>Traditional Public Schools</b>	<b>Charter School Funding as a % of Traditional Public Schools</b>
State Funds	\$10,062	\$4,123	244.0%
Federal Funds	\$959	\$316	303.5%
School District Contribution	\$430	\$7,910	5.4%
<b>State, Federal, &amp; School District Contribution Combined</b>	\$11,451	\$12,349	92.7%
Other Revenues	\$1,740	\$116	1,500.0%
<b>All Revenue Sources</b>	\$13,191	\$12,465	105.8%

**Table (F)(2)(iii)(c):  
Summary of 2008-09 Charter School Expenditures per Pupil by Revenue Source  
Excluding Special Education and Transportation**

<b>Charter School</b>	<b>State Revenues*</b>	<b>Federal Revenues</b>	<b>School District Revenues</b>	<b>Other Revenues</b>	<b>Total Expenditures</b>
Jumoke Academy	\$10,641	\$1,224	\$0	\$409	\$12,274
Odyssey	9,681	154	0	275	10,110
Integrated Day	11,369	774	0	224	12,367
ISAAC	13,796	1,010	0	456	15,262
Common Ground	10,656	1,831	0	476	12,963
The Bridge Academy	11,466	902	801	294	13,463
Side By Side	10,215	273	0	0	10,488
Explorations	9,949	259	0	2,204	12,412
Trailblazers	9,333	1,112	5,294	5,631	21,370
Amistad	10,114	960	0	3,670	14,744
New Beginnings	9,420	1,177	0	80	10,677
Stamford Academy	9,328	472	7,483	3,454	20,737
Park City	7,908	1,142	184	0	9,234
AF Bridgeport	9,313	1,646	0	1,617	12,576
Highville	9,048	750	0	32	9,830
Asylum Hill	9,727	551	0	1,461	11,739
AF Hartford	9,300	1,272	0	9,337	19,909
Elm City College	9,333	1,018	0	1,757	12,108
<b>Charter Averages</b>	<b>\$10,062</b>	<b>\$959</b>	<b>\$430</b>	<b>\$1,740</b>	<b>\$13,191</b>

\* Charter schools are allowed to retain up to 15 percent of the state's \$9,300 per pupil grant for expenditure in a future year.

In terms of the local, state and federal support for charter schools, the table below summarizes the 2008-09 revenue shares.

Overall, the average state share for charter schools is nearly 2.5 times greater than the public LEAs. State, federal and other revenues support nearly all of the charter schools operations compared with 35 percent for traditional public schools.

<b>Table (F)(2)(iii)(d)</b>				
<b>Comparison of Revenue Share of State, Local and Federal Funding</b>				
	<b>Local Revenues</b>	<b>State Revenues</b>	<b>Federal/Other Revenues</b>	<b>Total Revenues</b>
<b>Charter Schools</b>	0.72%	73.37%	25.91%	100%
<b>Traditional Public Schools</b>	64.52%	30.43%	5.05%	100%

Finally, the total appropriation for charter schools is \$48,152,000 for 2009-10 and \$53,047,200 for 2010-2011. For 2009-10, the charter school appropriation amounts to about 2 percent of the CSDE’s General Fund appropriation, yet student enrollment in charter schools constitutes less than 1 percent of the state’s total student enrollment. Of note, the charter school line item has grown by over \$32 million in the past eight years, a 210 percent increase. In contrast, over that same time, charter school student enrollment increased by only 133 percent.

**Appendices Referenced in Section F-2(iii)**

Appendix (F)(2)(b) Connecticut General Statutes on Charter Schools

**(F)(2)(iv) Funding for Charter School Facilities**

Since 2002, Connecticut has provided charter schools with funding for facilities and other related supports. Section 10-66hh of the CGS authorizes the Commissioner of Education to establish a grant program to assist state charter schools in financing charter school building projects, general improvements to school buildings and repayment of debt incurred for building projects. (See CGS 10-66hh in Appendix (F)(2)(b)). This statutory provision was first enacted in 2001 and has since been extended approximately every two years by the state legislature to continue this grant program. Section 14 in Public Act 10-111 makes this statutory provision authorizing the charter school facility grant program permanent. (See Public Act 10-111 in Appendix at (A)(1)(c))

Since 2002, Connecticut has provided \$14.5 million in funding for charter school building projects. In 2005, a separate bond fund was established specifically for the purpose of charter school building projects and improvements. This provision was extended in 2007 and is codified in statute at CGS section 10-66jj. (See CGS 10-66jj in Appendix (F)(2)(b)). Of note, in November 2009, the

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CSDE requested an additional \$5 million in funding from the State Bond Commission to issue additional grants for the purpose of Charter School Building Projects. This request is still pending.

In addition, in 2005 the General Assembly created a pilot school construction grant to provide a grant to one state charter school to buy and renovate a building for use as a charter school facility. (See CGS 10-285h in Appendix (F)(2)(b)). Amistad Academy, located in New Haven, Connecticut, applied for this grant on November 30, 2005. Its application was approved for a \$31.5 million project, with the school's costs eligible for reimbursement by the state at a rate of 78.5 percent. Since that time, Amistad Academy has purchased a facility and the renovation process is well underway.

To provide funding for charter schools beyond school building projects, the CSDE also awards funds to charter schools for technology infrastructure. (See CGS 10-262n(d)(2) in Appendix (F)(2)(b)). Charter schools were paid over \$130,000 from 1999 through 2007 for this purpose, although the majority of the money was paid in 2001 and 2003 (\$50,000 in each year).

The state does not impose any facility-related requirements on charter schools that are stricter than those applied to traditional public schools. Of note, pursuant to 10-66hh of the CGS, charter schools are treated as priority school districts for the purpose of making grants for "general improvements to school buildings." For the purpose of "school building projects," Section 10-66hh of the CGS refers to the definition in Section 10-282 of the CGS, which applies to traditional public schools. (See CGS 10-282(3) in Appendix (F)(2)(b)).

**Appendices Referenced in Section F-2(iv)**

Appendix (A)(1)(c) Public Act 10-111

Appendix (F)(2)(b) Connecticut General Statutes on Charter Schools

**(F)(2)(v) Innovative, Autonomous Public Schools other than Charter Schools**

Current state statute allows LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools in the form of CommPACT schools, interdistrict magnet schools and the newly authorized "innovation schools," pursuant to section 6 of Public Act No. 10-111.

## **1. CommPACT Schools**

CommPACT schools were authorized by the state legislature in 2007 and are governed by CGS 10-74g. (See CGS 10-74g in Appendix (F)(2)(e)). The schools are a product of an initiative led by the University of Connecticut's Neag School of Education in collaboration with the American Federation of Teachers-Connecticut, Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents, Connecticut Association of Urban Superintendents, Connecticut Education Association and Connecticut Federation of School Administrators, to provide alternative supports for urban schools whose students are underperforming. The name CommPACT symbolizes the commitment required by the partners within each school including community members, parents, administrators, students and teachers.

CommPACT schools are LEA-sponsored alternative schools staffed by faculty that come together voluntarily to redesign the core programs and working conditions for managing school operations. A CommPACT School is an existing public school reorganized by teachers and administrators to maximize shared decision-making and collaboration. In exchange for accountability to the LEA, the local and regional school board is required to permit the CommPACT School autonomy in governance, finance and curriculum. (See CGS 10-74g in Appendix (F)(2)(e)). They are managed by a partnership of LEA administrators, school representatives, teachers, community leaders and parents. Currently, there are eight CommPACT schools operating in five cities across the state: Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven, New London and Waterbury.

### ***Instructional Models and Associated Curriculum***

The University of Connecticut's Neag School of Education serves as the hub for the CommPACT schools initiative by coordinating supports both within and across network schools. The Neag School is a resource for research-based practices for curricula and school-reform models. Often, the materials and strategies employed by schools have not been sufficiently field-tested to determine which types of school environments they work best in or how well they address specific student needs and/or learning styles. The Neag School provides field-based assistance and annually evaluates each school's progress. By conducting audits of the school, surveying the administrators, teachers, students, parents and the community to identify the school's target needs, the Neag

School provides each CommPACT School with a menu of research-proven programs to close the achievement gap. An award from the NEA Foundation funds this research. Schools then select a customized set of supports, including but not limited to, Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports (PBIS), the Schoolwide Enrichment Model, the Accelerated Schools Plus (ASP) and Atlas Learning Communities reform models.

Since a CommPACT school is managed by a partnership involving its LEA administrators, school representatives, teachers, community leaders and parents, decision-making is shared, which leads to a shared vision, mission and ownership and in turn enhances the teaching and learning experience for all involved. The team within that school makes decisions about teaching methods and materials that best suit the students and needs of the CommPACT school.

***New Structures, Formats and Staffing for the School Day and Year***

The LEA's collective bargaining agreements cover CommPACT teachers; however, teachers in a CommPACT school may agree to alter parts of the agreement if they believe it will improve student learning. Flexibility in hours, school calendar and other scheduling issues have proven to increase efficiency and have led to increased collaboration in schools by better using the distribution of time. Critical to a CommPACT school's foundation is the required buy-in: the principal and 90 percent of the teachers and LEA administrators must accept the requirements of becoming a CommPACT school.

***Student Enrollment and Accountability for Achievement***

CommPACT schools operate under existing local school attendance policies, drawing students as they would before achieving CommPACT status. While the CommPACT school project is only in its second year of operation, schools have made significant gains in parent and community engagement, improved student behavior and revamping the curriculum in the areas of literacy and mathematics. Each site has implemented a growth curve model of measuring student achievement. It is anticipated that next year the project should be able to document student growth on a range of academic and social measures including statewide achievement tests and additional measures tailored to the school environment.

## **2. Interdistrict Magnet Schools**

Magnet schools play a very important role in Connecticut's Public School Choice initiative and provide thousands of Connecticut students with an innovative approach to public education and opportunities for success in school and beyond. The first regional magnet school opened in Connecticut in 1991. Currently there are 61 magnet schools operating in the state with a statewide enrollment of 23,015 students. Over \$148 million was appropriated for magnet school operating grants for 2009-10, which makes up over 6 percent of the CSDE's General Fund appropriation.

Pursuant to Section 10-264l of the CGS, an "interdistrict magnet school program" means a program that "(i) supports racial, ethnic and economic diversity, (ii) offers a special and high-quality curriculum and (iii) requires students who are enrolled to attend at least half-time." (See CGS 10-264l in Appendix (F)(2)(e)). A variety of entities are authorized to operate an interdistrict magnet school, including a local and regional board of education, a regional educational service center, a public or private college or university and a third-party not-for-profit corporation that the Commissioner approves. (See CGS 10-264l(a) in Appendix (F)(2)(e)). Interdistrict magnet schools are eligible to receive grant assistance from the state for both the operation of the magnet school program as well as for grants for transportation (see CGS 10-264i in Appendix (F)(2)(e)) and facilities. (See CGS 10-264h and CGS 10-264l in Appendix (F)(2)(e)). However, in considering whether to approve an application for a grant for an interdistrict magnet school, statute requires the Commissioner to consider, among other factors, whether the program offered by the school is likely to increase student achievement and reduce racial, ethnic and economic isolation. (See CGS 10-264l(b)(2) in Appendix (F)(2)(e)).

The membership, duties and responsibilities of the governing board are designed uniquely by each magnet school to capitalize on the special learning theme and focus of the school. The governing board for a magnet school may consist of participating LEAs, business and industry partners, parents and representatives of higher education. Duties may include: hiring of administrative staff, school operations, curriculum design, building design, budget and transportation.

***Instructional Models and Associated Curriculum***

By definition, an interdistrict magnet school must offer a “special and high-quality curriculum,” which helps the school attract students from outside the LEA in which the school operates. (See CGS 10-264l(a) in Appendix (F)(2)(e)). These engaging and innovative schools provide educational opportunities for students who benefit from a range of themes or teaching philosophies that include performing arts, mathematics, science and technology, international studies, early childhood and multicultural education.

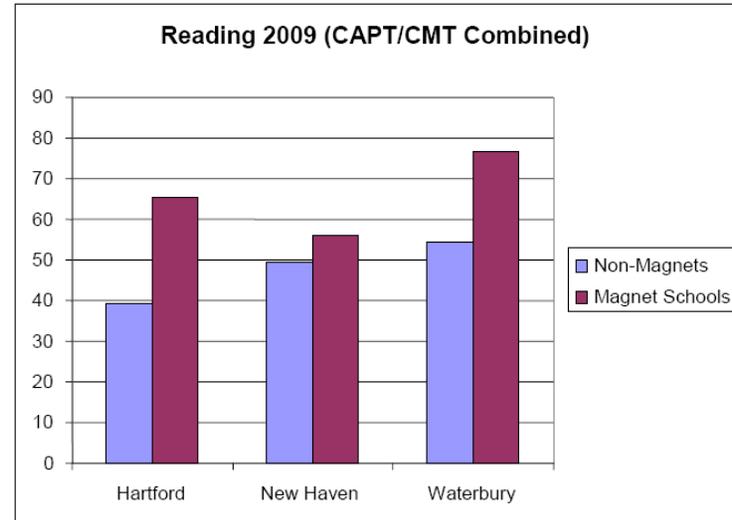
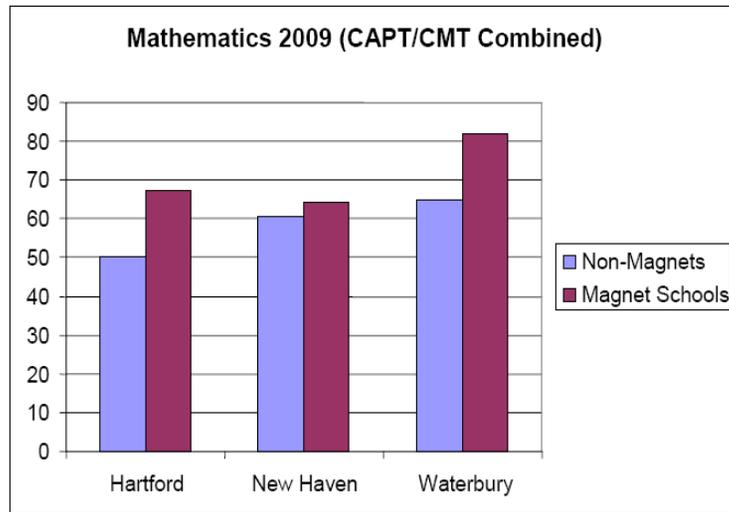
***New Structures, Formats and Staffing for the School Day and School Year***

The schedule of the magnet school day and year vary depending on programmatic needs. Magnet school calendars are designed to accomplish their mission. Examples include a longer school day, before- and after-school programs, extended school years, vacation week programs and college-style scheduling. All interdistrict magnet schools must conform with the same laws and regulations applicable to public schools. (See CGS 10-264l(a) in Appendix F-2(e)). Therefore, staff in magnet schools may be selected by their interest and experience in the school’s unique program. Magnet school staff generally work longer hours and have more planning time built into their schedules compared to regular public school staff.

***Student Enrollment and Accountability for Achievement***

Magnet school seats are generally made available to all students in the region who are interested; however, if applications exceed the number of available seats, a lottery may be conducted. In its operations plan, a magnet school is required to include a written commitment for participation from the LEAs that will participate in the school. (See CGS 10-264h(b) Appendix (F)(2)(e)). If after accommodating students from participating LEAs an interdistrict magnet school operator has unused student capacity, any interested student may enroll directly into the program. (See CGS 10-264l(j) in Appendix (F)(2)(e)). In addition, the governing authority for interdistrict magnet schools must enroll students from more than one participating LEA to remain eligible for state funding. (See CGS 10-264l in Appendix (F)(2)(e)). The governing authority also maintain student enrollment so that at least 25 percent, but not more than 75 percent, of the students enrolled are pupils of racial minorities. (See CGS 10-264l(a) Appendix (F)(2)(e)).

Due to the strong emphasis on increasing student achievement, magnet schools continually use various assessment methods to measure student performance and adjust the school curriculum and instruction according to the findings. Examples of magnet school performance levels are detailed in the charts below. These graphs compare students in magnet schools and non-magnet schools who have met or exceeded the proficiency standard on Connecticut’s statewide assessments in mathematics and reading.



### 3. Innovation Schools

Section 6 of Public Act 10-111 authorizes the local or regional board of education of a priority school district to convert an existing public school or establish a new school as an “innovation school.” (See Section 6 of Public Act 10-111 in Appendix (A)(1)(c)). The law requires that the innovation school be developed through an “innovation plan” developed by faculty and district leadership or an external partner. Eligible external partners include a public or private institution of higher education, nonprofit charter school operators, educational collaborative or a consortia authorized by the Commissioner of Education. The local or regional board of education is responsible for determining whether LEA faculty and district leadership or an external partner will be responsible for

developing the innovation plan. A committee of stakeholders, whose membership is outlined in the law and includes board members, parents, teachers and administrators, work together to develop the innovation plan. The innovation plan is required to articulate the areas of autonomy and flexibility in curriculum, budget, school schedule and calendar, school district policies and procedures, professional development and staffing policies and procedures, including waivers from or modifications to contracts or collective bargaining agreements.

***Instructional Models and Associated Curriculum***

The innovation plan is required by law to include a detailed description of the curriculum and related programs for the proposed school specifying how the curriculum is expected to improve school performance and student achievement.

***New Structures, Formats and Staffing for the School Day and School Year***

In addition to a plan for the curriculum and related programs, the innovation plan must include at least the following elements: (a) a budget plan that includes a detailed description of how funds shall be used in the proposed school to support school performance and student achievement that is or may be different than how funds are used in other public schools in the district; (b) a plan for the school schedule and calendar, that includes a detailed description of the ways the program or calendar of the proposed school may be enhanced or expanded; (c) a staffing plan including any proposed waivers or modifications of current collective bargaining contracts; (d) a plan for policies and procedures including the unique operational policies and procedures for the innovation school and how these will support school performance and student achievement; and (e) a plan for professional development for teachers, administrators and other staff.

***Student Enrollment and Accountability for Achievement***

The statute specifies that a student who is enrolled in a school at the time it is established as an Innovation School be allowed to remain in the school if the student and the student's parents so choose. In addition, the innovation plan must also provide for multiple measures by which to assess school performance and student achievement and propose goals for the following: (a) student attendance; (b) student safety and discipline; (c) student promotion, graduation and dropout rates; (d) mastery state test performance; (e) progress

in areas of academic underperformance; (f) progress among subgroups of students including those from low-income families, those who are limited English proficient and those receiving special education; and (g) reduction of achievement gaps among different groups of students.

Under the new law, the LEA superintendent will be required to annually evaluate the Innovation School and submit the evaluation to the local or regional board of education documenting whether the school has met the annual goals and the specified implementation defined in the innovation plan. The superintendent may amend or suspend one or more components if, after one year, the school has “substantially failed” to meet the goals of the innovation plan. If the superintendent determines a school has “substantially failed” in one or more components, the board of education may amend or suspend one or more components of the plan or terminate authorization of the school (but not before completion of the third full year of operation).

**Appendices Referenced in Section F-2(v)**

Appendix (A)(1)(c) Public Act 10-111

Appendix (F)(2)(e) Connecticut General Statutes on Magnet Schools and Compact Schools

**(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions (5 points)**

The extent to which the State, in addition to information provided under other State Reform Conditions Criteria, has created, through law, regulation, or policy, other conditions favorable to education reform or innovation that have increased student achievement or graduation rates, narrowed achievement gaps, or resulted in other important outcomes.

*In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.*

Evidence for (F)(3):

- A description of the State's other applicable key education laws, statutes, regulations, or relevant legal documents.

*Recommended maximum response length: Two pages*

**(F)(3) DEMONSTRATING OTHER SIGNIFICANT REFORM CONDITIONS**

Beyond innovative school reform models already cited in Section F, Connecticut has invested in other programs and initiatives in an effort to increase student achievement, improve graduation rates and narrow achievement gaps, among other outcomes.

Connecticut's investments in these other forms of support are summarized below:

- Dropout Prevention
- In-School Suspension Actions
- Developing Tomorrow's Professionals
- Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI)
- Early Childhood Education

## **1. Dropout Prevention**

In March 2007, the SBE adopted a report from the CSDE outlining a course of action to address the twin challenges of dropouts and in-school suspensions and expulsions. This report made seven recommendations, including the convening of an intra-agency and interagency collaborative advisory committee to develop and implement programs and to employ the Public School Information System (PSIS), with its unique student identification numbers, as a framework for identifying and monitoring student data longitudinally to better understand the impact of individual and collective dropout prevention strategies. Work has begun to address each of these seven recommendations. The CSDE has targeted 21 LEAs where data reveal a need for continued focus on assisting more students to complete school. The current LEAs include: Bridgeport, East Hartford, Enfield, Gilbert School, Griswold, Hartford, Killingly, New Britain, New Haven, New London, Plainfield, Plymouth, Regional School District #19, Seymour, Stafford, Thomaston, Torrington, Vernon, Waterbury, Windham and Windsor Locks.

In October 2009, the districts identified above attended the Governor's Summit on Dropout Prevention, sponsored by America's Promise, where they were exposed to detailed data on high school dropouts, their prospects in life and their impact on the state and nation economically and socially. They were exposed to principles of dropout prevention from Grad Nation and research from the Institute for Educational Science (IES) and the National Dropout Prevention Center. A CSDE research team presented preliminary findings on a set of dropout indicators drawn from Connecticut student data. District teams then met with professional facilitators to develop district-specific dropout prevention strategies.

Since the conference, the target LEAs have been provided with continuing opportunities to learn about current research and practice associated with school dropout issues and have participated in a facilitated exercise to help each examine their own local data, current initiatives, gaps in services and strategies to expand their response to students that drop out in their LEA. As a result, each of the 21 LEAs has developed an action plan with strategies to reduce the dropout rate by supporting students to remain connected to their education, school and communities.

Moving forward, these LEAs will meet to share data results, best practices and lessons learned as they work to reduce their dropout rates. Small planning grants were made available to LEAs to amplify opportunities for continued dialogue across LEA and CSDE staff. The Partnership for High School, College and Workforce Alignment will use the graduation data and local dropout prevention initiatives to repurpose existing state education grants to support promising practices in dropout prevention. In addition, effective July 1, 2011, students who are in danger of failing to graduate will have access to another support feature to enable their persistence in school completion. Pursuant to Section 28 of Public Act 10-111, a school district with a dropout rate of 8 percent or greater in the previous school year shall establish an online credit recovery program to allow those students who are identified by certified personnel as in danger of failing to graduate to complete online coursework approved by the local or regional board of education for credit toward meeting the high school graduation requirements. (See Public Act 10-111 in Appendix (A)(1)(c)).

## **2. In-School Suspension Actions**

Pursuant to Section 10-233c, as amended by Section 20 of Public Act 10-111, all suspensions from school shall be in-school suspensions unless school administration determines that the student being suspended poses such a danger to persons or property or such a disruption to the educational process that the suspension should be out of school. (See section 20 of Public Act 10-111 in Appendix (A)(1)(c)). Anticipating this statutory implementation date, the CSDE published guidelines on October 1, 2008, to aid local and regional boards of education in making the determination as to whether a suspension of a student shall be either an in-school or out-of-school suspension. A critical feature of the guidance and CSDE activity has been to reduce aberrant rates of out-of-school suspension due to school policy infractions such as insubordination or disrespect. Using a careful analysis of local data, the CSDE has provided professional development sessions to school personnel where high levels of out-of-school suspension exist. The training sessions examine students' behavior with respect to intensity, duration, frequency and the sufficiency of educational supports. The trainings focus on: developing effective in-school suspension programs that are purposeful in minimizing students' time away from classroom instruction; introducing concepts that in-school suspension is part of providing a school climate that is both disciplined and

supportive; ensuring a continuum of sanctions available for students who exhibit behavior problems; and a system of strong academic and student support components.

As a result, many districts have developed in-school suspension programs that have an assigned coordinator to maintain continuity of programming and maintain relationships, instructional support offered through certified content teachers, support services staff providing counseling and social skills instruction, increased supervision through low student-to-staff ratios and communication with parents and guardians about program expectations. Through RTTT funding and the Connecticut Framework for Professional Development, the CSDE expects to leverage the above training initiatives so that school district personnel can examine their local data regarding out-of-school suspension rates and put into place stronger models of positive behavior support.

### **3. Developing Tomorrow's Professionals (DTP)**

This program is aimed at adolescent minority males and provides specific information to participants on the essential life skills associated with mitigating the effects of racism. School principals are required to support students in taking higher-level courses and assuming school leadership roles. Participants learn to tap the full resources of the school to support personal learning and plan course-taking sequences leading to higher education requirements for college enrollment and career goal attainment. Each student is mentored by a successfully enrolled minority college student and a career businessman or professional. It has been a major component of the effort to reduce the dropout rate and improve graduation rates of students who reside in the seven largest cities.

This program has been overwhelmingly successful for the 60-80 minority males that participate each year. The DTP has proven to foster school success, prevent school drop out, increase college attendance and connect participants with careers, including public school teaching. In April 2010, more than 700 applications were submitted to be part of a new cohort of 70 students. Over the course of the RTTT our goal is to increase the program to serve a minimum of 250-300 students residing in seven towns. Through RTTT funding, the CSDE expects to increase the opportunity for participation, especially among districts with high concentrations of minority male students and conduct a program evaluation to validate its success and recommend ways for program improvement.

In 2009, at the request of parents and schools districts, the CSDE was encouraged to expand the program to support the development of initiatives to increase minority female student success. This initiative proposes to address: school academic performance, access to post-secondary professional careers, life skills development and generational and cross-generational mentoring/networking. Planning for this program will be accelerated and objectives further defined with funding from RTTT.

#### **4. Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI)**

LEAs have continued to make family engagement and parent leadership training activities available in their communities. One such program, the Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI), a nationally recognized program developed by the Connecticut Commission for Children, has provided leadership training for parents and families on a wide range of topics, including important competencies at being an effective parent, spouse and actively engaged citizen in one's community. Connecticut has had success in implementation of this national program and since 1992 over 1,800 parents have been recipients of the training. The state's fiscal resource to implement PLTI has been the Parent Trust Fund and through the adoption of Public Act No. 10-111, this Fund will be transferred from the Department of Social Services to the CSDE for administration. (See sections 24 to 27 of Public Act 10-111 in Appendix (A)(1)(c)). RTTT funding will leverage the state's commitment so that PLTI training will be expanded to more families in the participating LEAs. It is planned that eight regional community-based institutes per year will be held for parents to enable their development as change agents, advocates for their children and individuals who promote school practices that increase student achievement. As described in Section D-5, the CSDE will use its lever of change, the Partnership for Family and Community Engagement, to include PLTI as a critical feature of parent leadership development.

## **5. Early Childhood Education**

Connecticut allocates significant state funds to provide direct services for children and families as well as a community planning initiative and professional development in the area of early childhood education. Section 16-o through 16-u of the CGS provides for the School Readiness Grant program, which was originally established in 1998. (See CGS sections 10-16o through 16-u in Appendix (F)(3)(a)). This program provides over \$70 million for spaces in community child care programs and public school classrooms for three- and four-year-old children. Communities are eligible to receive this grant by virtue of being a Priority School District or one of the lowest 50<sup>th</sup> wealth rank towns. School Readiness Councils, consisting of co-leadership from the chief elected official and the superintendent of schools, are charged with coordinating a School Readiness program network. In addition, supplemental funds of close to \$7 million are available to federally funded Head Start grantees to increase the number of children served, extend the program for children served and enhance program quality. (See CGS section 10-16n in Appendix (F)(3)(a)).

Professional development for early childhood programs is funded within available state appropriations to support implementation of intentional teaching, using standards-based instruction and assessment-based decision-making. This statewide initiative utilizes early childhood coaches to provide contextual professional learning and addresses issues unique to each setting in an effort to help teachers in School Readiness funded programs meet the unique needs of learners while being accountable for standards-based instruction.

As a means for coordinating various professional development activities of the state's workforce, Connecticut offers anyone in the Early Child Care and Education field access to a professional registry, a statewide, secure, online database that tracks the education, credentials, training and employment experience of its members. The registry captures and reports the career ladder level and qualifications of the early care and education workforce by occupation, role, program and funding source. This makes it a valuable resource for individuals, programs, state agencies, policymakers and researchers.

Other early childhood efforts offered by the state that assist in addressing the achievement gap include the availability of a child care facilities loan fund managed by the Connecticut Educational and Health Facilities Authority (CHEFA) to help ensure access to

high-quality facilities as well as the Early Childhood Education Cabinet which was designated by the Governor as the federal State Advisory Council for Early Education and Care under the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007.

The 2010-11 state budget includes \$427,500 in funding that will leverage \$1.2 million in private dollars for a community planning initiative for early childhood coordination to improve outcomes for young children from birth to age eight. Twenty-three towns have received private funds in the last biennium and completed community plans and are poised for implementation of local strategies. Despite a fiscal downturn in the state, funding for this program has continued and it remains an integral part of statewide collaborative efforts. The William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund and the Children’s Fund of Connecticut are two private foundations that address children’s issues statewide and remain committed to working with the state in a public-private partnership, which has been recognized by the National Governors Association. Within the communities, numerous United Ways, community foundations and other private foundation also contribute financial support and perhaps more importantly, remain active members of the local early childhood collaborative groups leading these efforts. Our work together has led to a commitment to build an early childhood system at both the state and local levels with communities as full partners from creating the vision to implementation.

**Appendices Referenced in Section F-3**

Appendix (A)(1)(c)	Public Act 10-111
Appendix (F)(3)(a)	Connecticut General Statutes on Early Childhood Education