



Commissioner's Network

An Overview | November 2013



The Commissioner's Network

The Network is a commitment between local stakeholders and the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) to dramatically improve student achievement in up to 25 schools. The Network offers new resources and authorities to empower teachers and school leaders to implement research-based strategies. Schools are selected by the Commissioner to participate in the Network for a period of three to five years.

Flexibility

Network schools remain part of their local school districts, but the districts and the CSDE secure school-level flexibility and autonomy for the schools in exchange for heightened accountability.

Partnerships

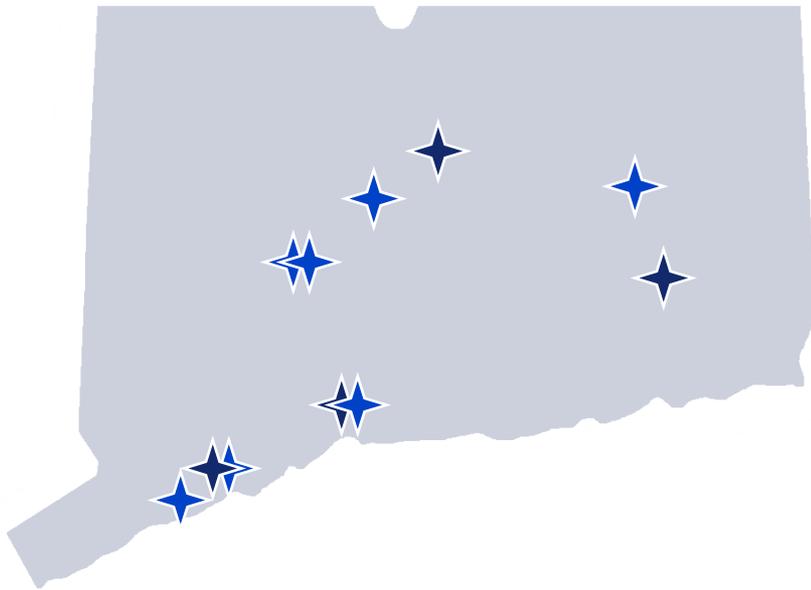
Network schools may partner with a number of different nonprofit organizations, including RESCs, Connecticut institutions of higher education, or high-performing nonprofit EMOs.

Capacity

Connecticut is investing over \$15 million in Network schools this year. In addition to new resources and flexibilities, schools receive extra support through leadership coaching, biweekly school walkthroughs, monthly action planning, and professional learning opportunities.

The Commissioner's Network

The Network currently serves more than 7,000 students in 11 schools.



Cohort I Schools

- Curiale School, Bridgeport
- High School in the Community, New Haven
- Milner School, Hartford
- Stanton School, Norwich

Cohort II Schools

- Briggs High School, Norwalk
- Crosby High School, Waterbury
- DiLoreto School, New Britain
- Dunbar School, Bridgeport
- Walsh School, Waterbury
- Windham Middle School, Windham
- Wilbur Cross High School, New Haven

Cohort III Expansion Process

Milestones:	Timeframe:
1. CSDE releases solicitation for expressions of interest	November 1 st
2. Local board submits expression of interest	Fall
3. Commissioner initially selects school for the Network	Fall
4. Local board forms Turnaround Committee	Fall
5. CSDE conducts training for auditors	Fall
6. Auditors conduct school audit	Fall
7. Turnaround Committee develops Turnaround Plan and budget proposal	Winter
8. Turnaround Committee reaches consensus or Commissioner imposes plan	Winter
9. SBE votes to approve Turnaround Plan	Winter
10. Local board and collective bargaining units for certified staff negotiate MOUs	Winter
11. School leader operationalizes Turnaround Plan in partnership with CSDE	Spring
12. Certified staff identified and/or selected to work at the school ratify MOUs	Summer
13. CSDE allocates Network funds and bond monies to the school	Summer

Please note: the timeline may vary from district to district.

School Selection



On or before July 1, 2014, the Commissioner may select up to 14 additional schools to participate in the Network; eligible schools are those in categories 4 and 5, including Turnaround, Review, and Focus schools.



The Commissioner shall give preference for selection to schools: (a) that volunteer to participate, provided the local board and union mutually agree; (b) in which an existing collective bargaining agreement will have expired for the school year in which a Turnaround Plan will be implemented; or (c) that are located in school districts that have experience in school turnaround, or that have previously received a 1003(g) School Improvement Grant.



The Commissioner may not select more than 2 schools from a single district in a single school year. In addition, the Commissioner may not select more than 4 schools in total from a single district.



Final school selection is contingent on the approval of their Turnaround Plan by the State Board of Education.



Network schools remain a part of their local district, but have the necessary autonomy to implement transformative strategies over a 3 to 5 year period.

The Turnaround Committee

Each school selected for participation in the Network requires a Turnaround Committee, which is responsible for developing and reaching consensus on a Turnaround Plan and overseeing the plan's implementation; the Turnaround Committee must consult with the School Governance Council and other local stakeholders.

Membership

One parent appointed by the local board of education;
One administrator appointed by the local board of education;
One parent appointed by the local teacher's union;
Two teachers appointed by the local teacher's union;
The Commissioner or a designee; and
The Superintendent or a designee.

Core Responsibilities

- ✓ Assist the CSDE in conducting the operations and instructional audit;
- ✓ Develop a Turnaround Plan in accordance with the guidelines issued by the CSDE; and
- ✓ Monitor implementation of the Turnaround Plan.

The Superintendent, or a designee, will serve as the non-voting, ex-officio committee chair.

The Operations and Instructional Audit

Network schools undergo an audit process to identify school strengths and weaknesses in the areas of talent, academics, culture and climate, and operations. The operations and instructional audit consists of three phases:



Data and document review

The CSDE will obtain and the auditors will review school artifacts, data, and documentation.



1-Day Site Visit

The auditors will observe school systems and classrooms, and meet with members of the school community.



Audit Report

The auditors will synthesize and use all available data to generate a report detailing the findings of the audit process.

The Turnaround Plan

In consultation with the School Governance Council, the Turnaround Committee is expected to develop a Turnaround Plan that responds to the findings of the audit and includes bold strategies to empower teachers and school leaders to dramatically raise student achievement.

Framework

- Provide a rigorous needs analysis informed by the operations and instructional audit.
- Identify an evidence-based turnaround model, aligned to school needs and growth areas.
- Provide robust strategies to secure, support, develop, evaluate, and retain top talent.
- Summarize the school's academic model, including curricula, assessments, and data-driven instruction.
- Outline a comprehensive approach to build a positive school culture and climate.
- Develop operational structures to effectively utilize time and resources.

Considerations

- Turnaround Plans must include conditions for school turnaround in the areas of talent, academics, culture and climate, and operations.
- If the Turnaround Committee does not submit or develop a plan, or if a plan is deemed deficient, a CSDE-developed plan may be imposed by the Commissioner.
- The State Board of Education may approve or reject plans developed by the Turnaround Committee.

New Resources to Support Teachers and Leaders

This year, Connecticut is investing more than \$15 million in Network schools. After the State Board of Education approves the Turnaround Plan, Network schools are eligible to receive the following resources:

- 1 Commissioner's Network Grant:** To support the implementation of the Turnaround Plan and innovative, research-based strategies.
- 2 Bond Funding for Low-Performing Schools:** To improve school infrastructure and increase technology access in the building.
- 3 Wraparound Grant:** To support comprehensive wraparound strategies, including nonacademic supports for students and families.

Network Performance Expectations

Culture and Climate



Student attendance



Chronic absenteeism rate



Teacher attendance



Student suspension rate

Academic Achievement



Math proficiency



Reading proficiency



School Performance Index



Graduation rate



Course passage rate



Teachers by performance levels

Network schools receive additional flexibility and resources in exchange for heightened accountability:

- ✓ Annual performance benchmarks
- ✓ Monthly action planning
- ✓ Quarterly NetStat sessions
- ✓ Data-sharing agreement with CSDE
- ✓ Cyclical school audits and reviews
- ✓ Culture and climate surveys

Curiale School | Bridgeport - Cohort I



Grades:	K-8
2012-13 Enrollment:	775
% Free & Reduced:	100%
% English Language Learners:	15%
% with Disabilities:	11%

Year 1 Highlights

- The percent of students scoring at or above goal on the Math CMT increased between 2012 and 2013 in the following grades – Grade 3: from 8% to 20%; Grade 5: from 15% to 22%; Grade 6: from 15% to 26%.
- The percent of students scoring at or above goal on the Reading CMT increased between 2012 and 2013 in the following grades – Grade 3: from 8% to 15%; Grade 6: from 18% to 24%; Grade 8: from 29% to 33%.

Turnaround Plan Highlights

- New principal with past record of success
- Community-based partnerships
- Extended school day (88 min/day)



Grades:	9-12
2012-13 Enrollment:	241
% Free & Reduced:	84%
% English Language Learners:	7%
% with Disabilities:	22%

Year 1 Highlights

- The percent of students scoring at or above goal on the Reading CAPT increased from 9% in 2012 to 24% in 2013.
- The chronic absenteeism rate decreased from 40% to 29%.
- The number of suspended or expelled students as a percent of total enrollment decreased from 24% in 2011-12 to 10% in 2012-13.

Turnaround Plan Highlights

- Extended school day (1 hr/day)
- Teacher-led school operated by the NHFT
- Meaningful community partnerships and wraparound services
- Mastery-based learning and promotion

Milner School | Hartford - Cohort I



Grades:	PK-8
2012-13 Enrollment:	373
% Free & Reduced:	100%
% English Language Learners:	25%
% with Disabilities:	13%

Year 1 Highlights

- The percent of students scoring at or above goal on the Reading CMT increased between 2012 and 2013 in the following grades – Grade 6: from 14% to 22%; Grade 8: from 26% to 37%.

Turnaround Plan Highlights

- Performance-based partnership with Family Urban Schools of Excellence
- New principal with past record of success
- Academic Assistants in every classroom
- Extended school day and Saturday Academy
- School uniform policy
- Small class sizes

Stanton School | Norwich - Cohort I



Grades:	PK-5
2012-13 Enrollment:	412
% Free & Reduced:	85%
% English Language Learners:	23%
% with Disabilities:	11%

Year 1 Highlights

- The average student attendance rate in 2012-13 was 95%.
- The percent of students scoring at or above goal on the Math CMT increased between 2012 and 2013 in the following grades – Grade 3: from 36% to 48%; Grade 4: from 32% to 41%.

Turnaround Plan Highlights

- Extended school day (1 hr/day)
- Academic interventionists
- Embedded professional development
- Responsive Classroom and PBIS

Briggs High School | Norwalk - Cohort II



Grades:	9-12
2012-13 Enrollment:	52
% Free & Reduced:	79%
% English Language Learners:	12%
% with Disabilities:	33%

Turnaround Plan Highlights

- Performance-based partnership with Our Piece of the Pie (OPP)
- Transfer School Model
- College and career access programming, including SAT prep and internship experiences
- New instructional methodologies: blended learning, project-based learning, mastery-based progression
- OPP Youth Development Team coordinating wraparound services and family engagement
- Embedded professional development

Crosby High School | Waterbury - Cohort II

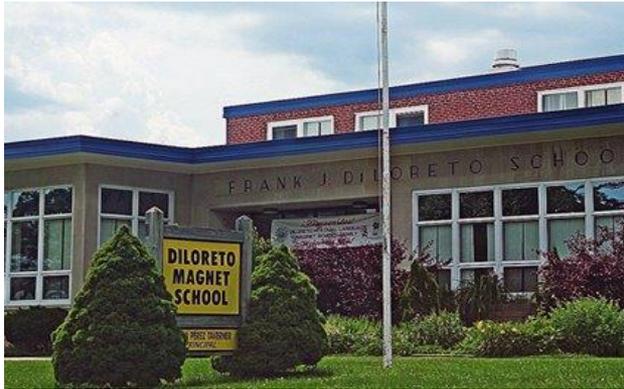


Grades:	9-12
2012-13 Enrollment:	1,463
% Free & Reduced:	82%
% English Language Learners:	12%
% with Disabilities:	16%

Turnaround Plan Highlights

- New school leadership team
- Thoughtful transition to Small Learning Communities
- Dual-enrollment opportunities allowing for high school and college credit
- New district Director of School Turnaround to support school turnaround efforts
- Creation of the Crosby Teaching and Learning Institute to offer school-specific professional development opportunities
- Academic coaches and interventionists
- Meaningful opportunities for family and community engagement

DiLoreto School | New Britain - Cohort II



Turnaround Plan Highlights

- New principal with past record of success
- Extended school day (1 hour/day)
- English Language Development Model
- Summer Language Institute
- Embedded professional development
- Purposeful strategies to reduce chronic absenteeism
- Small class sizes

Grades: K-8

2012-13 Enrollment: 901

% Free & Reduced: 85%

% English Language Learners: 48%

% with Disabilities: 9%

Dunbar School | Bridgeport - Cohort II



Turnaround Plan Highlights

- New principal with a past record of success
- Performance-based partnership with Family Urban Schools of Excellence
- Academic Assistants in every classroom
- Extended school day and Saturday Academy
- Summer enrichment program
- School uniform policy
- Small class sizes

Grades:	K-8
2012-13 Enrollment:	313
% Free & Reduced:	100%
% English Language Learners:	1%
% with Disabilities:	11%

Walsh School | Waterbury - Cohort II



Grades:	PK-5
2012-13 Enrollment:	511
% Free & Reduced:	97%
% English Language Learners:	14%
% with Disabilities:	13%

Turnaround Plan Highlights

- New school leadership team
- New district Director of School Turnaround to support school turnaround efforts
- Academic coaches
- Saturday Enrichment Academy
- Creation of the Walsh Teaching and Learning Institute to offer professional development
- New Family and Community Center with a Community Engagement Coordinator
- Focus on school climate through PBIS implementation and a new Character Development program

Wilbur Cross High School | New Haven - Cohort II



Grades:	9-12
2012-13 Enrollment:	1,348
% Free & Reduced:	80%
% English Language Learners:	17%
% with Disabilities:	14%

Turnaround Plan Highlights

- Creation of the International Academy at Wilbur Cross and hiring of an Academy Leader
- Performance-based partnership with Internationals Network for Public Schools
- Collaborative interdisciplinary teaching teams
- Embedded professional development
- Personalized graduation plans for students
- Project-based, experiential learning
- Summer professional learning opportunities for teachers and staff
- Meaningful strategies to increase student attendance

Windham Middle School | Windham - Cohort II



Grades:	6-8
2012-13 Enrollment:	718
% Free & Reduced:	78%
% English Language Learners:	22%
% with Disabilities:	17%

Turnaround Plan Highlights

- Extended time and participation in the TIME Collaborative
- Purposeful transition to Small Learning Communities
- Character development through a new advisory program and PBIS
- Embedded professional development
- New ELA and math curriculum, technology, and resources
- Summer professional learning opportunities for teachers and staff
- Sheltered Instruction across grades levels and content areas