

IX.E.

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

TO BE PROPOSED:

April 4, 2018

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-223h of the Connecticut General Statutes, approves continued participation of Uncas Network School, Norwich, in the Commissioner's Network for an additional year commencing July 1, 2018, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action, including, but not limited to, expending such funds as may be necessary to execute and implement the foregoing.

Approved by a vote of _____, this fourth day of April, Two Thousand Eighteen.

Signed: _____
Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Secretary
State Board of Education

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner of Education

DATE: April 4, 2018

SUBJECT: Commissioner's Network Extension for Uncas Network School in Norwich

Executive Summary

Introduction

Public Act 12-116, in part, established the Commissioner's Network to provide new resources, increased flexibilities, and greater accountability to improve student achievement in some of the state's lowest performing schools. The purpose of the Commissioner's Network is to turn around chronically low-performing schools and improve outcomes for students who attend these schools. Network Turnaround Plans must include intensive and transformative strategies that are necessary to turn around schools that, to date, have been unsuccessful in their improvement efforts. These plans must reach beyond surface reforms to achieve dramatic and transformative outcomes, address past turnaround efforts, and provide an explanation as to how the proposed interventions will succeed where previous efforts have failed.

Schools are accepted into the Network for a minimum of three years. Subsection (h) of Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-223h establishes that the State Board of Education (SBE) may allow schools to continue in the Commissioner's Network for an additional year, not to exceed two additional years, if necessary. For the reasons set forth below, the Uncas Network School in Norwich is recommended to remain in the Network for an additional year. Upon SBE approval, this will be the fifth and final year for Uncas Network School in the Commissioner's Network.

The Commissioner's Network is a commitment between local stakeholders and the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) to improve student achievement in up to 25 schools. There are 15 schools presently participating in the Network. Each school receives increased financial investments to assist in the implementation of its turnaround plan. For each year a school is in the Network, the funding level decreases in order to promote financial sustainability of its turnaround over time.

Background:

Uncas Network School currently serves 262 students in grades kindergarten through five. Eighty-eight percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Sixteen percent of the students are identified as needing special education services, and twenty-five percent are English learners. Approximately 39 percent of the students are Hispanic, 24.8 percent are black, and 18.3 percent are white.

Uncas Network School entered the Commissioner's Network in the fall of 2014. Prior to receiving State Board approval to enter the Network, an Operations and Instructional Audit was conducted on March 17, 2014. The audit revealed a lack of a clear positive behavior support system, low level of instructional rigor, including higher-order thinking and questioning; lack of staff to support high needs students, the need for school-based, job-embedded professional development for teachers and non-certified staff, and an open concept layout to the school that created challenges in implementing effective instructional practices. Upon entering the Network, Uncas Network School had declining test scores, with only 21 percent of 3rd graders reading at grade level on the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT).

To move toward greater self-sustainability, Uncas Network School has received a decreased level of funding in each of the four years in the Commissioner's Network. Norwich Public Schools has absorbed the costs of the full-time school psychologist and social worker, as well as partially paying for additional staff members in the 2016-17 Commissioner's Network budget. The additional school staff members hired as a result of the turnaround plan, have been an effective use of Network funds and the school's leadership team has worked hard to ensure that spending is maximized for student benefit by building teacher capacity through job-embedded coaching, and reducing chronic absenteeism. The school's Leadership Team has been a good steward of Network funds and has worked to ensure that spending is maximized for student benefit.

Improvements:

- The percentage of Uncas Network School students meeting or exceeding the achievement standard in English Language Arts (ELA) on the Smarter Balanced Assessment increased from 19.6 percent in 2015-16 to 22.1 percent in 2016-17.
- The percentage of Uncas Network School students meeting or exceeding the achievement standard in Mathematics on the Smarter Balanced Assessment increased from 19.5 percent in 2015-16 to 23.1 percent in 2016-17.
- The percentage of students considered chronically absent decreased from 8.8 percent in 2015-16 to 7.7 percent in 2016-17.
- The suspension rate continues to decrease annually. Over the last five years, the rate has decreased from 13.7 percent in 2012-13 to a current rate of 2.8 percent for 2016-17.
- The Next Generation Accountability index score increased from 56.3 percent in 2015-16 to 64.8 percent in 2016-17. The state average index score is 73.2 percent.

Continued Areas of Focus:

- While recent growth trends have been strong, sustained improvement of overall reading and mathematics proficiency should continue. Instruction and intervention should maximize systematic and targeted planning, implementation, maintenance, and evaluation of student and learning supports.
- While Uncas Network School provides multiple engagement opportunities and wraparound supports for families, staff will focus on increasing engagement opportunities and community partnerships aligned to school improvement goals.

Next Steps:

During the 2018-19 school year, Uncas Network School will continue strategies that have proven effective over the past four years, and target areas requiring further improvement. The Year 5 plan will prioritize the following:

- Leadership Team members will continue to provide teachers with professional development in literacy and math instruction in order to meet the rigor of the Connecticut Core Standards. Professional development shall include a focus on lesson design and lesson delivery that incorporates differentiation.
- Continue to establish and strengthen community partnerships to support Uncas students and families with appropriate wraparound supports, such as mental health services.
- Continue to strengthen the data team and the Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI) process that has proven successful for reading. Expand further with a focus on supplemental interventions for students below grade level in math.
- As a result of feedback on walkthroughs, administration will expand the definition of student engagement to include increased opportunities for student discourse and utilization of academic vocabulary, and provide appropriate professional development.

Recommendation:

The CSDE recommends that the SBE approve an additional fifth and final year of participation in the Commissioner's Network for Uncas Network School at a funding level to be determined by CSDE, within state budget appropriations.

Prepared by: Jennifer Webb, Education Consultant, Turnaround Office

Approved by: Desi D. Nesmith, Chief Turnaround Officer



Next Generation Accountability Report: 2016-17

Choose a District

Choose a School

School Category (1-5)
(1 is highest)

State Support Designation
(Cat. 4 and 5 schools only)

School of Distinction?

Norwich School District	Uncas Network School_1041911	2		No
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Choose a District, then Choose a School. To refresh the District List, clear the School name.

Grade Range: K - 5

No:	Indicator	Index/Rate ¹	Target	Points Earned	Max Points	% Points Earned	State Avg Index/Rate
1a.	ELA Performance Index – All Students	54.8	75	36.5	50	73.1%	67.1
1b.	ELA Performance Index – High Needs Students	53.7	75	35.8	50	71.6%	55.9
1c.	Math Performance Index – All Students	52.2	75	34.8	50	69.6%	62.2
1d.	Math Performance Index – High Needs Students	50.8	75	33.8	50	67.7%	50.5
1e.	Science Performance Index – All Students	39.2	75	26.2	50	52.3%	55.3
1f.	Science Performance Index – High Needs Students	39.3	75	26.2	50	52.4%	45.2
2a.	ELA Avg. Percentage of Growth Target Achieved – All Students	64.9%	100	64.9	100	64.9%	55.4%
2b.	ELA Avg. Percentage of Growth Target Achieved – High Needs Students	65.0%	100	65.0	100	65.0%	49.8%
2c.	Math Avg. Percentage of Growth Target Achieved – All Students	56.7%	100	56.7	100	56.7%	61.7%
2d.	Math Avg. Percentage of Growth Target Achieved – High Needs Students	55.6%	100	55.6	100	55.6%	53.7%
4a.	Chronic Absenteeism – All Students	7.7%	<=5%	44.7	50	89.4%	9.9%
4b.	Chronic Absenteeism – High Needs Students	7.9%	<=5%	44.2	50	88.4%	15.8%
5	Preparation for CCR – % taking courses		75%	0.0	0		70.7%
6	Preparation for CCR – % passing exams		75%	0.0	0		43.5%
7	On-track to High School Graduation		94%	0.0	0		87.8%
8	4-year Graduation All Students (2016 Cohort)		94%	0.0	0		87.4%
9	6-year Graduation - High Needs Students (2014 Cohort)		94%	0.0	0		82.0%
10	Postsecondary Entrance (Class of 2016)		75%	0.0	0		72.0%
11	Physical Fitness (estimated part rate) and (fitness rate)	100.0%	39.0%	75%	26.0	52.0%	92.0% 51.6%
12	Arts Access			60%	0.0		50.5%
	Accountability Index				550.4	850	64.8%

¹ Unrounded index/rates are used in calculations. Values rounded to 1 decimal are displayed.

These statistics represent the results from the third year of Connecticut's Next Generation Accountability Model for districts and schools. For detailed information and resources about every indicator including the rationale for its inclusion, the methodology used as well as links to resources, research, and evidence-based strategies, please consult the document titled [Using Accountability Results to Guide Improvement](#).

This model is the direct result of an extensive consultation process over a two year period. The CSDE sought feedback from district and school leaders, Connecticut educators, state and national experts, CSDE staff, and many others. This model was originally outlined in Connecticut's flexibility application to the U.S. Department of Education and formally approved by the USED in August 2015 and is now included in Connecticut's state plan for the Every Student Succeeds Act.

Achievement Gap Size Outlier?

Gap Indicators	Non-High Needs Rate	High Needs Rate	Size of Gap	State Gap Mean + 1 StdDev ^{2*}	Is Gap an Outlier?
Achievement Gap Size Outlier?					N
ELA Performance Index Gap	53.7		16.6		
Math Performance Index Gap	50.8		18.5		
Science Performance Index Gap	39.3		16.5		
Six-Year Graduation Rate Gap (2014 Cohort)					N/A

^{2*} If the Non-High Needs Rate exceeds the ultimate target (75 for Performance Index and 54.8 for graduation rate), then the ultimate target is displayed and used for gap calculations. ^{2*} If size of gap exceeds the state mean gap plus one standard deviation, then the gap is an outlier.

Participation Rate	Rate
ELA – All Students	100.0%
ELA – High Needs Students	100.0%
Math – All Students	100.0%
Math – High Needs Students	100.0%
Science – All Students	100.0%
Science – High Needs Students	100.0%



COMMISSIONER'S NETWORK FAST FACTS

UNCAS NETWORK SCHOOL GRADES K-5

COHORT III — ENTERED NETWORK FALL 2014
Norwich Public Schools

SUCCESS

Revisions to the master schedule at Uncas Network School have created more opportunities for inclusive practices. Strong implementation of the workshop model with differentiated student supports are in place. Full-time art and music enrichment are scaffolding literacy and math instruction. Fundations, a multisensory, foundational skills program in kindergarten and first grade, has proved to be very engaging to students and is improving writing and decoding skills of primary level students. Actively connecting with families has increased student engagement school-wide. School community has been strengthened through the implementation of Restorative Practices and the Choose Love program.



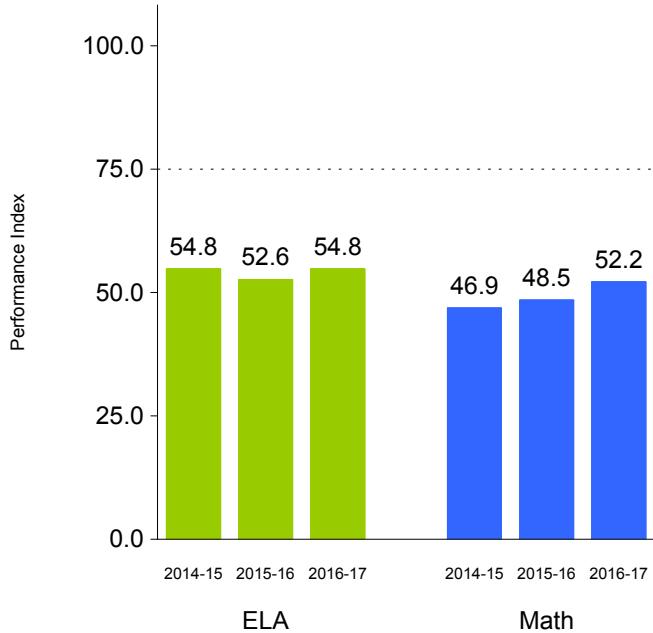
COMMISSIONER'S NETWORK FUNDING

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
\$601,754	\$500,000	\$350,000	\$190,000

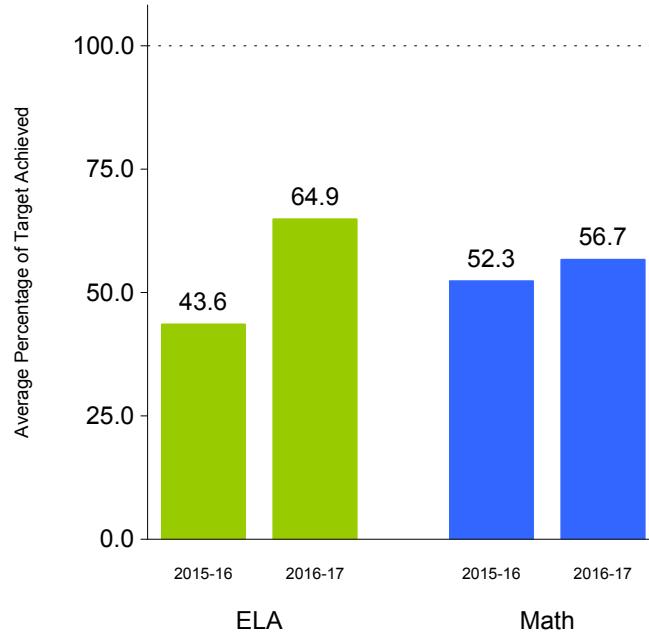
Talent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide additional support for English learners through the addition of bilingual personnel.
Academics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Promote collaboration among interventionists, certified support staff, and classroom teachers so that students receive targeted instruction based on individual need.Provide targeted support and enrichment to students in math and literacy through interventionists providing push-in and pull-out services.
Climate/Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Implement Restorative Practices and the Choose Love program to enhance systems of recognition, student ownership and accountability as well as building a stronger school community.Continue efforts to improve student average daily attendance and reduce chronic absenteeism.
Operations	N/A

LEADING AND LAGGING INDICATORS OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**Academic Achievement**

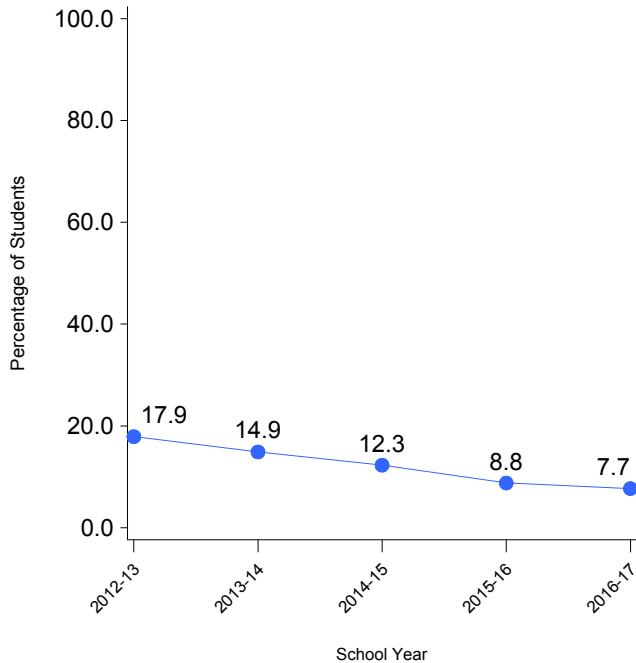
The Performance Index represents average performance of students in a subject area. When the index is 75 or better, the students are on average, performing solidly in the desired achievement level. The target for 2029-30 is 75.0 as indicated by the dotted line in the chart.

**Academic Growth (Matched Students)**

The Average Percentage of Target Achieved is a percentage of the individualized growth target achieved by students on average. The target for 2029-30 is 100% as indicated by the dotted line in the chart.

**Chronic Absenteeism**

The percentage of students who missed at least 10% of their enrolled school days for any reason.

**Suspension Rate**

The percentage of students who received at least one suspension or expulsion during the school year.

