



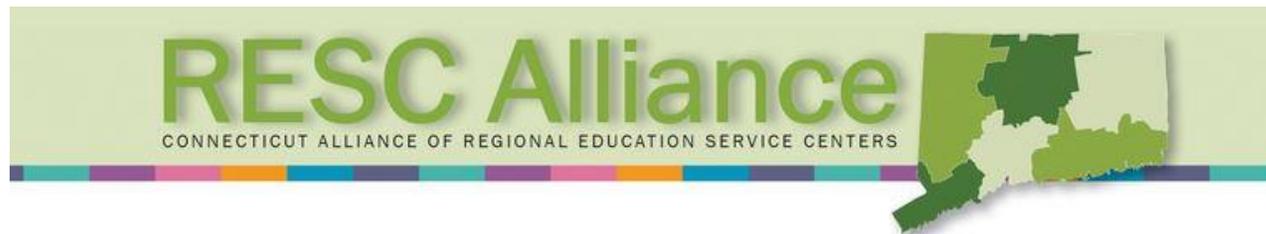
CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Connecticut State Department of Education

Connecticut State Board of Education

Equity and Excellence in Education for All Connecticut Students

Process Support Materials - Data Collection & Analysis Results



Quick Reference Page Guide

- Overview, Context, and Content Origins - (pg. 3)
- Scope, Instrumentation, and Methodology of Data Collection Phase (pg. 7)
- More than 15,000 open-ended responses inputted and analyzed (pg. 6)
- Analysis Process (pg. 11)
- Survey Findings (pg. 12)
- Survey open-ended question analysis (pg. 17)
- Representative analysis (pg. 21)
- Focus group analysis (pg. 26)
- Common trends and themes in the data (pg. 28)
- External Data references (pg. 33)
- Data Collection Resources: surveys, focus group questions and protocols (pg. 48)

Overview & Context:



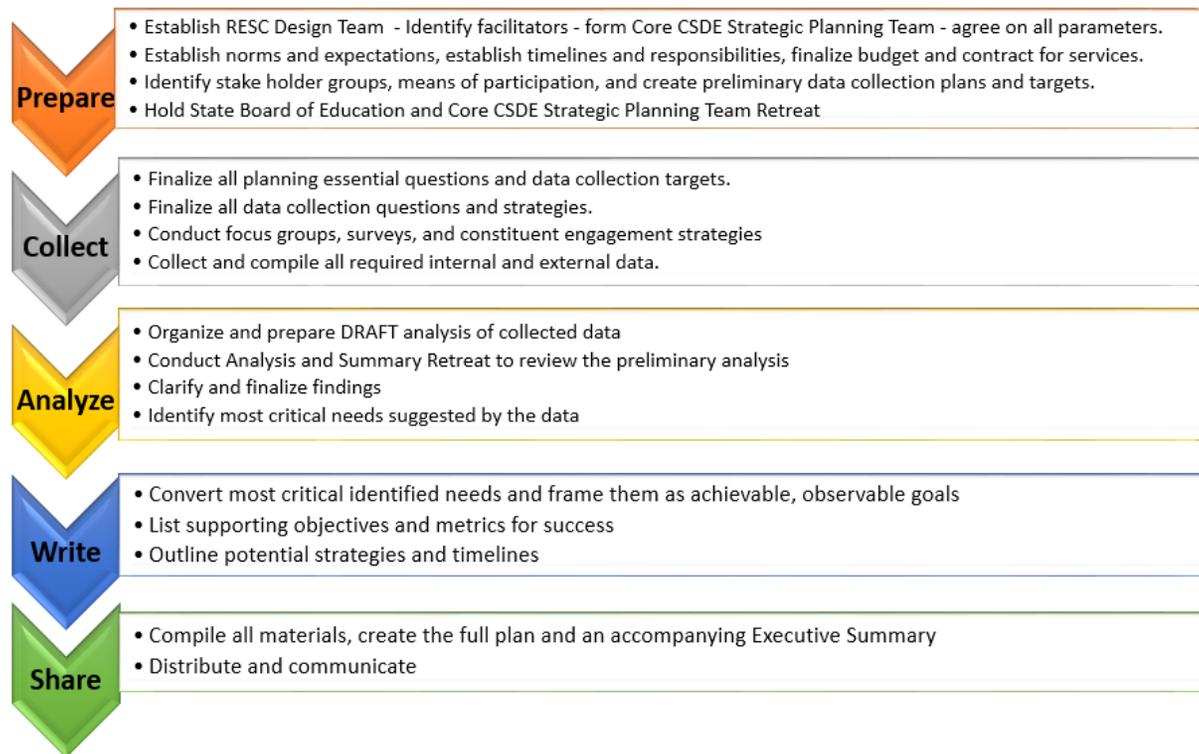
SCHOOLS ARE SET UP TO BE THE EQUALIZER OF OPPORTUNITY – YOU WANT ALL KIDS, REGARDLESS OF BACKGROUND, TO HAVE SIMILAR OPPORTUNITIES (OUTCOMES) TO PROMOTE TALENT AND PROMOTE MERIT. BUT THAT IS NOT WHAT WE DO. THE ONLY WAY TO REALLY CREATE EQUITABLE SCHOOLS IS TO REALLY FOCUS ON THAT AS YOUR GOAL. MAKE SURE YOU HAVE A VISION AND COMBINE A COMMITMENT TO ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE WITH EQUITY. WHEN WE COMBINE EXCELLENCE AND EQUITY, WHAT WE ARE FOCUSED ON IS ENSURING THAT EVERY KID HAD ACCESS TO HIGH STANDARDS AND GREAT TEACHERS.

**Pedro Noguera
Professor of Education
UCLA**

This quote from New York University’s Pedro Noguera perfectly represents the State Board of Education’s and the State Department of Education’s primary mission to pursue both excellence and equity for all of Connecticut’s students. To assist in building the framework to support this work over the next five years, the Commissioner of Education convened a team of professionals representing all six of Connecticut’s Regional Education Service Centers and asked them to design a plan of action that would achieve this goal. The vision for this plan was that when completed, it would represent work needed to fulfill a commitment to Connecticut’s citizens and communities to provide a great education in an outstanding school for every child in our state and compel all of us to act together to ensure that every

student—regardless of gender, disability, race, zip code, or family income—is prepared to succeed in life-long learning and work beyond school.

As a planning process, “*Ensuring Equity and Excellence for all Connecticut Students*,” was designed as engage a wide range of stakeholders in an exploration of these issues. To accomplish this, a five step process was designed to frame the issues, gain understanding from the field, and frame actions for moving forward. An outline of that process follows:



Once the five phase process was agreed upon, work began in July to build the schedules and work responsibility assignments that would support its implementation. With those established, the completion of the “Prepare” and “Collect” Phases of this plan required content guidance from the State Board of Education. This input began with a meeting of the Board designed to explore and capture their thinking regarding the themes of equity and excellence. The RPT planned to use those results to provide guidance for the Data Collection/constituent outreach phase of the process. The retreat was held in the Connecticut Board of Regents building in Hartford on Thursday, August 13th, 2015. In addition to theme clarification, this full-day session was designed to achieve the following overall outcomes:

1. Process and role clarity for SBOE in the department and State Board strategic planning process (agree on the horizon line).
 - a. Confirm the Board’s role/purpose in this process to provide the overarching vision and priorities for the broader planning process and to help guide the data collection that supports it.
 - b. Review the process plan specifics and the Board’s role in it - which is to forge and support vision and mission – CSDE staff role is to build strategies and implement to move the department toward that.
2. Build final plan product clarity
 - a. Create a shared sense of what the final strategic plan outcome will look like - a collection of broad goals to guide the work of the department over the next 5 years - not a set of specific strategies (those will be staff responsibilities).
3. Deepen the State Board’s growth mindset - creating a future focused frame of reference that is essential for visioning and planning.
4. Engage in productive visioning activities.
 - a. Expanding foundational thinking about the challenges and opportunities in the 5 year horizon of public education in this planning window.
 - b. Gaining clarity of meaning/defining excellence and equity for all students.
5. Guide the overall data collection strategy for the planning process - helping to identify what are the essential questions the board would like to see answered to help inform their planning and goal-setting decision making.
6. Use this opportunity to engage the State Board as the first group of stakeholders in the focus group and data collection process.

The activities to support Retreat Outcomes 4-6 identified themes of inquiry related to excellence and equity and set the focus for the Data Collection phase of this planning process. Through a discussion, processing, and prioritizing process, the State Board of Education identified the most important information that it was interested in reviewing prior to setting goals and policy guidance for the Department of Education.

Connecticut State Board of Education: Themes of Inquiry for Equity and Excellence

Equity	Excellence
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Programmatic supports for equity 2. High Standards and expectations for all learners 3. High quality and diverse teaching force 4. School climate and culture 5. Defining equity (shared and understood) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supporting the ongoing development of effective educators 2. Communicating best practices 3. Life-long learning 4. Effective measurement mindset 5. Parental involvement/engagement 6. Social Responsibility 7. College and career ready 8. Early Learning

As part of the discussions that created these themes, members of the Board began to explore the underlying forces that can create a policy tension between the twin goals of excellence and equity. To create a frame of reference for developing the data collection tools, the Board brainstormed and then prioritized exploration questions related to each theme. The prioritization action was an important step as the practical limitations of the time required for participants to complete of the focus groups and surveys dictated a cap on the total number of questions that could be asked (12-15). The RPT felt strongly that participants should be able to complete the process in a reasonable amount of time (survey in less than 15 minutes and the focus groups in less than 90 minutes). Ignoring time guidelines would place practical limits on potential participation. With this in mind, the base key questions by the Board were then grouped and edited by the RPT to create

the data collection outline. The final inquiry topic list, which reflects the most important areas of interest expressed by the State Board of Education, was as follows:

1. How would you define “equity in education?” What does that term mean to you?
2. Is a diverse teacher/administrator workforce necessary to close the achievement gap? Why or why not?
3. What initiatives can the state/districts implement to increase teacher/administrator diversity?
4. Could changes to the ECS Formula improve equity and excellence for all students?
5. Do schools provide enough cultural experiences to help create citizens prepared for their lives beyond school?
6. What is the school’s role in promoting active citizenship?
7. How do the schools in your community welcome and involve parents in the learning process?
8. How do you define what the critical skills of college and career readiness are?
9. Who should have input in defining what these learning goals and expectations for students are? (If not addressed) What other groups should have input?
10. What would a measurement system that rewards growth in these critical skill areas look like?
11. How important is Pre-K programming - How should the support for early (<=pre-k) learning opportunities be expanded?
12. Where do you go to learn about best practices in education? What other resources are available?
13. Do you believe educators have had a voice in ensuring how systems are designed to ensure student success?
14. What else would you like to say about these topics?

Based on this framework of inquiry, the RPT crafted a data collection study designed to gather the information requested by the State Board of Education. Additionally, the State Board identified a number of external data targets whose outcomes might inform a discussion on these topics. These items were aligned by the RPT with their appropriate questions and will be reported in the analysis section of this report.

Scope of Data Collection Phase:

Two mechanisms were designed to gather the data; focus groups, in which small gatherings of 15 or fewer participants discuss their responses to the inquiry questions under the guidance of a facilitator, and a publicly accessible survey open to all Connecticut residents. After an eight week data collection phase, more than 55 hours of conversations were collected from 46 focus groups. Each focus group session was facilitated, recorded, transcribed and analyzed. The statewide survey was accessible for about eight weeks in both English and Spanish and was completed by more than 6,700 respondents. Those responses included more than 15,000 separate written contributions to one of the four open ended questions in the survey. These write-in comments were also analyzed and are included in the analysis portion of this report. More detailed descriptions of the implementation of these data gathering tools follow in the Methodology section.

Instrumentation for Data Collection Phase: The following tools were used and can be found in the appendices:

- CSDE Strategic Planning Survey (English Version) (Appendix A)
- CSDE Un Estudio Estratégico de Planificación (Spanish Version of Survey) (Appendix B)
- CSDE Focus Group Questions – Community Stakeholders (Appendix C)
- CSDE Focus Group Questions – Education Leadership & State Agencies (Appendix D)
- CSDE Focus Group Questions – Parents & Students (Appendix E)
- CSDE Focus Group Questions – Teachers (Appendix F)

Methodology for Data Collection Phase:

Public Survey: The CSDE Strategic Planning Survey questions were developed by the RPT to reflect the State Board’s priorities and then, with collaboration, feedback, and approval from the Commissioner of Education and her key staff, were finalized and distributed primarily in electronic format using SurveyMonkey. The RPT, the State Department of Education, various state and professional agencies,

community organizations, and local school districts all helped to publicize the survey. A vast majority of the respondents (77%) learned of the survey and connected to it via a link they received in an email.

The survey was comprised of 15 specific response questions and four open-ended questions which were aligned with the inquiry topics and adapted from validated surveys (Foster, et al. 2012) used for similar purposes in other states. Part One asked for demographic information (town of residence, gender, age, race/ethnicity, education and role) as well as how respondents were made aware of the survey. Part Two asked questions relevant to the key ideas of equity and excellence in education. Part Three contained four open-ended questions which allowed respondents to express opinions on topics related to the key ideas of the survey or any other topic that they wished to expound upon.

The survey was hosted by SurveyMonkey, was available in both English and Spanish versions, and was open to the public between September 14 and November 23, 2015. RPT staff monitored the survey responses regularly to ensure proper functioning. A total of 6,744 individuals responded to the English version of the survey while 29 individuals responded to the Spanish version.

Focus Groups: The CSDE Focus Group questions were developed by the RPT to reflect the State Board's priorities and then, with collaboration, feedback, and approval from the Commissioner of Education and her key staff, were finalized and applied according to an established protocol created by the RPT. A training session was held for the focus group facilitators to ensure that the protocols were understood and consistently applied. There were four slightly different versions of the focus group questions which were applied based on the background of the primary audience for that session: 1. community stakeholders, 2. education leadership and state agencies, 3. parents and students, and 4. teachers.

In addition to the organizations identified in subsection (c) of Section 10-4 of the Connecticut General Statutes for inclusion in a long-range planning process, the State Board of Education wanted additional groups invited to be part of the process as well. In all, nearly 75 organizations were invited either electronically or personally to send a representative to an in-person focus group. These organizations

were grouped for logistical/practical purposes, sessions were scheduled for each group, and then invitations for those specific sessions were forwarded to organizational representatives. The invited groups and organizations are listed below:

Community Based Organizations

- Achieve Hartford
- Center for Latino Progress
- The Conference of Churches
- Connecticut Coalition for Achievement Now
- Connecticut Council for Education Reform
- NAACP Connecticut State Conference
- Teach for America – Connecticut
- Excel Bridgeport
- African American Affairs Commission
- L/PR Affairs Commission
- Urban League of Greater Hartford
- Urban League of Southwest Connecticut
- Connecticut Association of Human Services
- Connecticut Association of (Community Action Agencies)
- Connecticut Center for Children’s Advocacy
- Commission on Children
- Connecticut Association for the Gifted
- World Affairs Council

Philanthropic Organizations

- Hartford Foundation for Public Giving
- Greater New Haven Foundation
- Connecticut Council for Philanthropy
- Graustein Foundation
- United Way
- Connecticut Education Foundations

Government/Agency Representatives

- Connecticut Department of Children and Families
- Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development
- Connecticut Department of Labor
- Connecticut Department of Social Services
- Connecticut Office of Early Childhood
- Connecticut Office of Policy and Management
- Connecticut Early Childhood Education Cabinet
- Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance
- Connecticut Council of Administrators of Special Education
- Education Committee of CSL
- Black and Hispanic Caucus
- Latino Caucus
- Workforce Investment Boards
- Juvenile Justice system representation (TBD)
- Department of Corrections Superintendent and other representation
- Office of the Child Advocate

Institutional Representatives

- Connecticut Administrators of Programs for English Language Learners
- Connecticut Alliance of Regional Educational Service Centers
- Connecticut Board of Regents for Higher Education
- University of Connecticut

- General Electric Foundation

- UCONN Cooperative Extension
- Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges
- Connecticut Technical High School System Board
- Northeast Charter Schools Network
- Comer Yale Child Study Center
- Institution for Social and Emotional Learning
- School Garden Resource Institute

Professional Associations

- American Federation of Teachers (AFT-CT)
- Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE)
- Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS)
- Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS)
- Connecticut Education Association (CEA)
- Connecticut Federation of School Administrators
- Connecticut Association of School Business Officials (CASBO)
- National Association of Black Social Workers (Connecticut Chapter)

Business and Industry Representatives

- Metro Hartford Alliance
- Connecticut Business & Industry Association (CBIA)
- Regional Chambers of Commerce (each chamber, one rep per)
- Connecticut Farm Bureau Association
- Connecticut Mental Health Association

Parent and Student Organizations

- Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center (CPAC)
- Connecticut Parent Teacher Association
- Connecticut Parents Union
- State Student Advisory Council on Education (SSACE)
- Students for Education Reform – Connecticut
- Connecticut Parent Power
- Parent University representation

In addition to these representational focus groups, role alike groups of students, parents, teachers, administrators, and superintendents were scheduled regionally in each of the six RESC offices (Litchfield, Trumbull, Hamden, Hartford, Old Lyme and Hampton). Student and parent sessions were scheduled at the same time but were held separately. Each RESC scheduled five focus groups within their catchment area. Governmental representative groups were held centrally at local offices in Hartford and Middletown. Each of these sessions was also conducted by a trained facilitator following the same common protocol. Focus groups were recorded using professional hardware with Audacity software and then labeled with indicators developed and implemented by the RPT. The recordings were saved onto a shared, secure drive, marked for the number of participants and sent to an external transcription service (TranscribeMe) for processing. A total of 46 focus groups were conducted with more than 55 hours of conversational data captured, collected, and transcribed.

Analysis Processes for Data Collection Phase:

Online Survey: Questions 1-15 on the survey were analyzed by the frequency of response. For any question that allowed for “Other” as a response, the responses typed in were analyzed and added to the appropriate answer choice. Outlying responses were noted where relevant. Questions 16-19 on the survey were open-ended responses and a summary of the over 15,000 entries is included in this report. A more in-depth analysis of any of these questions is possible at the request of the department or SBOE. To conduct a representative summary analysis of each question, the responses were downloaded from SurveyMonkey into Microsoft Excel for sorting. Responses that were not relevant were deleted (for example, some individuals responded “NA” to some of the questions). The most frequently recurring remaining responses were coded, tracked and are reported here in the results section.

Focus Groups: As noted, Audacity audio files of the focus groups were stored centrally and then sent to a transcription service and were received back in Microsoft Word format. The Word files were then uploaded and analyzed using NVivo software. The RPT worked together to develop a system of coding that identified key ideas while increasing inter-rater reliability. Analysis was broken down by constituent group and reported in aggregate.

Connecticut State Strategic Planning Survey Preliminary Findings (6,744 Responses)

Race/Ethnicity of Respondents	%
African American / Black, not of Hispanic origin	2.7
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.2
Asian	1.7
Hispanic or Latino	3.3
Pacific Islander	0.1
White, not of Hispanic origin	90.1
Other (please specify)	1.8

Highest Level of Education	%
K-12	1.8
High school graduate / G.E.D.	6.9
College degree	25.4
Master's degree	60.7
PhD	5.2

How Respondents Learned of Survey	%
Link from a web page	6.1
Link from an email	77.1
Print publication	0.3
Social media	8.0
Word of mouth	4.2
Other (please specify)	4.2

Role	%
Educator	48.6
Parent / guardian	36.0
Other (please specify)	5.8
Community member	2.9
Business person	2.2
Grandparent	1.9
Elected official	1.8
Current student	0.8

Age of Respondents	%
12-17 Years	0.7
18-25 Years	1.9
26-35 Years	15.1
36-45 Years	32.3
46-55 Years	26.4
56-65 Years	15.5
Over 65 Years	8.1

Survey Questions

What are the most important purposes of preK-12 public education in Connecticut?	%
Prepare every student for future economic success	57.8
Ensure that students have basic academic skills	53.5
Create global citizens	39.6
Connect students to their peers and community	30.0
Support/Develop Connecticut's future workforce	22.8
Promote Equity	14.2

Support our democratic society	12.8
Identify Opportunity	12.5
Other	8.3

What are the most important skills current preK-12 students should learn before graduating?	%
Problem Solving	62.0
Communication Skills	57.2
Basic Academic Skills	36.5
Creativity/Innovation	23.4
Employability Skills	22.7
Use of Technology/Media	21.5
Financial Literacy Skills	19.5
Social and cross-cultural skills	18.2
Global Citizenship	11.7
Civics Skills	8.7
Foreign Language	6.2
Other	2.9

How important is the quality of preK-12 schools to Connecticut's success as a state?	%
Very Important	88.5
Important	9.0
Somewhat Important	2.2
Unimportant	0.4

What do you value most in a preK-12 public school?	%
Quality of teaching	49.7
High expectations for all students	43.9
Challenging academic program	35.9
Social and emotional supports for students	29.7
Joyful learning experience	27.9
Caring environment	25.3
Physical safety	17.4
Diversity of students and staff	10.3
Welcoming to parents and the community	10.2
Quality of Facilities	10.0
Extra-curricular options	9.0
Other	2.6

What improvement priorities would you recommend for Connecticut's current preK-12 school system?	%
Help all students achieve their academic potential	52.2
Promote student creativity and self-motivation	44.0
Ensuring that struggling schools get the help they need	32.6
Improve students' basic academic skills	28.8
Increase academic rigor and raise expectations	21.5
Improve the quality of teaching	17.8
Improving the quality of classroom materials	16.3
Greater access to fine-arts	16.3
More extra-curricular activities	8.5
Longer School Day	6.9

What priorities will best ensure that preK-12 schools meet future student and state needs?	%
Training and supporting quality teachers	42.0
Early childhood education	33.2
Equitable Funding and Resources	30.1
Technology and digital literacy	29.5
Career readiness and employability	29.3
Community involvement and partnerships	23.7
Innovation and entrepreneurship	15.6
Training and supporting quality principals	14.8
College awareness	13.0
Global citizenship	10.6
Foreign language instruction	8.9
Other	6.3

What is your overall opinion of preK-12 public schools in Connecticut?	%
Positive: They have many strengths	18.0
Mixed Positive: They have more strengths than weaknesses	57.6
Mixed negative: They have more weaknesses than strengths	20.0
Negative: There are serious problems	4.4

How often do you discuss preK-12 public education with friends / family?	%
Daily	32.8
Weekly	33.1
Monthly	16.7
Several times per year	14.6
Rarely / Never	2.7

Survey Open Ended Response Analysis:

Question 16: What does “Equity in Education” mean to you?

There were 4,390 responses for this question. The analysis of a random sample is described below.

Response Categories	% of Random Sample	Detailed Descriptions
Equal Opportunity/Access to Resources	66.5	Same level of opportunity for all, equal quality of teaching for all, every child provided means to learn, grow & prosper, education quality not influenced by socio-economic status, each receives best education at own level, equal access to best teachers, materials technology & course content
All Individuals’ needs met	12.3	Value of every child’s education, all learning styles accommodated, all are treated fairly, everyone gets what they need, individual academic potential is honored, appropriate curriculum for every cognitive level, each student becomes prepared for real life
Equal or More Funding for towns/students with most need	9.1	Funding sources not dependent on zip code, acknowledging variation in student needs between communities, high-poverty districts get resources they need, all schools should be funded to help all students achieve their highest potential.
High Expectations for all students	5.2	All students held to high standards, closing opportunity gap between various learner types, teaching now for their future, instilling love of learning, every student has a fair shot
Cross-culturally equal opportunity for all students	1.3	Culturally diverse and sensitive teacher population for all learners, one size does not fit all from different cultures, inclusion through instruction with ability to value cultural differences
Alternative Educational Needs met	1.1	All students, from special education to gifted, get equal attention, support & encouragement, all have equal access to enrichment and course variety, SPED/ELL resources should not outweigh regular education resources.

Question 17: What would help parents and children become more engaged at school?

There were 4,226 responses for this question. The analysis of a random sample is described below.

Response Categories	% of Random Sample	Detailed Descriptions
Collaboration between parents and teachers	19.1	Improve communication around student goals, parent workshops around Common Core, open grade book policies, grades should not be the only reason for communication
Include parents in decision making process	13.2	Greater input for standards and curriculum development, involvement in individualized goal setting, increased input in post-secondary planning, reduce influence of few, vocal parents
Greater volunteer opportunities for parents	4.1	Increased opportunities for parents to get into classrooms, school should feel more welcoming for parents, more opportunities for parents to share work and life experiences with students
Reduced emphasis on test scores	4.0	Students are being taught to take Common Core tests, standardized testing takes up too much class time, not enough information for parents as to the need or results of standardized tests
Extra-curricular activities	2.9	Greater opportunities for students to participate in activities beyond sports, more arts programs
Relevant learning experiences	1.6	Opportunities for students to have creative experiences, work-based learning experiences
School safety	1.5	Students need to feel safe, bullying education, cyber-bullying education and enforcement, greater security presence at high schools
Civic partnerships	1.1	Involve community in curriculum, schools should make greater use of the expertise of it's community

Question 18: Are there skills that Connecticut students need for the future that are not being taught today?

There were 3,782 responses for this question. The analysis of a random sample is described below.

Response Categories	% of Random Sample	Detailed Descriptions
Social Skills	18.4	Coping skills, empathy, kindness, confidence-building, respect for self and others, communication, self-efficacy, conflict resolution
Basic Life Skills	12.8	Global citizenship, coping, domestic know-how, work ethic, resourcefulness, essentials toward independence, perseverance, handling failure, accepting “no” for an answer
Computer/Technology skills	11.1	Keyboarding, coding, online conduct, info-literacy, on-line research, coding language
Foreign Language	9.1	Start in kindergarten, Spanish should be mandatory, mandatory in all public elementary and up, more time allotted in curriculum for foreign language, foreign language should be cross-curricular, foreign language skills and career impact
Financial Literacy	8.9	Balancing checkbook, managing credit/debt, filing taxes, preparing for college, applying for student loans, personal budgeting, buying a home, negotiating
Problem-solving/Critical thinking skills	7.3	Cooperation, collaboration, memorization, decision-making, coping, mathematical thinking, asking “how do I?”, self-reliance, deeper reading comprehension
Higher Reading/Writing Literacy rate	5.2	Formal handwriting, non-fiction writing focus, basic grammar/sentence structure, research writing, handwriting and brain-development, reading to others, thorough written response, promoting reading at home
Creativity/Innovation	4.7	Creative thinking, entrepreneurship, instilling love of learning, solving societal problems, finding opportunities outside of the classroom, play and imagination, less standardized testing
Cursive writing	3.6	Signing names/signatures, reading historic documents, penmanship
Non-college oriented work readiness	3.1	Access to trades training, vocational tech awareness, teaching about industrial arts, exposure to programs such as cosmetology, intro health-tech care, plumbing, electrician
Stronger STEAM skills	2.9	Push STEM more, more STEM intro at elementary level, more engineering intro courses, extra STEAM incentives for non-gifted & under-motivated students, integrate Integrate Math as living, breathing topic
Research/Study Skills	1.4	Finding well-documented answers, information literacy, how to invest in long-term projects

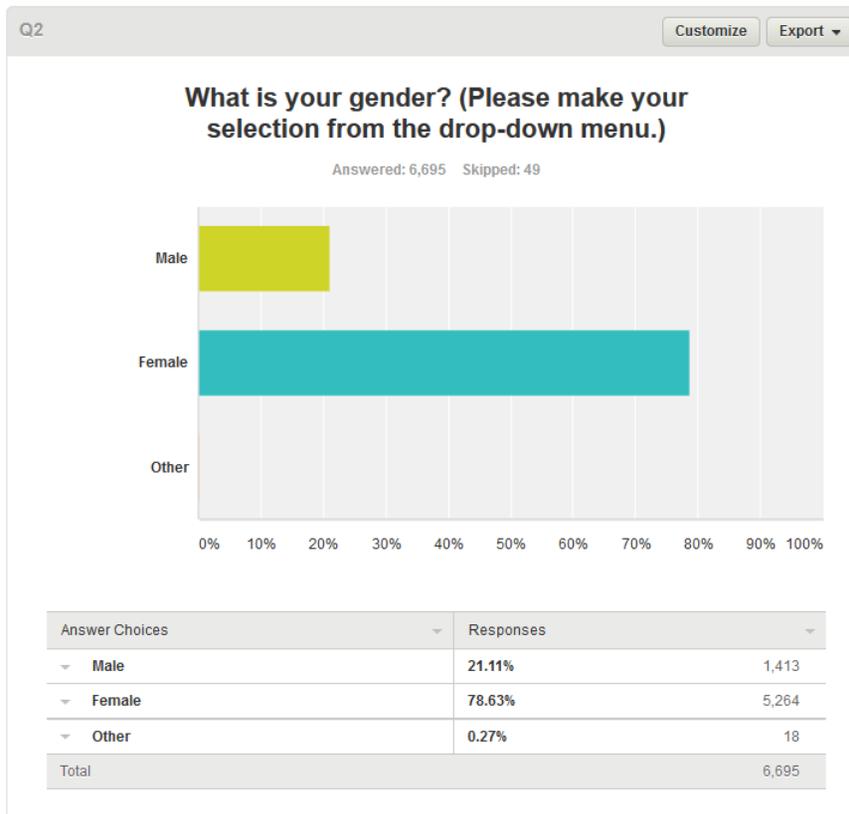
Question 19: Are there any other topics you wish to discuss?

There were 2,646 responses for this question. The analysis of the responses is described below.

Response Category/Topic	% of Responses	Sample Responses
Equality	7.2	<p>“We must promote racial equity in CT. Too many Black and Latino students are not graduating high school. This must be a priority. “</p> <p>“Please provide <u>more</u> support for the <u>changing</u> population in our state. Students are presenting with <u>more</u> language issues, coming from a wide array of countries. The types of <u>special education</u> students <u>have changed as well</u>. We are seeing many more emotionally disturbed students and <u>more</u> students who have <u>zero</u> home support. Teachers and schools need more support and resources in the classrooms to help this changing dynamic. “</p>
Leadership	7.1	<p>“Let's <u>get politics</u> out of <u>education</u> management in the State of Connecticut. We have politically-appointed and politically-motivated individuals at the highest levels of <u>educational management</u>, on the <u>University of Connecticut</u> Board of Trustees, on the Regents, on other boards charged with educating our young people. We need caring, <u>education-oriented</u> individuals <u>not</u> politicians.”</p>
Family	2.4	<p>“The home environment is the key to a child's success in school. Governments can pour <u>more money</u> into <u>education</u> budgets, but unless good parenting skills are taught, it becomes <u>more difficult</u> for the school to achieve maximum success for every child.”</p>
Standardized Testing	2.2	<p>“The <u>intense focus</u> on standardized testing as a measure of general achievement and as a way to determine how much money school "earn" for services is a broken system. Schools that have <u>struggling</u> students need more support, not less.”</p>
Community	1.0	<p>A school <u>should</u> be the center of the community; where children, teaching staff and families all work together to create a safe, supported, educational and understanding environment.</p>
Teacher Preparation	1.0	<p>Teachers appear to lack adequate preparation/support to address the diverse needs of students in an inclusive environment. Administrators are so involved with the implementation of competing and conflicting initiatives, that they lack any awareness of what is occurring in classrooms, both positive and negative.</p>

Representative Analysis:

There were two representational concerns with the survey; it was overwhelmingly female and there was a statistical underrepresentation of people of color. On the first issue, almost 80% of those that responded to the survey were female. While obviously not representative of the general population, there are proportionally more women than men in the educational profession. Additionally, there was no suggestion at any point in the data that male/female identity was a concern, so this disparity was deemed to be irrelevant to the analysis of the survey responses.



Because of the priority placed on equity in this plan and the historical demographic profile of struggling schools in Connecticut, the second issue of racial balance of the respondents is worthy of deeper exploration. In the 2010 census, Connecticut’s population was roughly 10% African American and 14% of Latino origin. In this survey, 2.7% of the responses were from African Americans and 3.3% were from people identifying as Hispanic. To ensure that the interpretations of the survey were truly representative, the RPT looked at the survey data through this lens. What follows is a side-by-side representative sample in which Caucasian responses were compared to those of their non-white peers to highlight any areas where perspectives were dramatically different based on race. Throughout the survey, there were 10 areas where a statistically significant difference was present. Of those, more than half can be directly associated with some measure or topic related to educational quality or the impact of that quality on the future of students. These issues were: preparation of students for future success, promotion of equity, the importance of staff diversity, preparation for college, improving the quality of teaching, and providing assistance for struggling schools. It is safe to say that non-Caucasian respondents are more concerned about educational quality and the diversity of the educational workforce than their peers. Given the history of the achievement gap in Connecticut, this should not be a surprise and should lend a sense of urgency to the policy and advocacy recommendations suggested in the Systemic Needs section of this report.

What are the most important purposes of preK-12 public education in Connecticut?	Overall %	Non-White %
Prepare every student for future economic success	57.8	79.0
Ensure that students have basic academic skills	53.5	58.5
Create global citizens	39.6	46.3
Connect students to their peers and community	30.0	32.9
Support/Develop Connecticut’s future workforce	22.8	31.1
Promote Equity	14.2	26.7
Support our democratic society	12.8	12.9
Identify Opportunity	12.5	23.0
Other	8.3	7.4

What are the most important skills current preK-12 students should learn before graduating?	Overall %	Non-White %
Problem Solving	62.0	70.4
Communication Skills	57.2	69.7
Basic Academic Skills	36.5	40.3
Creativity/Innovation	23.4	31.3
Employability Skills	22.7	28.7
Use of Technology/Media	21.5	37.3
Financial Literacy Skills	19.5	29.4
Social and cross-cultural skills	18.2	34.3
Global Citizenship	11.7	18.8
Civics Skills	8.7	12.7
Foreign Language	6.2	18.5
Other	2.9	3.2

What do you value most in a preK-12 public school?	Overall %	Non-White %
Quality of teaching	49.7	56.0
High expectations for all students	43.9	53.9
Challenging academic program	35.9	40.0
Social and emotional supports for students	29.7	35.0
Joyful learning experience	27.9	32.6
Caring environment	25.3	27.1
Physical safety	17.4	19.0
Diversity of students and staff	10.3	37.0
Welcoming to parents and the community	10.2	21.8
Quality of Facilities	10.0	18.3
Extra-curricular options	9.0	16.2
Other	2.6	1.9

What improvement priorities would you recommend for Connecticut's current preK-12 school system?	Overall %	Non-White %
Help all students achieve their academic potential	52.2	57.7
Promote student creativity and self-motivation	44.0	49.7
Ensuring that struggling schools get the help they need	32.6	48.7
Improve students' basic academic skills	28.8	26.6
Increase academic rigor and raise expectations	21.5	33.5
Improve the quality of teaching	17.8	35.8
Improving the quality of classroom materials	16.3	27.0
Greater access to fine-arts	16.3	15.2
More extra-curricular activities	8.5	19.9
Longer School Day	6.9	8.5

What priorities will best ensure that preK-12 schools meet future student and state needs?	Overall %	Non-White %
Training and supporting quality teachers	42.0	47.9
Early childhood education	33.2	39.6
Equitable Funding and Resources	30.1	35.6
Technology and digital literacy	29.5	34.5
Career readiness and employability	29.3	34.0
Community involvement and partnerships	23.7	33.1
Innovation and entrepreneurship	15.6	22.5
Training and supporting quality principals	14.8	23.1
College awareness	13.0	29.4
Global citizenship	10.6	12.5
Foreign language instruction	8.9	19.7
Other	6.3	2.3

Preliminary Focus Group Analysis – Most Identifiable Response Trends

#	Representative Comment	% of Responses
1	College and career readiness defined as one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Communication</i> • <i>Writing skills</i> • <i>Creativity</i> • <i>Problem Solving/Critical Thinking</i> • <i>Entrepreneurship</i> • <i>Digital and Information Fluency</i> • <i>Vocational skills</i> 	89.2
2	A wide range of stakeholders should have input to goals and expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This should not be linked to unfunded mandates from the state</i> • <i>Teachers should have greater say in this process</i> 	75.2
3	Most groups expressed concerns that individual teachers did not have a sufficient voice in educational policies.	68.2
4	Suggested strategies to develop a more diverse teaching force included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Loan forgiveness programs</i> • <i>Scholarships</i> • <i>Out-of-state teacher certification reciprocity</i> • <i>Teacher mentoring programs</i> • <i>College credit incentives</i> • <i>Higher starting salaries</i> 	41.2
5	Means of measuring student growth should be individualized. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>There should be less emphasis on standardized testing.</i> • <i>Growth should be measured beyond academics.</i> 	35.6
6	The achievement gap is closely related to the economic gap between communities	34.0

7	Respondents agreed that students may respond at a higher level with teachers and administrators who were more like them culturally and ethnically. The quality of the educator was ultimately the most important factor	32.1
8	There needs to be greater emphasis on pre-K development	24.1
9	The role of education in developing citizenship is the responsibility of the community as a whole, and not just the schools	23.4
10	Students in economically challenged communities need greater access to diverse learning experiences	23.2
11	Collaboration with peers was often mentioned as the best professional development tool.	21.1
12	The state needs to have a long range plan that it adheres to. Many groups expressed frustration with the large number of initiatives forced upon them by the state	15.1
13	<p>Changes in the ECS formula responses were varied across the board. The most informed responses suggested that while the formula could be modified slightly, it currently does an acceptable job at providing the students in the most need with the most resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Urban and rural groups believed that the state-wide distribution of funding between districts is out-of-balance</i> 	15.0

Common Response/Trend Analysis Crosswalk

With all of the data organized and prioritized by collection tools, the RPT met to compare all of the responses for the purpose of identifying common threads and trends that could be used to inform policy decision making for the Connecticut State Department of Education and the State Board of Education. With the goal of identifying those items that represent the most critical core statements represented in the data, the RPT set response thresholds for each data collection tool based on the number of responses to draw from and the type of question that was asked. These ranged from 25% response mark for the pre-set questions in the online survey to a frequency analysis based on a sample percentage of the focus group data set. The group then mapped each response area to a topically aligned item from the other data collection tool. Finally, the appropriate external data target identified by the State Board of Education was then associated with each of these items. This process created the following topic grid. The areas shaded with a blue background represent those concerns that surfaced in every phase of the data collection and met the response thresholds for the data category. Each of topics will be explored in more depth in the next section.

Survey <i>(25%)</i>	Open Ended <i>(10%)</i>	Focus Group <i>(Response Frequency)</i>	External Data*
Prepare for future economic success		Defined college and career readiness	DOL Reports, WIBs, COGs, High School Graduation rates
Acquisition of basic academic skills	Basic life skills	Balanced measures of student growth Defined college and career readiness	State testing, SAT, ACT, PISA
Skills for life learning and work beyond school – problem solving, communication, creativity, digital literacy	Social skills Computer/technology skills	Balanced measures of student growth Defined college and career readiness	Parts of PISA Assessment
Dispositions for life learning and work beyond school – self-regulation, motivation, persistence	Social skills	Balanced measures of student growth Defined college and career readiness	Gallup? National Student Clearinghouse (Persistence Statistics)
Global Citizenship	Basic life skills	Balanced measures of student growth Defined college and career readiness	

Connect students to community			SSP
Quality of teaching		Balanced measures of student growth Defined college and career readiness Peer collaboration	Statewide teacher evaluation data Certification/Highly Qualified
High expectations for all students within a challenging academic program	All individuals needs met	Achievement gap related to economic gap Balanced measures of student growth Defined college and career readiness	Achievement Gap Data (state assessments) AP data, High School Graduation rates
Social and emotional support for all students	All individuals needs met	Balanced measures of student growth Defined college and career readiness	Chronic Absentee, Discipline, Bullying Reports
Joyful/caring/safe learning experiences and environment		Balanced measures of student growth Defined college and career readiness	Chronic Absentee, Discipline, Bullying Reports
Training and supporting quality teachers		Peer collaboration	Statewide teacher evaluation data Praxis, Higher Ed reports, Data from the Educator Equity Plan
Early childhood education		Greater emphasis on funding Pre-K development	Pre-K enrollment – district participation – full day K participation
Equitable funding and resources	Equal opportunity and access to resources	Achievement gap related to economic gap ECS formula	Per Pupil Spending State Expenditure Reports and ECS
Ensuring struggling schools get the help they need	Equal opportunity and access to resources	Greater access to diverse learning experiences	Commissioners Network and Alliance Districts funding Statewide reports on housing, poverty, crime, health, employment and their alignment with those communities with struggling schools

Generally positive view of public education			Gallup
	Collaboration between parents and teachers		
	Include parents in decision making	Wide range of stakeholder involvement	
	Question 19		
		Teacher voice in the improvement process and educational policy development	
		Importance of a diverse workforce and suggested strategies	CSDE Equity Plan
		Have a strong, clear state plan – committed to over the long-term (allows for local control and appropriate mandate relief)	

Summary Findings: Introductory Narrative

The most striking result of the data analysis is that the responses clearly show that “equity” for Connecticut educational constituents is defined as BOTH equal opportunity AND outcomes for all students regardless of background or economic circumstances. Most participants recognize that students who come from underserved areas are at a significant disadvantage when compared to their affluent peers and there is wide support in the field, in theory and with conditions, for strategies that are designed to equalize these gaps. For “excellence,” the consensus reflects a desire to see a well-rounded view of student competence that goes beyond just the topics that have been the focus of standardized testing. In discussions around definitions of excellence, there was a consensus on a variety of skills, attributes

and dispositions that constituents believe are required for success in life, learning and work. A majority of participants believe some of these elements have been unrepresented by accountability policies in the past. These data trends coalesce into three significant areas of convergence (those represented by the blue highlights in the crosswalk) which are described in the next section of the plan. They are;

- 1. The desire to define excellence for students as high expectations for a wide range of skills and attributes, not just those that have been traditionally tested;***
- 2. The critical need for all students to be challenged by a great teacher capable of inspiring them with differentiated instructional strategies that meet individual needs, and all teachers to be supported by exceptional administrators; and***
- 3. The equally critical need for schools and school systems to have the resources and infrastructure they need to support the foundations of Connecticut's educational promise to its children.***

All three of these goals are framed for action in the primary planning document. Beyond these three areas of consensus and focus, there were a few vexing oppositional forces that emerged from the data, providing insight into how many respondents felt that the balance and equilibrium they believe is required for them to be most productive has been lacking in recent years. For example, the need for time to cover an ever growing body of subject area knowledge competes for the time required for the most valued type of deep, rigorous and personalized learning. There is a similar tug between a desire for keeping traditional content in the curriculum and the emerging understanding of the time needed to develop the foundational skills required for success in a digital age.

Additionally, there is the challenge of finding a balance between reliable testing measures and the value of developmental feedback for important skills and dispositions that are difficult to assess with a similar degree of statistical certainty. While there are solid local efforts in some communities to bring this type of information to students and their families, there is no state-wide process to do so and this was noted by many as a gap in the system. It is important to note that work on this concern is already underway as the new model for

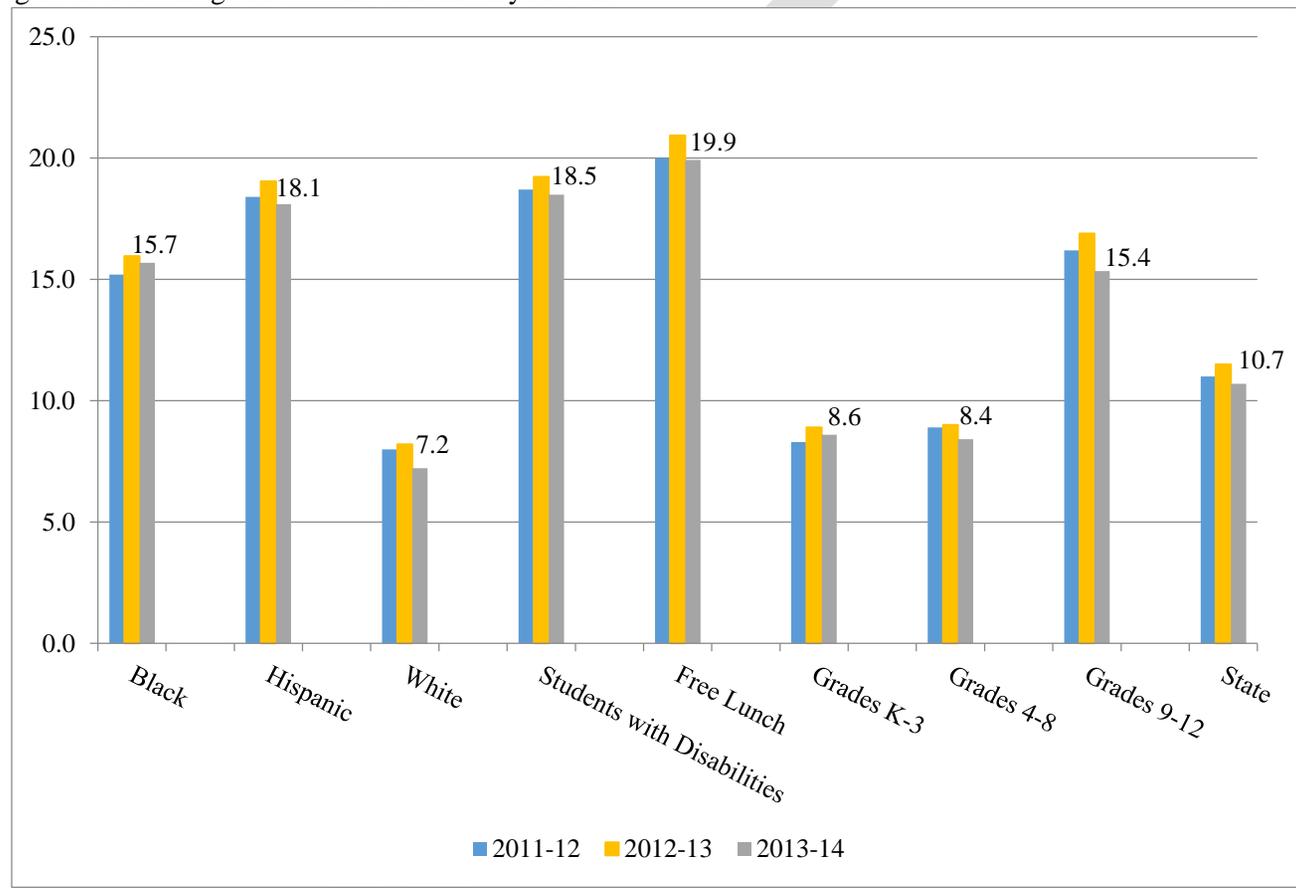
accountability (the SPI – School Performance Index) under development by the State Department of Education will expand the indicators that represent success and shift the focus to a growth oriented model.

These and other seemingly hard to reconcile differences weighed heavy on the minds of many respondents. Members of the RPT believe this is a byproduct of a change fatigue caused by the weight of the significant reforms that have been implemented over the last few years. This leads us to feel that an effort to clearly define – or to support district definitions of – a broad vision of student success and undertaking a sustained alignment of systems to ensure that all children obtain them is the main theme represented in the data. If it could be done, this would create a sense of constancy of this purpose for the field. This conclusion is borne out by the response patterns highlighted in the cross-walk grid. The data shows that respondents have an overwhelming desire for the state educational system to define a focus on a comprehensive vision of student success and then to commit to consistently supporting it over time. More extensive data analysis that could be done (comparing demographic groups’ answers on similar questions for example) with the collected data to provide insight into this and other matters as well if the State Board wants to pursue further insights into the responses.

Key External Data Findings:

Chronic Absenteeism

Figure 1. Percentage of Students Chronically Absent

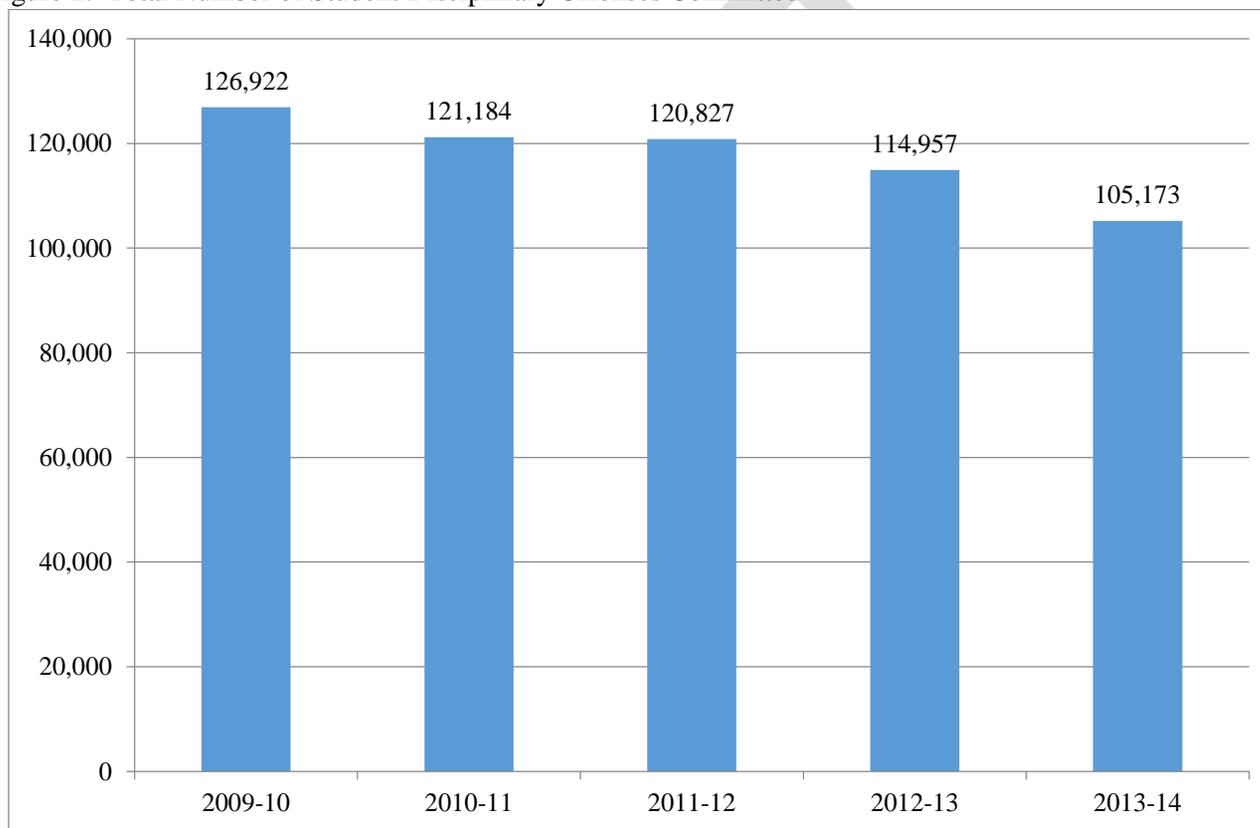


Students are considered chronically absent if they miss 10 percent or more of the days enrolled in school, for any reason. The three year trend data presented in Figure 1 indicate that the 2012-13 school year had a slight increase in the percent of chronically absent students, both statewide, and

across all subgroups. Students who were eligible for free or reduced price lunch have had the highest rates, followed by students with disabilities, and Hispanic students. By grade level, students at the secondary level have the highest chronic absenteeism rate.

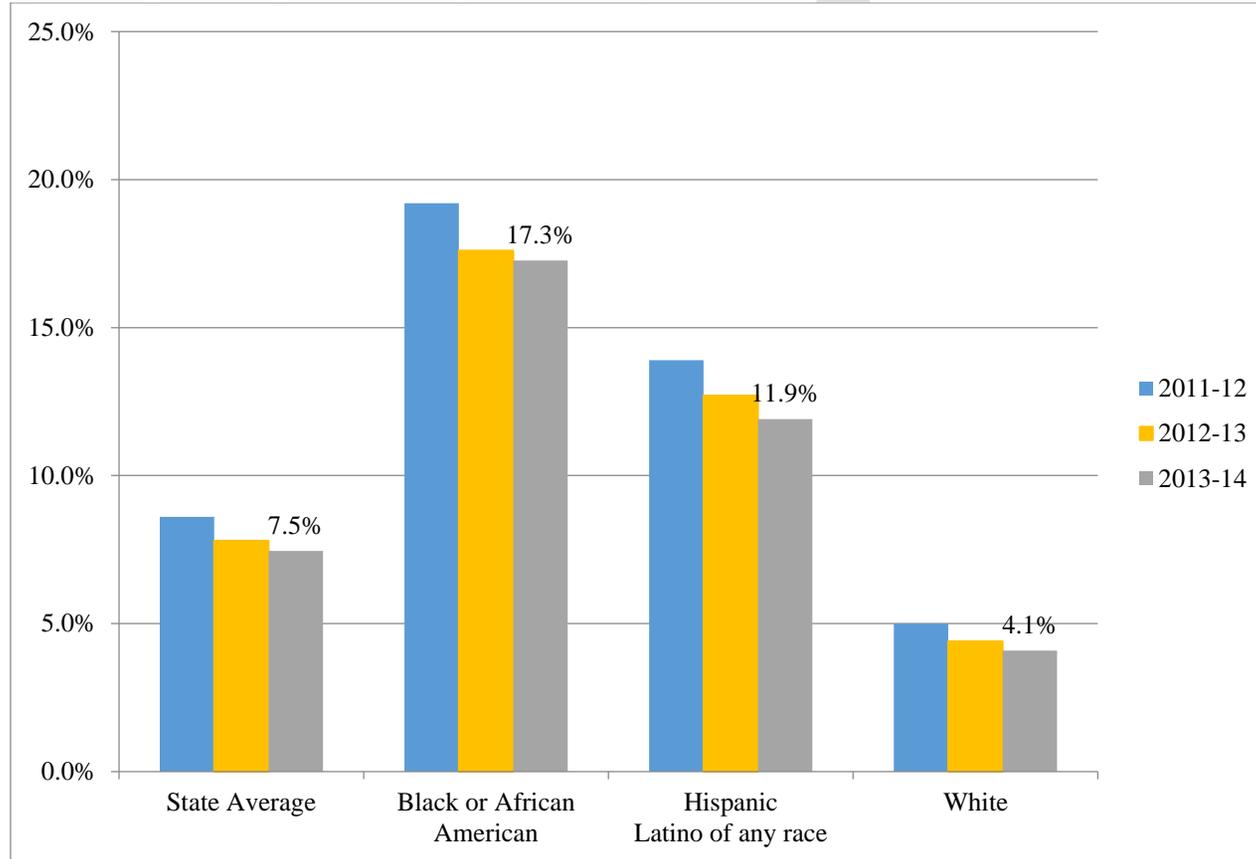
Student Disciplinary Offenses

Figure 2. Total Number of Student Disciplinary Offenses Committed



Over the last five years, the number of state-reportable disciplinary offenses has steadily declined. From 2009 to 2013, there has been a decrease in the number of offenses by 17.1 percent.

Figure 3. Suspension/Expulsion Rates by Race/Ethnicity



As could be expected, given the overall reduction in the number of disciplinary offenses, the suspension/expulsion rate of students has also declined over the last three years. However, black and Hispanic students continue to face suspensions and expulsions at rates higher than their white peers, and the state overall.

Achievement Gap – State Assessments

Figure 4. Achievement Gap – State Assessments - Math

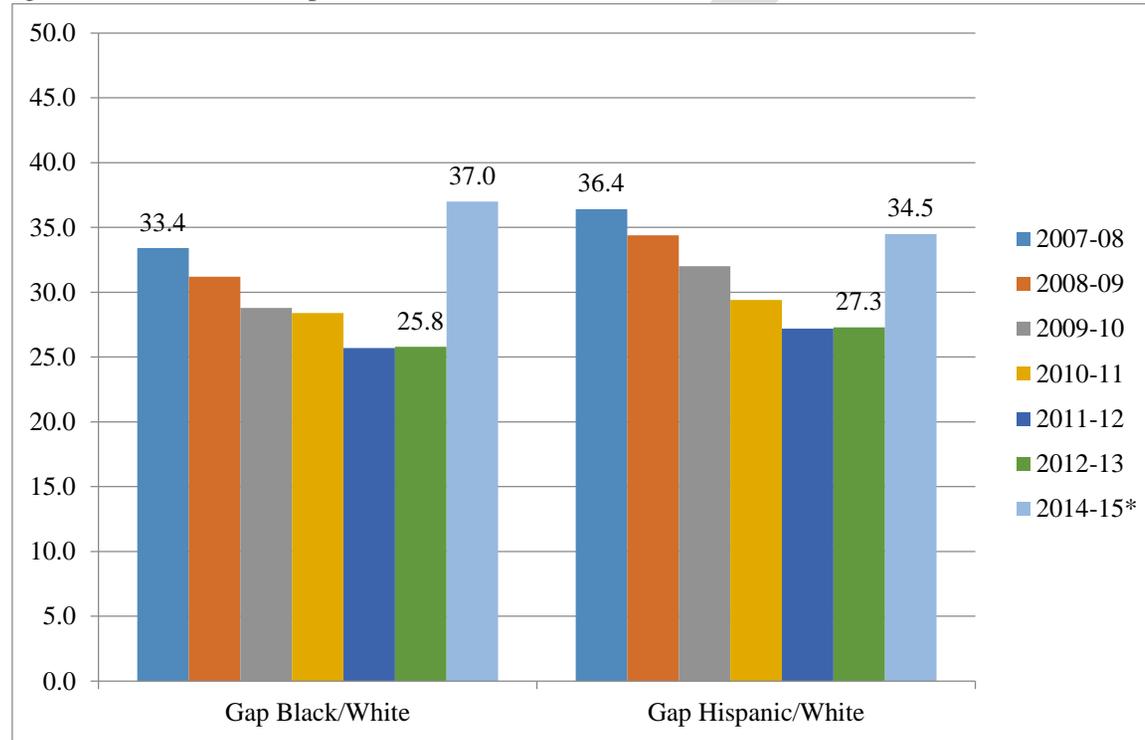


Figure 5 shows the achievement gap between black and white, and between Hispanic and white subgroups for the mathematics Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT, grades 3-8). The 2014-15 data represent data from the 2015 administration of the Smarter Balanced Assessment. NOTE: *While the CMT and Smarter Balanced Assessment do not measure the same standards, however, the achievement gap data are presented within the context of the historical nature of the gap in Connecticut.* From 2007 to 2010 there was a steady decline in both achievement gaps, however, the gaps began to increase in 2011 and 2012. With the new Smarter Balanced Assessment, the gap in mathematics is greater compared to previous years when the CMT was the state standardized assessment.

Figure 5. Achievement Gap – State Assessments – Reading/English Language Arts

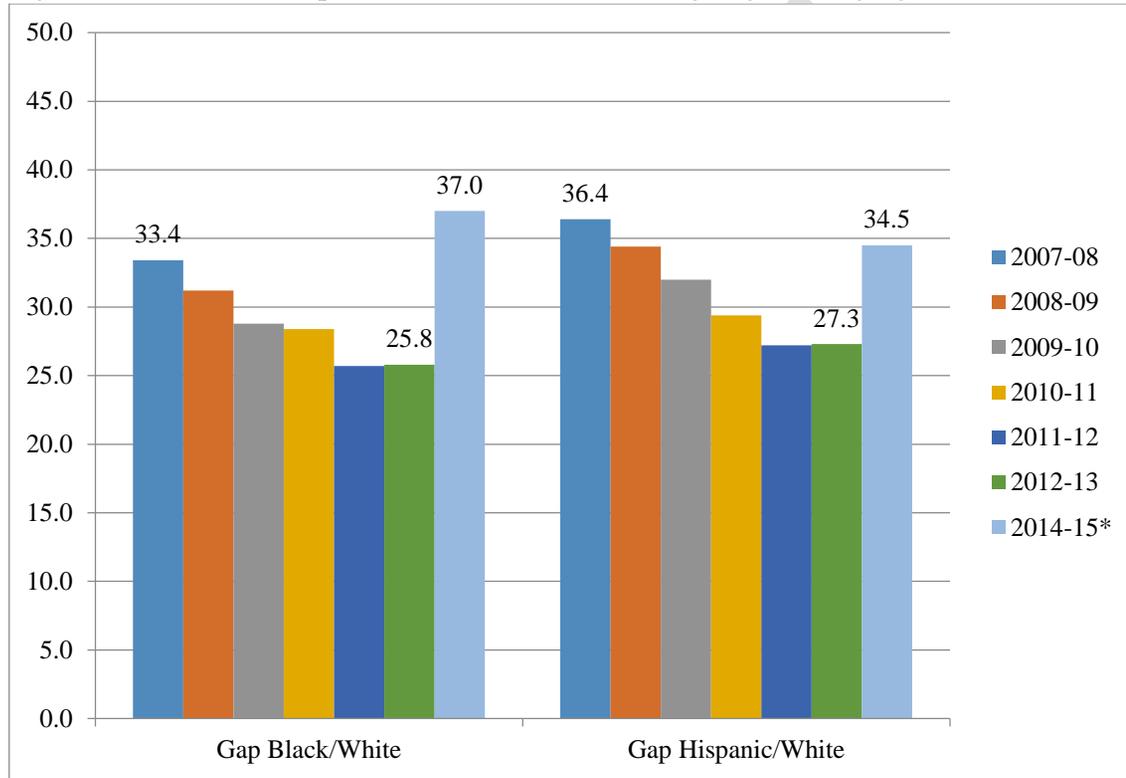
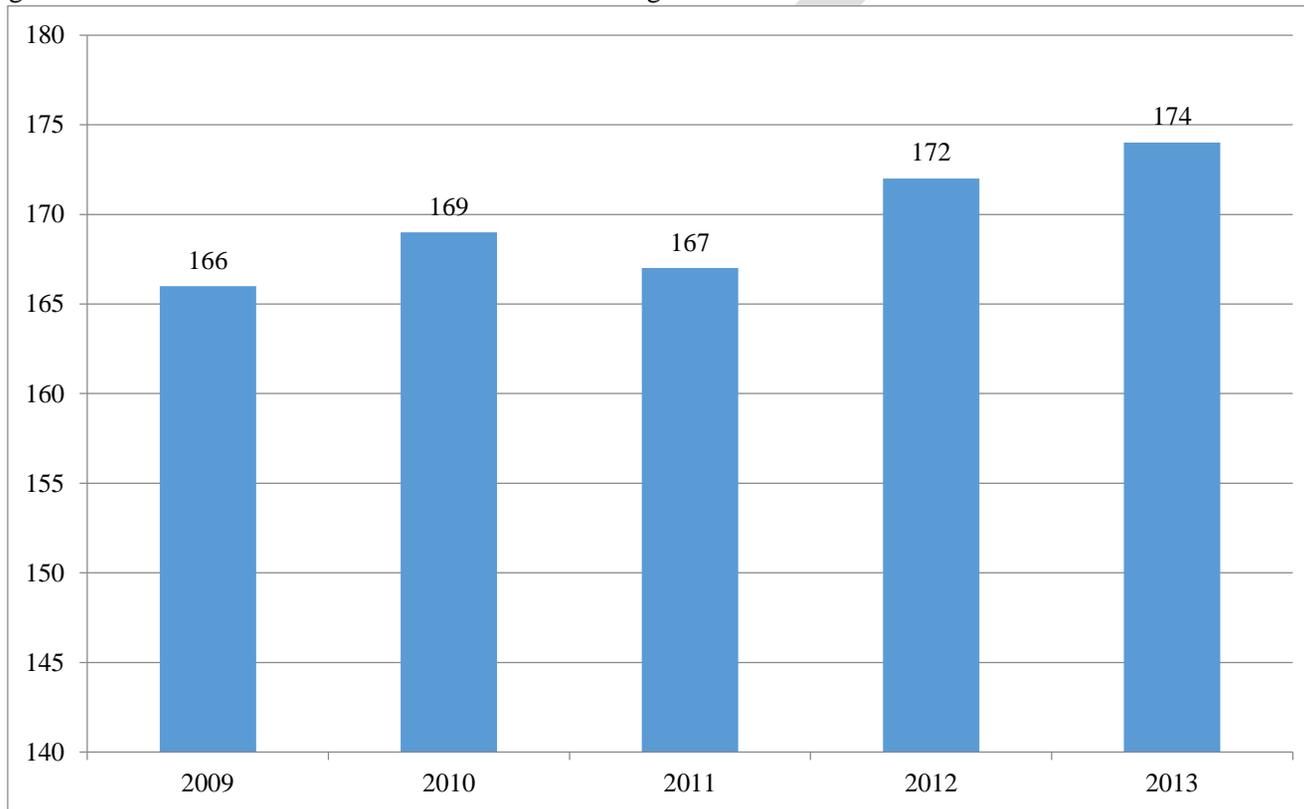


Figure 6 shows the achievement gap between black and white, and between Hispanic and white subgroups for the reading Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT, grades 3-8). The 2014-15 data represent data from the 2015 administration of the Smarter Balanced Assessment. NOTE: *While the CMT and Smarter Balanced Assessment do not measure the same standards, however, the achievement gap data are presented within the context of the historical nature of the gap in Connecticut.* From 2007 to 2010 there was a steady decline in both achievement gaps. The achievement gap continued to decrease in 2011, and stabilized with the 2012 CMT administration. Similar to the mathematics achievement gap data, with the new Smarter Balanced Assessment, the gap in reading/English language arts is greater compared to previous years when the CMT was the state standardized assessment.

Advanced Placement Course Availability

Figure 6. Number of Connecticut Public Schools Offering Advanced Placement Courses



Most recent publically available data indicate that the majority of public secondary school in Connecticut provide access to Advance Placement courses for their students.

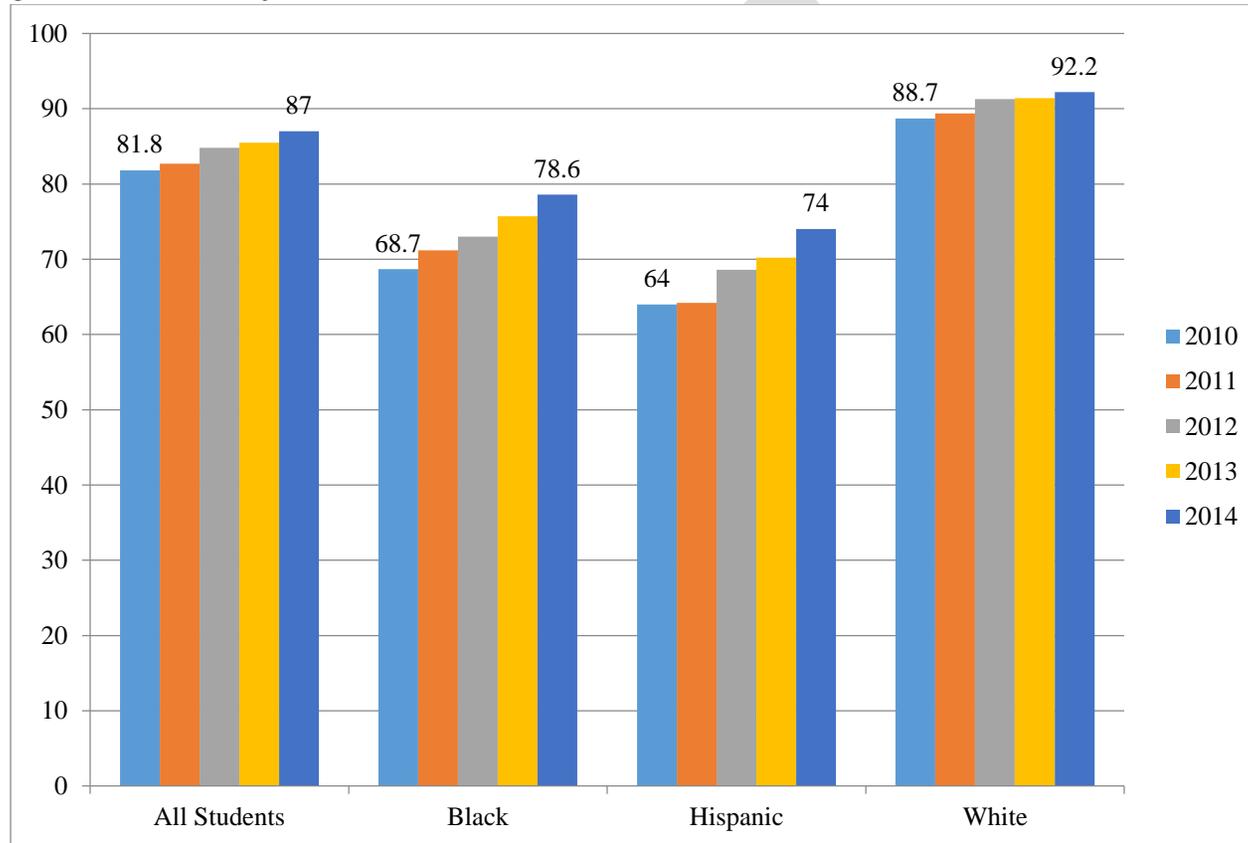
Recommendation for additional data exploration:

- Number of Advanced Placement courses offered by school

- Advanced Placement course enrollment by race/ethnicity and economic status

Graduation Rates

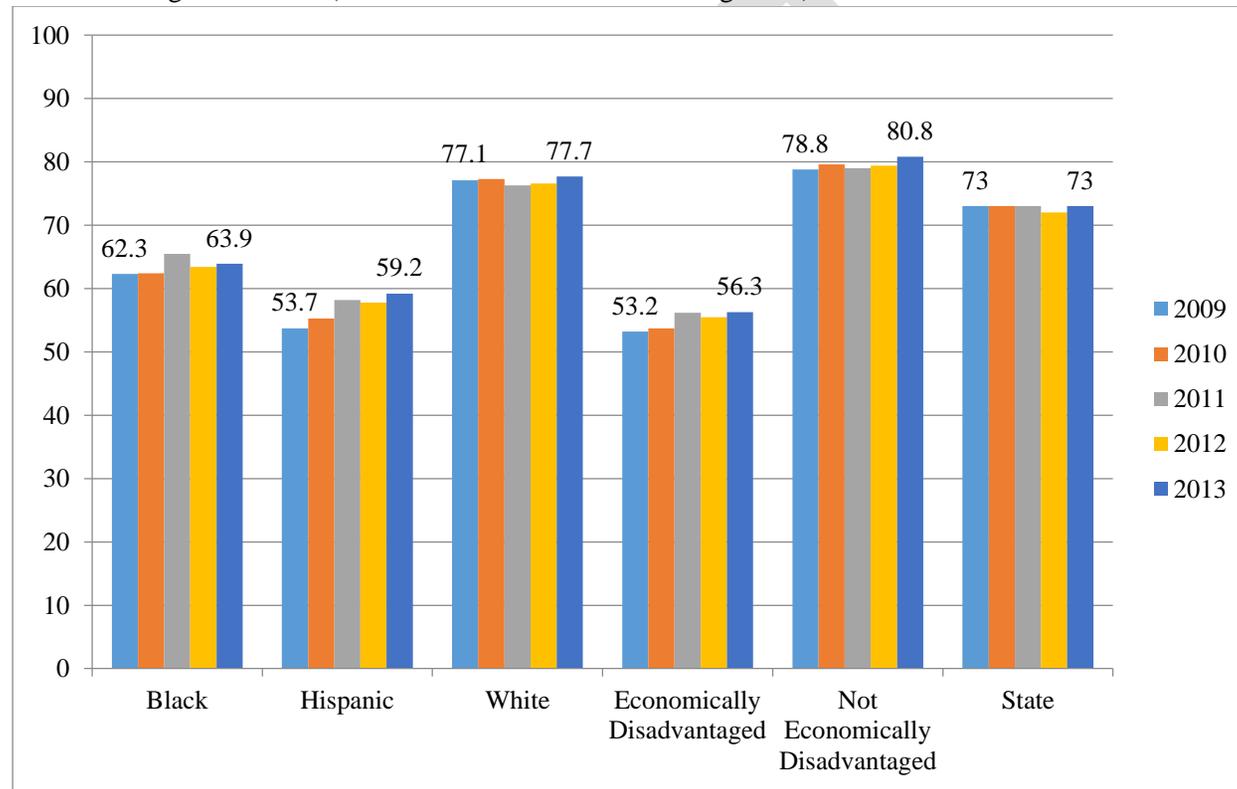
Figure 7. Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rates



From the class of 2010 to the class of 2014 the statewide graduation rate increased from 81.8 to 87.0. Graduation rates increased for the major racial/ethnic groups as well, however black and Hispanic students continue to graduate at rates lower than their white peers.

Postsecondary Education Enrollment

Figure 8. Percentage of High School Graduates Entering Postsecondary Education at Any Point during the Year Following Graduation (source: National Student Clearinghouse)



The percentage of high school seniors enrolling in postsecondary education (2 or 4 year program) has remained stable from 2009 to 2013. Hispanic students, and economically disadvantaged students, have had the largest increase since 2009 in the percentages enrolling in postsecondary education. There remains a gap in college enrollment between black and white, and Hispanic and white students.

Employability of College Graduates

The Connecticut Department of Labor (DOL) lists the following 10 occupations, which require at least a bachelor's degree, as among the fastest growing careers in Connecticut

- Interpreters and Translators
- Atmospheric and Space Scientists
- Meeting, Convention, and Event Planners
- Market Research Analysts
- Petroleum Engineers
- Biomedical Engineers
- Personal Financial Advisors
- Athletic Trainers
- Software Developer
- Computer Systems Analysts

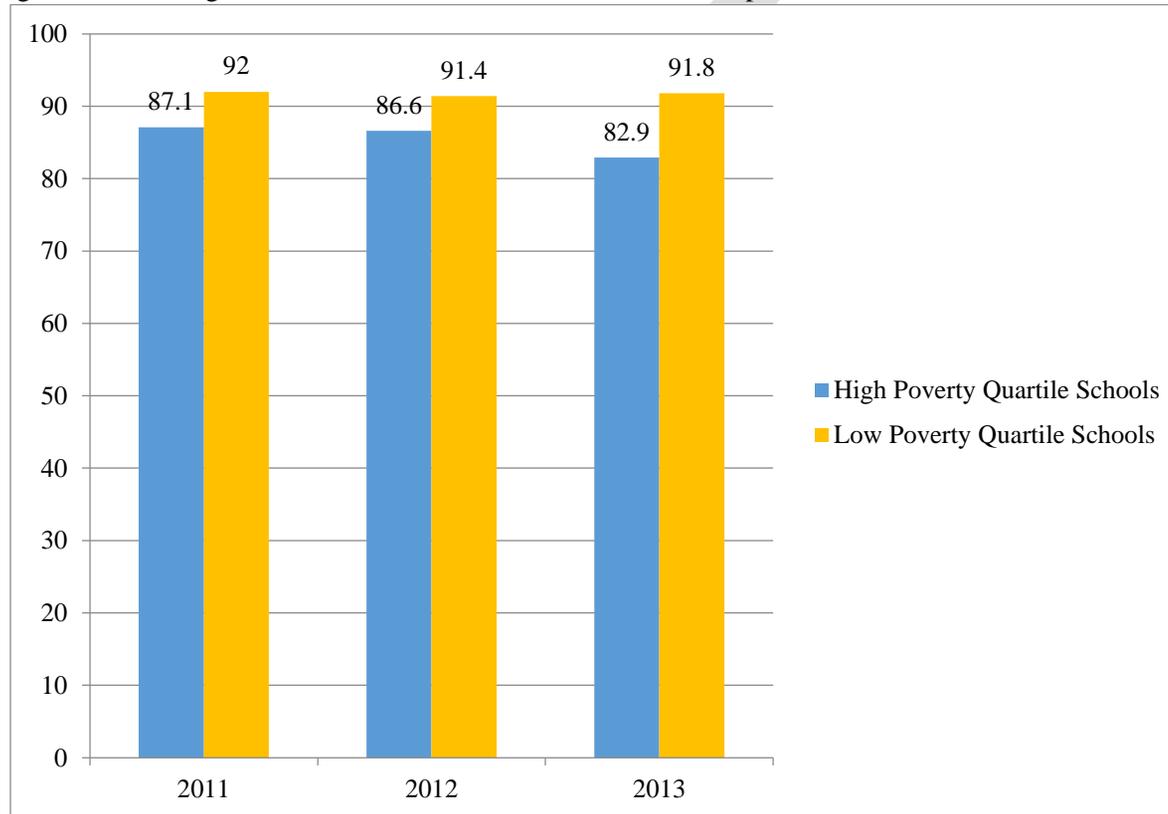
The DOL also provides the requisite skills necessary for success. ALL occupations listed above require communication, collaboration, and critical thinking skills, all of which comprise the 21st Century Skills deemed necessary for future success of our students. In addition, all but two of the occupations require depth of knowledge in one or more of the STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) content areas.

Recommendation for additional data exploration:

- Non-academic achievement data regarding student attainment of the 21st Century Skills

Teacher Qualifications

Figure 9. Percentage of Teachers with Two or More Years of Experience



Students in high poverty quartile schools are more likely to be taught by teachers with less than two years' experience. From 2011 to 2013, the percentage of teachers with two or more years' experience has been *decreasing* in the high-poverty quartile schools, conversely, the percentage of teachers with under two years' experience is *increasing* in these schools.

SAT

Figure 10. SAT Average Scale Score

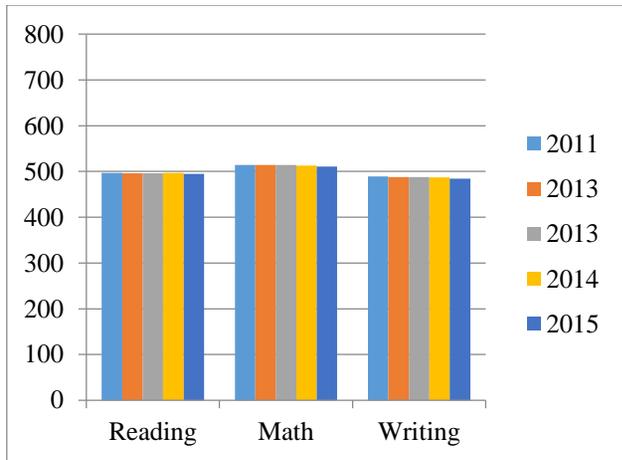
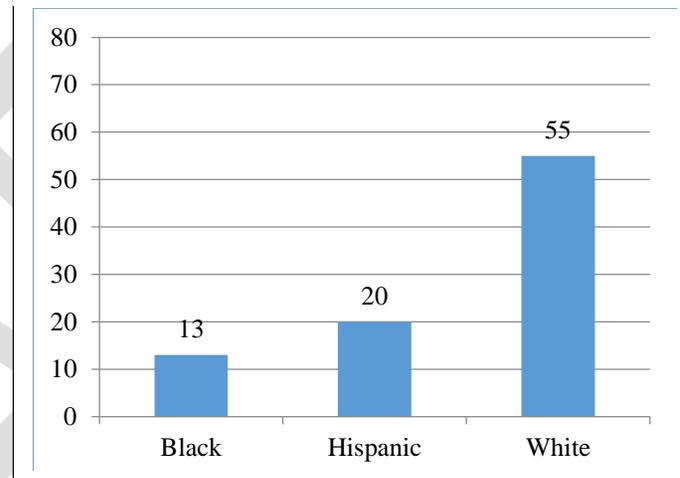


Figure 11. Percentage of SAT Test Takers Reaching or Exceeding the College Ready Benchmark

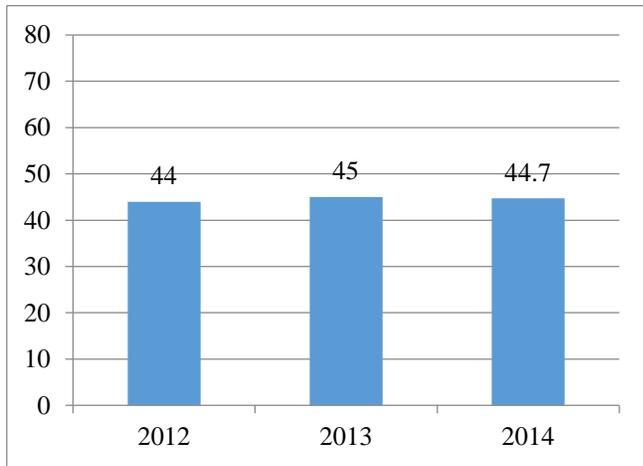
Figure 12. Percentage of SAT Test Takers Reaching/Exceeding the College Ready Benchmark, by race/Ethnicity



A common metric reported by the College Board for the SAT is the average scale score (see Figure 10). The average scale score for college bound senior has remained virtually unchanged since 2011 across all content areas.

According to the College Board, a composite score of 1550 is indicative of college and career readiness. Figure 11 shows the percentage of high school seniors who were at/above this benchmark. As with the scale scores this number has remained stable.

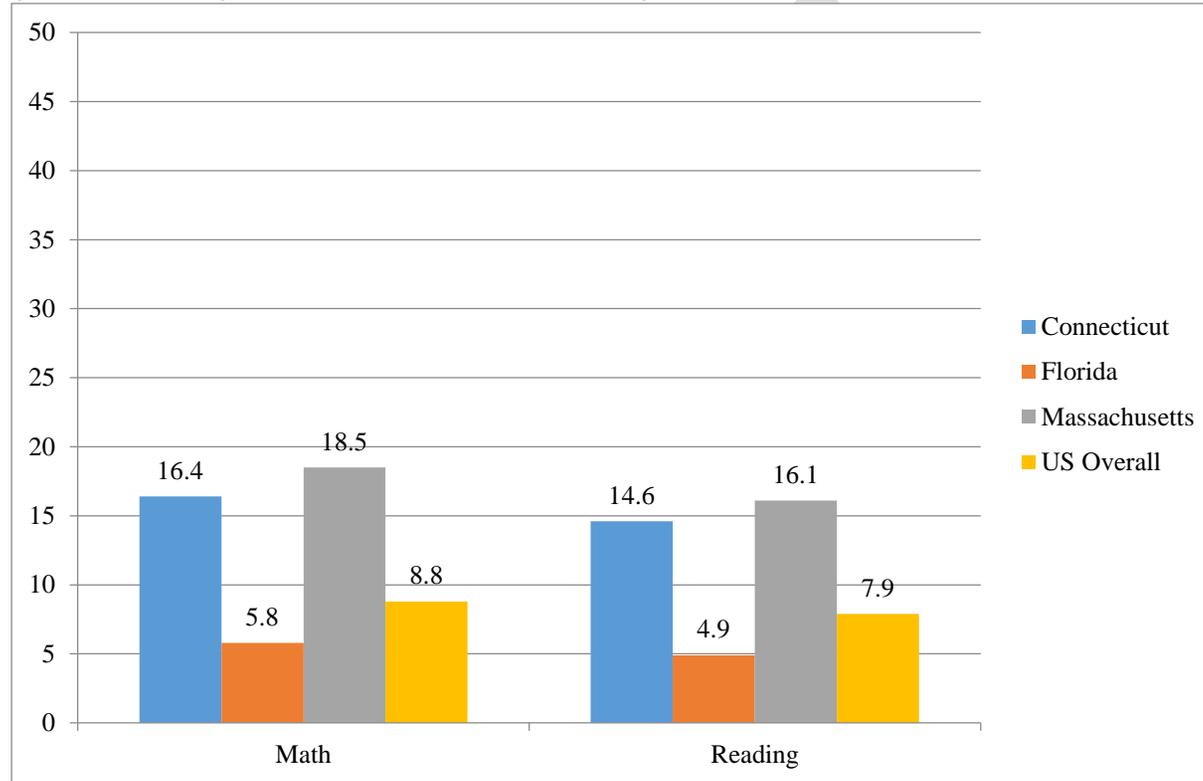
Figure 12 shows the percentage of high school seniors reaching or exceeding the college ready benchmark, by race. The achievement gap between Hispanic and white students was 35 percentage points, and between black and white students 42 percentage points.



DRAFT

Program for International Student Assessment (PISA)

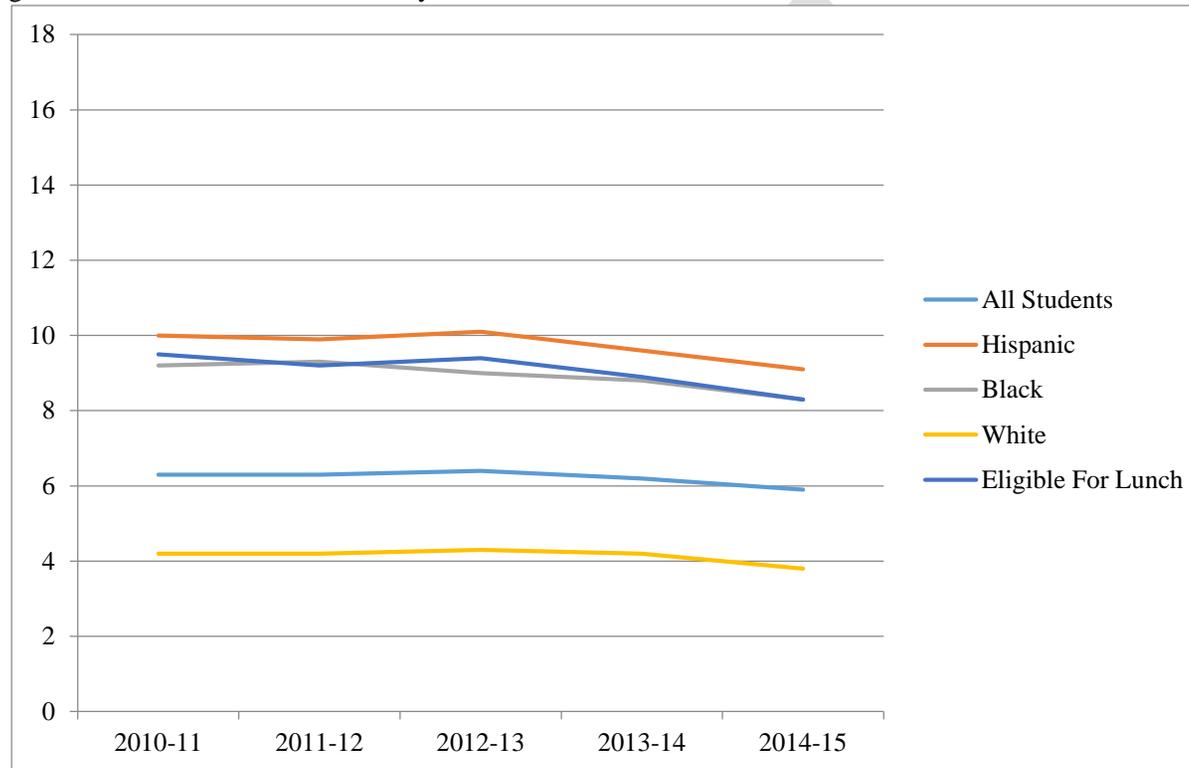
Figure 13. Percentage of 15 Year Old Students Reaching Level 5 or Greater in 2012



The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) is an international assessment, coordinated by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) that measures 15-year-old students' reading, mathematics, and science literacy every three years. PISA also includes measures of general or cross-curricular competencies, such as collaborative problem solving. PISA emphasizes functional skills that students have acquired as they near the end of compulsory schooling. Connecticut was one of only three states in the United States to have schools participated in PISA. Connecticut performed just below Massachusetts, and well above levels in Florida. Problem-solving skill data were not readily available at the state-level.

Student Mobility

Figure 14. Statewide Student Mobility Rates



Student mobility rate is calculated by taking the number of students who transferred INTO or OUT of a Connecticut public school divided by the total number of enrolled public school students anytime. The mobility rate provides an indication of the degree to which a student population “churns” throughout the school year. Mobility is an important indicator to analyze because when a student changes schools, there is an immediate disruption of the student’s learning (Engce, 2006; Kerbow, Azcoitia & Buell, 2003). Student mobility can significantly impact major areas of a student’s life, including academic achievement, the ability to interact positively with other students, and the likelihood of being involved in disciplinary incidents (ODE, 1998). The data in Figure XX indicate that Hispanic, black, and economically disadvantaged students experience mobility at higher rates compared to their peers.

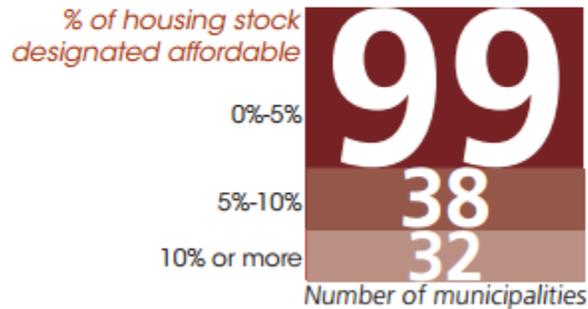
Housing and Poverty

As noted in the page before, student mobility has the potential to impact a student's academic achievement. Rumberger (1999) classified student moves and the associated school changes into two categories: reactive and strategic. A reactive move is likely associated with a significant family change such as divorce, need for affordable housing, or job loss. A strategic change is likely associated with families in search of better education and opportunities for their children.

The following data snapshot is from the Partnership for Strong Communities, and suggests that more can be done to increase affordable housing options for our neediest families.

Affordable Units

Just 32 of the state's municipalities have 10% or more of their housing stock designated as affordable under the Affordable Housing Appeals List.



Source: 2012 Affordable Housing Appeals List

CSDE Strategic Planning Survey

CSDE Strategic Planning Survey

Introduction

The Connecticut State Board of Education has embarked on a planning process designed to guide policy and practice improvements for the Department of Education on behalf of all of Connecticut's children over the next five years. Focused on the goals of equity and excellence of education for all, a critical goal of the effort is to gather feedback from citizens to help inform decision making. As a stakeholder invested in the quality of Connecticut's public education system you are invited to participate in this survey and share your thinking on these vital topics. The following questions should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. All responses will be treated anonymously and all results will be aggregated and analyzed for large group reporting. Although you will not be identified, by completing the survey, you agree to allow the State Board of Education to use or publish your contributions should they decide to do so.

Demographics

1. What is your town of residence? (Please make your selection from the drop-down menu.)
2. What is your gender? (Please make your selection from the drop-down menu.)
3. What is your age? (Please make your selection from the drop-down menu.)
4. What is your ethnicity? (Please make your selection from the drop-down menu.)
5. How did you learn about this survey? (Please make your selection from the drop-down menu.)
6. What is your highest level of education? (Please make your selection from the drop-down menu.)
7. What is your role? (Please choose the answer that most accurately describes you.)

Survey Questions

CSDE Strategic Planning Survey

Please respond to the following questions. There are no right or wrong answers.

8. What are the most important purposes of preK-12 public education in Connecticut? (Please select up to three responses.)

<input type="checkbox"/> Prepare every student for future economic success	<input type="checkbox"/> Connect students to their peers and community
<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure students have basic academic skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Support our democratic society
<input type="checkbox"/> Support/develop Connecticut's future workforce	<input type="checkbox"/> Promote equity
<input type="checkbox"/> Create global citizens	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify opportunity
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) <input type="text"/>	

9. What are the most important skills current preK-12 students should learn before graduating? (Please select up to three responses.)

<input type="checkbox"/> Communication skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Financial literacy skills
<input type="checkbox"/> Problem solving	<input type="checkbox"/> Social and cross-cultural skills
<input type="checkbox"/> Basic academic skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Global citizenship
<input type="checkbox"/> Creativity / Innovation	<input type="checkbox"/> Civics skills
<input type="checkbox"/> Use of technology and media	<input type="checkbox"/> Foreign language(s)
<input type="checkbox"/> Employability skills	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) <input type="text"/>	

10. How important is the quality of preK-12 public schools to Connecticut's success as a state?

1 - Unimportant
 2 - Somewhat important
 3 - Important
 4 - Very important

CSDE Strategic Planning Survey

11. What do you value most in a preK-12 public school? (Please select up to 3 responses.)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Welcoming to parents and the community | <input type="checkbox"/> High expectations for all students |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diversity of students and staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Caring environment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extra-curricular options | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical safety |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Quality of facilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Challenging academic program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Joyful learning experience | <input type="checkbox"/> Quality of teaching |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social and emotional supports for students | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | |

CSDE Strategic Planning Survey

12. What improvement priorities would you recommend for Connecticut's current preK-12 school system? (Please select up to three responses.)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Longer school day / year | <input type="checkbox"/> Help all students achieve their academic potential |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More extra-curricular activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Improve the quality of teaching |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greater access to fine arts | <input type="checkbox"/> Increase academic rigor and raise expectations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ensuring that struggling schools get the help they need | <input type="checkbox"/> Improve students' basic academic skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improve the quality of classroom materials | <input type="checkbox"/> Promote student creativity and self-motivation |

Other (please specify)

13. What priorities will best ensure that preK-12 schools meet future student and state needs? (Please select up to three responses.)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Foreign language instruction | <input type="checkbox"/> Early childhood education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Training and supporting quality principals | <input type="checkbox"/> Technology and digital literacy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Global citizenship | <input type="checkbox"/> Career readiness and employability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> College awareness | <input type="checkbox"/> Training and supporting quality teachers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Innovation and entrepreneurship | <input type="checkbox"/> Equitable funding and resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community involvement and partnerships | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | |

14. What is your overall opinion of preK-12 public schools in Connecticut? (Please select one response.)

- Negative: There are serious problems
- Mixed negative: They have more weaknesses than strengths
- Mixed Positive: They have more strengths than weaknesses
- Positive: They have many strengths

CSDE Strategic Planning Survey

15. How often do you discuss preK-12 public education with friends / family? (Please select one response.)

- Rarely / Never
- Several times per year
- Monthly
- Weekly
- Daily

CSDE Strategic Planning Survey

16. What does "Equity in Education" mean to you?

17. What would help parents and children become more engaged at school?

18. Are there skills that Connecticut students need for the future that are not being taught today? If you answered yes, please describe the skills you believe are not being taught?

19. Are there any other topics you wish to discuss?

Appendix B: CSDE Un Estudio Estratégico de Planificación

CSDE Un Estudio Estratégico de Planificación
Introducción
<p>Por los próximos cinco años, la Junta de Educación del Estado de Connecticut se ha embarcado en un proceso de planificación diseñado para guiar las mejoras políticas y prácticas del Departamento de Educación, en nombre de todos los niños de Connecticut. Centrado en los objetivos de equidad y excelencia de educación para todos, un objetivo fundamental desta obra es recorrer opiniones de los ciudadanos para ayudar el asesoramiento decisiones que serán tomadas en el curso de este proyecto. Por ser un participante investido en la calidad del sistema de educación pública de Connecticut, usted está invitado a participar en esta encuesta compartiendo su opinión sobre estos temas vitales de educación. Se necesitará cerca de 15 minutos para completar las siguientes preguntas. Todas las respuestas serán tratadas de forma anónima y todos los resultados serán agregados y analizados de forma general sin identificación individual. Aunque usted no será identificado, al completar la encuesta, estará otorgando su consentimiento que la Junta de Educación del Estado use o publique sus contribuciones en caso de que decidan hacerlo.</p>

CSDE Un Estudio Estratégico de Planificación
<p>1. ¿Cuál es su ciudad de residencia? (Por favor, haga su selección en el menú desplegable.)</p> <input type="text"/>
<p>2. ¿Es usted de sexo masculino o femenino? (Por favor, haga su selección en el menú desplegable.)</p> <input type="text"/>
<p>3. ¿Cuál edad tiene? (Por favor, haga su selección en el menú desplegable.)</p> <input type="text"/>
<p>4. ¿Cuál es su origen étnica? (Por favor, haga su selección en el menú desplegable.)</p> <input type="text"/>
<p>5. ¿Cómo se ha enterado acerca de esta encuesta? (Por favor, haga su selección en el menú desplegable.)</p> <input type="text"/>
<p>6. ¿Cuál es su mayor nivel de educación? (Por favor, haga su selección en el menú desplegable.)</p> <input type="text"/>
<p>7. ¿Cuál es su oficio? (Por favor, elija la respuesta que describe con mayor precisión.)</p> <input type="text"/>

CSDE Un Estudio Estratégico de Planificación

Preguntas de la encuesta

Por favor responder a las siguientes preguntas. No hay respuestas correctas o incorrectas, solamente su opinión.

8. ¿Cuáles son los propósitos más importantes de educación pública de preK-12 en Connecticut? (Por favor, seleccione hasta tres respuestas.)

- Preparar a todos los estudiantes para el futuro éxito económico
- Asegurar que los estudiantes tienen básicas habilidades académicas
- Ayudar / desarrollar la futura fuerza laboral de Connecticut
- Crear ciudadanos globalizados
- Conectar estudiantes con sus compañeros y la comunidad
- Apoyar nuestra sociedad democrática
- Promover la equidad social
- Identificar oportunidades
- Other (please specify)

CSDE Un Estudio Estratégico de Planificación

9. ¿Cuáles son las habilidades más importantes que los estudiantes actuales de preK-12 deben aprender antes de graduarse? (Por favor, seleccione hasta tres respuestas.)

- Las habilidades de comunicación
- La resolución de problemas
- Habilidades académicas básicas
- Creatividad / innovación
- El uso de tecnología y los medios de comunicación
- Habilidades de empleabilidad
- Alfabetización financiera
- Habilidades interculturales y sociales
- Ciudadanía global
- Habilidades cívica
- Aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras
- Other (please specify)

CSDE Un Estudio Estratégico de Planificación

10. ¿Cuán importante es la calidad de escuelas públicas de preK-12 para el éxito de Connecticut como un estado?

- 1 - Poco importante
- 2 - Algo importante
- 3 - Importante
- 4 - Muy importante

11. ¿Qué es que lo que más le valora en una escuela pública de preK-12? (Por favor, seleccione hasta 3 respuestas).

- La bienvenida a los padres y la comunidad
- Diversidad de estudiantes y profesionales educacionales
- Diversidad de estudiantes y profesionales educacionales
- Calidad de las instalaciones
- Una experiencia de aprendizaje encantadora
- Apoyos sociales y emocionales a los estudiantes
- Expectativas elevada para todos los estudiantes
- Un ambiente de cuidado
- La seguridad física
- Un programa académico riguroso
- Enseñanza de calidad
- Other (please specify)

CSDE Un Estudio Estratégico de Planificación

12. ¿Qué prioridades de mejora recomendaría usted para el sistema escolar actual de preK-12 de Connecticut? (Por favor, seleccione hasta tres respuestas.)

- Largo día escolar / año
- Más actividades extracurriculares
- Mayor acceso a las bellas artes
- Asegurar que escuelas necesitadas reciben la ayuda necesaria
- Mejorar la calidad de los materiales escolares
- Ayudar todos los estudiantes a alcanzar su potencial académico
- Mejorar la calidad de enseñanza
- Aumentar el rigor académico y elevar las expectativas educacionales
- Mejorar las destrezas académicas básicas de los estudiantes
- Promover la creatividad de los estudiantes y sus auto-motivaciones
- Other (please specify)

CSDE Un Estudio Estratégico de Planificación

13. ¿Qué prioridades pondrán mejor asegurarse que las escuelas de preK-12 satisfacen las futuras necesidades estudiantiles y estatales? (Por favor, seleccione hasta tres respuestas.)

- Instrucción de lengua extranjera
- Entrenamiento y soporte a directores de calidad
- Ciudadanía globalizada
- Incentivo universitario
- Innovación y iniciativa empresarial
- Participación en alianzas comunitarias
- Educación de la primera infancia
- Alfabetización tecnológica y digital
- Preparación profesional y empleabilidad
- Entrenamiento y soporte a los maestros de calidad
- Distribución equitativa de fondos y recursos escolares
- Other (please specify)

14. ¿De una forma generalizada, cuál es su opinión sobre el funcionamiento de escuelas públicas de preK-12 en Connecticut? (Por favor, seleccione una de las respuestas.)

- Negativo: Hay gravísimos problemas
- Medio negativo: Tienen más debilidades que potencialidades
- Medio positivo: Tienen más potencialidades que debilidades
- Positivo: Tienen muchos puntos fuertes

15. ¿Con qué frecuencia usted discute sobre la educación pública de preK-12 con sus amigos o su familia? (Por favor, seleccione una de las respuestas.)

- Raramente / Nunca
- Varias veces al año
- Mensualmente
- Semanalmente
- Diariamente

CSDE Un Estudio Estratégico de Planificación

16. ¿En su opinión, cuál es el significado de "Justicia Educacional"?

17. ¿Qué incentivos ayudaría padres y niños a comprometerse más con la escuela?

18. ¿Usted cree que hay habilidades que los estudiantes de Connecticut necesitan para el futuro que no están siendo enseñadas en las escuelas de hoy? Si su respuesta fue sí, por favor describa las habilidades que usted cree que no se están enseñando?

19. ¿Hay algo más que desea tratar en este cuestionario?

Appendix C: CSDE Focus Group Questions – Community Stakeholders

CSDE Long-Range Planning Focus Groups

Community Stakeholders

Goals of the Constituent Focus Group Sessions

- To gather perspectives on the vital issues of equity and excellence in Connecticut education
- To identify salient education issues and the ability of Connecticut schools to address those issues

Interviewer Instructions:

- Introduce yourself and thank the interviewee(s) for their time.
- Ensure that you have enough background information on the interviewee(s) to understand the position(s) and sector(s) of the person you are interviewing.
- For each main interview question, interviewers should probe as indicated and appropriate. Please note that the questions are intended to serve as a guide, not a script.
- Keep within the allotted time and do your best to get to each question.
- Be sure that recording equipment is positioned properly and is ready to begin recording before your subjects arrive.

I. Background

- a. Hello. My name is _____ from _____. Thank you all for speaking with me today.
- b. As you are aware, we are working with the State Department of Education to gather information on our state's educational system. This effort will help the SDE to develop a long range educational plan.
- c. We are conducting focus groups with individuals like yourselves, to understand different perspectives. We are interested in hearing your feedback on issues specific to your experiences. We greatly appreciate your comments, insights and honesty.
- d. Our focus group today will last about 90 minutes. What we learn today will help guide the next five-year strategic plan and the key themes will be incorporated in the final report. No names or organizations will be connected to anything that any one particular person may say in a discussion. Additionally, nothing sensitive that can be connected to any organization or individual will be discussed in the report. To ensure accuracy we would like your permission to record this focus group and for those recordings to be transcribed into text. These recordings will only be handled by individuals contracted by the state and will be kept secure. Is this something you are comfortable with?

II. Questions

1. Is a diverse teacher/administrator workforce necessary to close the achievement gap? Why or why not?
2. What initiatives could the state/districts implement to increase Teacher/administrator diversity?
3. Who should have input in setting learning goals and expectations?
4. What do you think “equity in education” means?
5. Do the schools in your community provide cultural experiences? What types of activities?
6. How do the schools in your community encourage your participation?
7. How do you define critical skills of college & career readiness?
8. What is the school's role in promoting active citizenship?
9. How should the support for early (<= pre-k) learning opportunities be expanded?
10. Do you believe educators have a voice in ensuring student success?
11. Are there any issues or concerns that have not been addressed that you would like to discuss?

Appendix D: CSDE Focus Group Questions – Education Leadership & State Agencies

CSDE Long-Range Planning Focus Groups Education Leadership & State Agencies

Goals of the Constituent Focus Group Sessions

- To gather perspectives on the vital issues of equity and excellence in Connecticut education
- To identify salient education issues and the ability of Connecticut schools to address those issues

Interviewer Instructions:

- Introduce yourself and thank the interviewee(s) for their time.
- Ensure that you have enough background information on the interviewee(s) to understand the position(s) and sector(s) of the person you are interviewing.
- For each main interview question, interviewers should probe as indicated and appropriate. Please note that the questions are intended to serve as a guide, not a script.
- Keep within the allotted time and do your best to get to each question.
- Be sure that recording equipment is positioned properly and is ready to begin recording before your subjects arrive.

- Please note that Question 3 is intended for Higher Ed participants only. If there are no Higher Ed participants in your audience, please skip.

I. Background

- a. Hello. My name is _____ from _____. Thank you all for speaking with me today.
- b. As you are aware, we are working with the State Department of Education to gather information on our state's educational system. This effort will help the SDE to develop a long range educational plan.
- c. We are conducting focus groups with individuals like yourselves, to understand different perspectives. We are interested in hearing your feedback on issues specific to your experiences. We greatly appreciate your comments, insights and honesty.
- d. Our focus group today will last about 90 minutes. What we learn today will help guide the next five-year strategic plan and the key themes will be incorporated in the final report. No names or organizations will be connected to anything that any one particular person may say in a discussion. Additionally, nothing sensitive that can be connected to any organization or individual will be discussed in the report. To ensure accuracy we would like your permission to record this focus group and for those recordings to be transcribed into text. These recordings will only be handled by individuals contracted by the state and will be kept secure. Is this something you are comfortable with?

II. Questions

1. Is a diverse teacher/administrator workforce necessary to close the achievement gap? Why or why not?
2. What initiatives can the state/districts implement to increase Teacher/administrator diversity?
3. ***THIS QUESTION IS INTENDED FOR HIGHER ED PARTICIPANTS ONLY*** What incentives can Higher Ed provide to attract minority candidates into teacher preparation programs?
4. Who should have input in setting learning goals and expectations? (If not addressed) What other groups should have input?
5. What do you think "equity in education" means?
6. Could changes to the ECS Formula improve equity and excellence for all students?
7. Do the schools in your community provide cultural experiences? What types of activities?
8. What would a measurement system that rewards growth look like? How close are we (exclusive)?
9. How do you define critical skills of college & career readiness?
10. What is the school's role in promoting active citizenship?
11. How should the support for early (<= pre-k) learning opportunities be expanded?
12. How do the schools in your community welcome and involve parents in the learning process?
13. Where do you go to learn about best practices in education? What other resources are available?

14. Do you believe educators have a voice in ensuring student success? Are there any issues or concerns that have not been addressed that you would like to discuss?

Appendix E: CSDE Focus Group Questions – Parents & Students

CSDE Long-Range Planning Focus Groups

Parent/Student Sessions

Goals of the Constituent Focus Group Sessions

- To gather perspectives on the vital issues of equity and excellence in Connecticut education
- To identify salient education issues and the ability of Connecticut schools to address those issues

Interviewer Instructions:

- Introduce yourself and thank the interviewee(s) for their time.
- Ensure that you have enough background information on the interviewee(s) to understand the position(s) and sector(s) of the person you are interviewing.
- For each main interview question, interviewers should probe as indicated and appropriate. Please note that the questions are intended to serve as a guide, not a script.
- Keep within the allotted time and do your best to get to each question.
- Be sure that recording equipment is positioned properly and is ready to begin recording before your subjects arrive.
- Ideally parents and students will be brought in together and the Background materials will be read to them together. Once all participants have agreed to the terms of the focus groups, the parents and students should be separated into different rooms.
- Please print out a copy of the student questions for the parents in case they have concerns about the students being separated.
- Please note that question 8 is intended for PARENTS ONLY.
- Please note that question 10 is phrased differently for Parents and Students.

I. Background

- a. Hello. My name is _____ from _____. Thank you all for speaking with me today.
- b. As you are aware, we are working with the State Department of Education to gather information on our state's educational system. This effort will help the SDE to develop a long range educational plan.

- c. We are conducting focus groups with individuals like yourselves, to understand different perspectives. We are interested in hearing your feedback on issues specific to your experiences. We greatly appreciate your comments, insights and honesty.
- d. Our focus group today will last about 90 minutes. What we learn today will help guide the next five-year strategic plan and the key themes will be incorporated in the final report. No names or organizations will be connected to anything that any one particular person may say in a discussion. Additionally, nothing sensitive that can be connected to any organization or individual will be discussed in the report. To ensure accuracy we would like your permission to record this focus group and for those recordings to be transcribed into text. These recordings will only be handled by individuals contracted by the state and will be kept secure. Is this something you are comfortable with?
- e. We would like to ask the students to come with us so that we may work with them separately. Parents may receive a copy of the questions the students will be asked if have any concerns.

II. Questions

1. Is a diverse teacher/administrator workforce necessary to close the achievement gap? Why or why not?
2. Who should have input in setting learning goals and expectations? (If not addressed) What other groups should have input?
3. If your child (or you) went to a school in a different town, how might the expectations be different?
4. What do you think “equity in education” means?
5. What information would best help you understand your students’ (your own) progress in school? How much of what you just described are you currently getting?
6. How do you define critical skills of college & career readiness?
7. What is the school’s role in promoting active citizenship?
8. ***PARENTS ONLY*** How should support for early (<= pre-k) learning opportunities be expanded?
9. How do the schools in your community welcome and involve parents in the learning process?
10. *Parents*: What are your hopes for your children when they complete their K-12 education? *Students*: What are your hopes when you complete your K-12 education?
11. Do you believe that parents have a voice in shaping the direction of student success in Connecticut public schools?
12. Are there any issues or concerns that have not been addressed that you would like to discuss?

Appendix F: CSDE Focus Group Questions – Teachers

CSDE Long-Range Planning Focus Groups

Teachers

Goals of the Constituent Focus Group Sessions

- To gather perspectives on the vital issues of equity and excellence in Connecticut education
- To identify salient education issues and the ability of Connecticut schools to address those issues

Interviewer Instructions:

- Introduce yourself and thank the interviewee(s) for their time.
- Ensure that you have enough background information on the interviewee(s) to understand the position(s) and sector(s) of the person you are interviewing.
- For each main interview question, interviewers should probe as indicated and appropriate. Please note that the questions are intended to serve as a guide, not a script.
- Keep within the allotted time and do your best to get to each question.
- Be sure that recording equipment is positioned properly and is ready to begin recording before your subjects arrive.

I. Background

- a. Hello. My name is _____ from _____. Thank you all for speaking with me today.
- b. As you are aware, we are working with the State Department of Education to gather information on our state's educational system. This effort will help the SDE to develop a long range educational plan.
- c. We are conducting focus groups with individuals like yourselves, to understand different perspectives. We are interested in hearing your feedback on issues specific to your experiences. We greatly appreciate your comments, insights and honesty.
- d. Our focus group today will last about 90 minutes. What we learn today will help guide the next five-year strategic plan and the key themes will be incorporated in the final report. No names or organizations will be connected to anything that any one particular person may say in a discussion. Additionally, nothing sensitive that can be connected to any organization or individual will be discussed in the report. To ensure accuracy we would like your permission to record this focus group and for those recordings to be transcribed into text. These recordings will only be handled by individuals contracted by the state and will be kept secure. Is this something you are comfortable with?

II. Questions

1. Is a diverse teacher/administrator workforce necessary to close the achievement gap? Why or why not?
2. What initiatives can the state/districts implement to increase Teacher/administrator diversity?
3. Who should have input in setting learning goals and expectations? (If not addressed) What other groups should have input?
4. What do you think “equity in education” means?
5. Do the schools in your community provide cultural experiences? What types of activities?
6. What would a measurement system that rewards growth look like? How close are we (exclusive)?
7. How do you define critical skills of college & career readiness?
8. What is the school's role in promoting active citizenship?
9. How should the support for early (<= pre-k) learning opportunities be expanded?
10. How do the schools in your community welcome and involve parents in the learning process?
11. Where do you go to learn about best practices in education? What other resources are available?
12. Do you believe educators have a voice in ensuring student success?
- 13.** Are there any issues or concerns that have not been addressed that you would like to discuss?