

# IX.I.

## CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION Hartford

### TO BE PROPOSED:

June 3, 2020

**RESOLVED**, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-223h of the Connecticut General Statutes, approves continued participation of Batcheller Early Education Center, Winchester, in the Commissioner's Network for an additional year commencing July 1, 2020, 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 third day of June, Two Thousand Twenty.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Miguel A. Cardona, Secretary  
State Board of Education

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Hartford**

**TO:** State Board of Education

**FROM:** Dr. Miguel A. Cardona, Commissioner of Education

**DATE:** June 3, 2020

**SUBJECT:** Approval of Commissioner’s Network Extension for Batcheller Early Education Center, Winchester

*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, Batcheller Early Education Center (BEEC) in Winchester is recommended to remain in the Network for a fifth and final year.

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 eight schools presently participating in the Network.

**Background**

BEEC currently serves 239 students in grades Pre-kindergarten through 2. Sixty-four percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Sixteen percent of the students are identified as needing special education services, and five percent are English learners (ELs). Approximately seven percent of the students are Hispanic, two percent are Black, and 84 percent are White.

BEEC entered the Commissioner’s Network in the fall of 2016. Prior to receiving State Board approval to enter the Network, an Operations and Instructional Audit was conducted on

December 22, 2015. The audit revealed many curricular program changes over the years with no consistent curriculum in place for reading and math; ineffective data management systems to track student achievement and behavioral data; a lack of a systematic coaching model focused on the improving of instructional practice, and the lack of a strong and effective behavior management system.

Over the past four years, Winchester Public Schools has shared the costs of kindergarten assistants, instructional specialists, interventionists, a dean of students and a community partnership coordinator with the CSDE. The school and/or district continue to repurpose funds to align expenditures more closely with school goals and student needs.

### **Improvements**

- Batcheller's Accountability Index increased from 79.8 percent in 2017-18 to 91.4 percent in 2018-19.
- The chronic absenteeism rate decreased from 8.7 percent in 2017-18 to 5.9 percent in 2018-19, which was below the 2018-19 ESSA target of 6.5 percent. Batcheller's Year to Date Chronic absenteeism rate is 4.8 percent.
- Continued professional learning focused on discourse across content areas.
- Peer observations and debriefs occur monthly to observe exemplary instructional practices in other classrooms.
- Common planning time is embedded into the weekly schedule. Coaching support is provided at each grade level during this time.
- Continued professional learning for all staff around Social-Emotional Learning including data analysis to determine trends and the subsequent development of plans.

### **Continued Areas of Focus**

- Instructional Data Team, School Data Team, and faculty meetings will continue to focus on the analysis of data to guide instructional decisions and improve instructional practices school wide.
- There will be continued development and implementation of preschool curricula in ELA, math, and science. BEEC will continue to provide on-going support for curriculum implementation, and provide embedded professional learning through coaching around the ELA and math curricula.
- Administration will continue monitoring instruction through informal and formal observations, walkthroughs, and peer observations.
- Teachers will continue to receive professional learning on student discourse across content areas.

### **Next Steps**

During the 2020-21 school year, BEEC will continue strategies that have shown some improvement over the past four years, abandon those that have not, and target areas requiring further growth and development. The CSDE Turnaround Office will provide more intensive monitoring and supports as BEEC enters Year 5 of the Commissioner's Network. The Year 5 plan will prioritize the following:

- Continue to decrease chronic absenteeism rate.

- Review units and lessons to ensure their close alignment to the Connecticut Core Standards.
- Analyze student activities and assignments to evaluate their alignment to standards, instruction, and transference of skills learned.
- Continue to revise school schedule to increase instructional times/minutes for all content areas.
- Continue to focus on guided reading and small group instruction in math. Support teachers in the analysis of data to inform small group instruction in both ELA and math.
- Continue to provide embedded Inclusion training for special education and general education teachers as well as related service providers. Classroom teachers continue to develop strategies for differentiation and enrichment and work with coaches to meet the needs of various learning and make data-driven decisions.

**Recommendation:**

The CSDE recommends that the SBE approve an additional and final year commencing July 1, 2020.

Prepared by:

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Approved by:

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