

# IX.H.

## 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 Clinton Avenue School, New Haven, 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 Clinton Avenue School,  
New Haven

*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, Clinton Avenue School (CAS) in New Haven is recommended to remain in the Network for an additional 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**

CAS currently serves 488 students in grades Kindergarten through eight. Sixty-eight percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Thirty-nine percent of the students are identified as needing special education services, and thirty-eight percent are English learners. Seventy-seven percent of students are Hispanic, and fifteen percent are identified as Black.

CAS 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 May 13, 2015. The audit revealed a lack of a common vision for effective instruction and school-wide behavior management system; low level of instructional rigor, including higher-order thinking and questioning; high student chronic absenteeism, and the need for ongoing and job-embedded professional learning for teachers in data analysis and data-driven decision making. Upon entering the Network, CAS had declining test scores, with only 22 percent of students meeting or exceeding the achievement standards in English Language Arts and 15 percent in Mathematics on the Smarter Balanced Assessment.

For the first two years under the Commissioner's Network Grant New Haven Public Schools has shared the costs of the Special Education Teacher, Culture and Climate Coordinator, and the Instructional Coach/Operations Coordinator. The school and/or district have begun to repurpose funds to align expenditures more closely with school goals and student needs.

## **Improvements**

- The ELA Performance Index improved from 61.1 in 2017-18 to 62.5 in 2018-19, exceeding the ESSA target of 60.2.
- Replaced a one-way dual language program with bi-literacy instruction for students in kindergarten to grade 2 with a focus on phonics in Spanish and English which leads to a bridge program to support student's transition to all English classes in grades 3 and 4 and sheltered EL instructional blocks for grades 5 and 6.
- CAS implemented Eureka Math, a program closely aligned to Connecticut Core Standards, to support math instruction, engaging all staff that teach math in professional learning and coaching to assure fidelity of implementation.
- The Chronic Absenteeism rate fell from 18.2 percent in 2017-18 to 15.2 percent in 2018-19.

## **Continued Areas of Focus**

- Continued focus on reducing chronic absenteeism.
- Continue to build teachers' capacity to examine data in order to analyze instructional impact on student outcomes, as well as using that data to plan for and adjust instruction in real-time to meet the needs of students.

- Provide additional professional learning opportunities focused on the continuation of capacity building of staff in both ELA and math through embedded coaching.

## **Next Steps**

During the 2020-2021 school year, CAS 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 continue intensive monitoring and supports as CAS enters Year 5 of the Commissioner's Network. The Year 5 plan will prioritize the following:

- Leadership Team will continue weekly walkthroughs to monitor instruction, provide actionable feedback, and monitor and support implementation of professional learning, and leadership and teachers will continue to participate in targeted Learning Walks to address instructional practice needs.
- Leadership Team members and external partners will continue to provide teachers with professional learning through job embedded coaching in literacy and math instruction in order to meet the rigor of the Connecticut Core Standards and support teachers adjusting instruction in real-time to meet the needs of learners.
- CAS Leaders will engage in professional learning to develop skills in using Data Wise Protocols to examine student work in order to improve the use of data to determine the impact on student learning and drive instructional decision.
- Continue to address chronic absenteeism through a tiered approach, partnering with the district and CSDE, including continuing to educate families about the importance of regular school attendance with a focus on early intervention, tapping wraparound services and community partners, and connecting teachers and families to support this effort.
- Continue supporting teachers in the implementation of restorative practices to address behaviors and enhance the climate and culture of the school in hopes of reducing suspensions.
- Continue to work in collaboration with CSDE's Turnaround Office in providing professional learning and support in Cultural Competencies. Staff will take part in a series of Professional Learning Communities around the Cultural Competencies and Implicit Bias with professional learning opportunities, including a book study.
- CAS will expand a Social Emotional Learning block to grades K-4 and continue Advisory Block in grade 5-8 to address implicit bias and promote a safe and welcoming school.

**Recommendation**

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

Prepared by:

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Approved by:

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