

IX.G.

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 Pearson School, 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 Pearson School, 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, Pearson School 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

Pearson School currently serves 302 students in grades three through six. Sixty-five percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Twenty percent of the students are identified as needing special education services, and three percent are English learners (ELs). Approximately 4 percent of the students are Hispanic, 4 percent are Black, and 83 percent are White.

Pearson School 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 January 22, 2016. The audit revealed a lack of common curriculum in all content areas, consistent programming in servicing students with disabilities, and formal or effective informal structures to engage families in their child's education; and absence of wraparound services for children and their families to address often urgent and chronic needs. Upon entering the Network, Pearson's math test scores had been on the decline. The percentage of students meeting or exceeding the achievement standards in mathematics on the Smarter Balanced Assessment decreased from 23.2 percent in 2014-15 to 22.1 percent in 2015-16.

Over the past four years, Winchester Public Schools has shared the costs of the assistant principal, instructional specialist, interventionists, and community partnerships/STEAM 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

- Pearson's Accountability Index increased from 75.3 in 2017-18 to 80.5 in 2018-19.
- The percentage of Pearson students meeting or exceeding the achievement standard in English Language Arts (ELA) on the Smarter Balanced Assessment increased from 47.4 percent in 2017-18 to 49.8 percent in 2018-19.
- The School Performance Index in ELA increased from 65.8 in 2017-18 to 68.4 in 2018-19, which was above the 2018-19 ESSA target of 65.5.
- The percentage of students meeting or exceeding the achievement standards in mathematics on the Smarter Balanced Assessment increased from 47.7 percent in 2017-18 to 55.1 percent in 2018-19.
- The School Performance Index in mathematics increased from 66.1 in 2017-18 to 69.8 in 2018-19, which was above the 2018-19 ESSA target of 60.4.
- The 2018-19 Smarter Balanced Growth Model reports Pearson's growth rate for math as 74.7 percent, 12.2 percentage points above the state average of 62.5 percent.
- The 2018-19 Smarter Balanced Growth Model reports Pearson's growth rate for ELA as 62.1 percent, an increase from 61.9 percent in 2017-18, 0.6 percentage points above the district average of 61.5 percent and 2.2 percentage points above the state average of 59.9 percent.
- The percentage of Pearson students meeting or exceeding the achievement standard on the 2018-19 Next Generation Science Standards Assessment was 53.8 percent, which was above the state average of 53.6 percent and the highest among all Alliance Districts and Commissioner's Network schools.
- The chronic absenteeism rate decreased from 5.2 percent in 2017-18 to 3.4 percent in 2018-19, which was below the 2018-19 ESSA target of 4.8 percent.

Continued Areas of Focus

- The suspension rate increased from 3.8 percent in 2017-18 to 5.1 percent in 2018-19. It should be noted that Pearson will continue to follow a tiered approach to behavioral interventions.
- Pearson added scripted components to the current unit/lesson template (e.g., specific teaching points based on trend data, targeted vocabulary) in order to more effectively

address individual student learning needs and to allow for consistency in lesson delivery school wide.

- Pearson will continue to provide training and direction to teachers on adhering specific protocols in order to effectively analyze data and develop instructional strategies to improve student performance.

Next Steps

During the 2020-21 school year, Pearson School 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 intensive monitoring and supports as Pearson School enters Year 5 of the Commissioner's Network. The Year 5 plan will prioritize the following:

- Continue academic gains in both ELA and mathematics.
- Continue to decrease chronic absenteeism rate in alignment with ESSA target.
- Revise curriculum in order to incorporate close reading strategies, and consider how units/lessons can be supplemented to increase rigor.
- Provide on-going coaching and guidance to teachers in data analysis in order to develop instructional strategies to improve student performance.
- Scaffold of learning that is on grade level to enable all students to access the grade level standards in ways they can be successful.

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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