

IX.B.

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION Hartford

TO BE PROPOSED:

February 6, 2019

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, 2019, 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 sixth day of February, Two Thousand Nineteen.

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

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford

TO: State Board of Education

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

DATE: February 6, 2019

SUBJECT: Commissioner's Network Extension for Batcheller Early Education Center in 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 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 an additional year.

The Commissioner's Network is a commitment between local stakeholders and the Connecticut State Department of Education to improve student achievement in up to 25 schools. There are 12 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. Nineteen percent of the students are identified as needing special education services, and nine percent are English learners. Approximately 7 percent of the students are Hispanic, 3 percent are Black, and 90 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.

Winchester Public Schools has shared the costs of the Dean of Students, Instructional Specialists, and the 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:

Achievement Data Table:

Grade Level Achievement Data

Grade	Northwest Evaluation Association Reading Percentage of Students Proficient		Northwest Evaluation Association Math Percentage of Students Proficient	
	Fall 2017	Spring 2018	Fall 2017	Spring 2018
K	46%	65%	39%	67%
1	53%	58%	48%	60%
2	62%	67%	65%	69%

- Implementation of new ELA and math curriculum aligned to the Connecticut Core Standards. Units of Study in ELA and math were developed for each grade level. Professional learning was provided to all teachers before the new curriculum was implemented.
- Development and implementation of a plan to transition the Next Generation Science Standards, including a partnership with the Connecticut Science Center, to provide professional learning to teachers on inquiry-based instruction, and embedded coaching in order to increase teacher capacity to deliver inquiry-based instruction.
- Emphasis on maintaining a data-driven focus through the review of data monthly during school data team meetings, and grade level data team meetings.
- Implementation of a systematic instructional coaching model to build teacher capacity in ELA and math instruction.

- Monthly school climate and leadership committee meetings to review progress towards student behavior goals.

Continued Areas of Focus:

- Continued focus on reducing chronic absenteeism.
- Transition to an inclusion service model where regular education and special education teachers collaborate weekly in planning and implementing Tier I instruction.
- Coaches will provide professional learning to further develop teacher's capacity to develop students' higher-order thinking and to embed meaningful student discourse across content areas.

Next Steps:

During the 2019-20 school year, BEEC will continue strategies that have shown some improvement over the past three 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 4 of the Commissioner's Network. The Year 4 plan will prioritize the following:

- Continue to provide professional learning to support implementation of the Bridges math Program, inquiry-based learning, and small group differentiation.
- Continued coaching for teachers around lesson planning and classroom management throughout all content areas to maximize student instructional time.
- Provide professional learning to support the Inclusion model with special education teachers implementing small group instruction in the general education classroom.
- Continue to utilize a systematic approach to support students and families on improving attendance through: monthly attendance team meetings; recognition of attendance for students and on-going efforts to identify and resolve the obstacles preventing the child's regular attendance.

Recommendation:

The CSDE recommends that the SBE approve an additional year commencing July 1, 2019.

Prepared by:

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Reviewed by:

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Approved by:

Desi D. Nesmith, Chief Turnaround Officer