

# IX.E.

## 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 Clinton Avenue School, New Haven, 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 Clinton Avenue School in 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 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 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 to improve student achievement in up to 25 schools. There are 12 schools presently participating in the Network.

## **Background:**

Clinton Avenue School currently serves 490 students in grades Kindergarten through eight. Seventy percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Sixteen percent of the students are identified as needing special education services, and 38 percent are English learners. Seventy-eight percent of students are Hispanic, and 16 percent are identified as Black.

Clinton Avenue 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 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, Clinton Avenue School 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 percentage of Clinton Avenue students meeting or exceeding the achievement standard in English Language Arts (ELA) on the Smarter Balanced Assessment increased from 25 percent in 2016-17 to 35 percent in 2017-18.
- The percentage of students meeting or exceeding the achievement standards in mathematics on the Smarter Balanced Assessment increased from 12 percent in 2016-17 to 21 percent in 2017-18.
- The growth rate for math increased from 19 percent in 2016-17 to 43 percent in 2017-18 as reported by the 2017-18 Smarter Balanced Growth Model.
- Clinton Avenue School designated an instructional block to provide additional remediation/enrichment for all students in grades K-8. The intervention programming is identified based on progress monitoring profiles. Most qualified teachers are paired with highest need students. All staff members are trained and utilized to implement this model.
- A school-wide behavior management plan is consistently and effectively implemented. Students and staff have a common understanding of the behavior policy. The 2017-18 Suspension Rate for Clinton Avenue was 3.8 percent, which is below the state average of 6.8 percent.
- Clinton Avenue is fully leveraging the Assets, Skills, Professions, Interests, Relationships, and Environment (ASPIRE) Survey, a family and community engagement tool, to increase meaningful engagement opportunities aligned to school goals.

### **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 based on all students' developmental needs.
- 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 2019-20 school year, Clinton Avenue School 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 Clinton Avenue School enters Year 4 of the Commissioner's Network. The Year 4 plan will prioritize the following:

- Leadership Team will continue its schedule of weekly walkthroughs to monitor instruction and provide timely and actionable feedback. Walkthroughs will also serve to monitor and support teacher implementation of professional learning. Teachers will continue to participate in monthly Learning Walks around instructional needs and practices.
- Leadership Team members continue to provide teachers with professional learning in literacy and math instruction in order to meet the rigor of the Connecticut Core Standards.
- 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 based on all students' developmental needs through the data team process.
- Continue to educate families about the importance of regular school attendance with a focus on early intervention, as well as tapping wraparound services and community partners to support this effort.
- Clinton Avenue School will work in collaboration with CSDE's Turnaround Office in providing professional learning and support in Culture Competencies. Staff will take part in a series of Professional Learning Communities around the Cultural Competencies and Social Emotional Learning/Support. Teachers will receive two resources as part of the Professional Learning protocols that will be utilized as discussion points and participate in scheduled workshops throughout the year.

**Recommendation:**

The CSDE recommends that the SBE approve an additional fourth 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.

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