

V.B.

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Hartford**

**TO BE PROPOSED:**

April 5, 2017

**RESOLVED**, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-223h of the Connecticut General Statutes, approves continued participation of Uncas Network School, Norwich, in the Commissioner's Network for an additional year commencing July 1, 2017, and directs the school to report to the State Board of Education Accountability and Support Committee on its priorities and progress in the 2017-18 school year; 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 fifth day of April, Two Thousand Seventeen.

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:** April 5, 2017

**SUBJECT:** Commissioner's Network Extension for Uncas Network School in Norwich

*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, I am recommending that the Uncas Network School in Norwich remain in the Network for an additional year. Upon State Board of Education approval, this will be Uncas' fourth year in the Commissioner's Network.

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 20 schools presently participating in the Network. Each school receives increased financial investments to assist in the implementation of its turnaround plan. For each year a school is in the Network, the funding level decreases in order to promote financial sustainability of its turnaround over time.

## History/Background:

Uncas Network School currently serves 246 students in Grades kindergarten through five. Eighty-six percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Nineteen percent of the students are identified as needing special education services, and twenty-eight percent are English learners. Approximately 32 percent of the students are Hispanic, 28 percent are black, and 22 percent are white.

Uncas Network School entered the Commissioner's Network in the fall of 2014. Prior to receiving State Board approval to enter the Network, an Operations and Instructional Audit was conducted on March 17, 2014. The audit revealed a lack of a clear positive behavior support system, low level of instructional rigor, including higher-order thinking and questioning; lack of staff to support high needs students, the need for school-based, job-embedded professional development for teachers and non-certified staff, and an open concept layout to the school that created challenges in implementing effective instructional practices. Upon entering the Network, Uncas Network School had declining test scores, with only 21 percent of 3<sup>rd</sup> graders reading at grade level on the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT).

For sustainability purposes, Uncas Network School has received a decreased level of funding in each of the three years in the Commissioner's Network. Norwich Public Schools has absorbed the costs of the full-time school psychologist and social worker, as well as partially paying for additional staff members in the 2016-17 Commissioner's Network budget. The additional school staff members hired as a result of the turnaround plan, have been an effective use of Network funds and the school's leadership team has worked hard to ensure that spending is maximized for student benefit by building teacher capacity through job-embedded coaching, and reducing chronic absenteeism. Students in Commissioner's Network Schools are expected to show academic growth from fall to winter and from winter to spring on benchmark assessments. The lack of expected growth in student outcomes may reflect a variability in instructional practice or consistent curriculum use across grade levels.

## Achievement Data Tables:

### Grade Level Achievement Data

Grade	Smarter Balanced Assessment English Language Arts Percentage of students at level 3 or above		Smarter Balanced Assessment Math Percentage of students at level 3 or above	
	2014-15	2015-16	2014-15	2015-16
3	12.1%	22.7%	*	38.6%
4	17.5%	*	20%	*
5	27.5%	*	*	*

\*Data suppressed to ensure student data privacy.

### School-wide Achievement Data

Smarter Balanced Assessment English Language Arts Percentage of students at level 3 or above		Smarter Balanced Assessment Math Percentage of students at level 3 or above	
2014-15	2015-16	2014-15	2015-16
19.5%	18.6%	15.1%	19.5%

**Improvements:**

- ) The percentage of Uncas Network School, Grades 3-5 students scoring at/above level 3 in math on the Smarter Balanced Assessment increased from 15.1% in 2014-15 to 19.5% in 2015-16.
- ) The percentage of students considered chronically absent decreased from 12.3 percent in 2014-15 to 8.8 percent in 2015-16.
- ) The suspension rate decreased from 5.9 percent in 2014-15 to 3.4 percent in 2015-16.
- ) Increased access to technology has allowed teachers to integrate 21<sup>st</sup> century skills into daily instruction, as evidenced by the use of one-to-one devices to support literacy and math stations, as well as the integration of Google Classroom.

**Continued Areas of Concern:**

- ) The percentage of Uncas Network School, Grades 3-5 students scoring at/above level 3 in reading on the Smarter Balanced Assessment decreased from 19.5 percent in 2014-15 to 18.6 percent in 2015-16. This decrease fails to meet the expected gains for a Commissioner’s Network school.
- ) The percentage of students in Grade 3 considered proficient in math on the NWEA MAP benchmark assessment decreased from 39 percent in fall 2016 to 38 percent in winter 2017. This establishes a clear need to improve instruction of math in the primary grades, ensuring that curriculum is aligned to the Connecticut Core Standards and Smarter Balanced Assessment.
- ) The percentage of students in Grade 4 considered proficient in math on the NWEA MAP benchmark assessment decreased from 47 percent in fall 2016 to 34 percent in winter 2017. This establishes a clear need to improve instruction of math in the intermediate grades, ensuring that curriculum is aligned to the Connecticut Core Standards and Smarter Balanced Assessment.
- ) The percentage of students in Grade 5 considered proficient in math on the NWEA MAP benchmark assessment decreased from 30 percent in fall 2016 to 25 percent in winter 2017. This establishes a clear need to improve instruction of math in the intermediate grades, ensuring that curriculum is aligned to the Connecticut Core Standards and Smarter Balanced Assessment.

## **Next Steps:**

From April 2017 forward, Uncas Network School will continue strategies that have shown significant improvement over the past three years, and abandon those that have not. The CSDE Turnaround Office will provide more intensive monitoring and supports as Uncas enters Year 4 of the Commissioner's Network. The Year 4 plan will prioritize the following:

- ) Increased focus and sense of urgency on improvement of literacy achievement.
- ) Revised instructional leadership plan including a regular classroom walkthrough schedule, focused on literacy and math instruction, submitted monthly to the Turnaround Office Point of Contact.
- ) Continue ReadConn professional learning modules for K-3 teachers to support the implementation of the Connecticut Core Standards in English Language Arts: foundational skills and comprehensive reading instruction.
- ) The attendance task force will continue to focus on supporting individual students and their families with differentiated supports, as well as home visits, to continue to reduce chronic absenteeism.
- ) Establish and strengthen community partnerships to support Uncas with providing students and families with the appropriate supports, such as mental health services.
- ) In the fall of 2017, Uncas Network School will meet with the Accountability and Support Committee of the State Board of Education to provide updates on the school's progress.

Prepared by: Kaylan Ricciardi, Education Consultant, Turnaround Office

Approved by: Desi D. Nesmith, Chief Turnaround Officer



CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**Connecticut State Board of Education**

**April 5, 2017**

**Commissioner's Network**

**Uncas Network School**

**Norwich Public Schools**

**Recommendation for a One-Year Extension**

**Desi D. Nesmith**

# Uncas Network School Demographics\*

246 students, Grades K-5

86% Free/Reduced Lunch

19% Students with Disabilities

28% English Learners

28% Black

32% Hispanic

22% White

\*Self-reported for 2016-17



# Leading & Lagging Indicators

Chronic Absenteeism			Suspension Rate		
2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017 YTD*	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017 YTD*
12.3%	8.8%	12.0%	5.9%	3.4%	2.0%
Smarter Balanced Assessment English Language Arts- Percentage of Students at Level 3 or above			Smarter Balanced Assessment Mathematics- Percentage of Students at Level 3 or above		
2014-2015		2015-2016	2014-2015		2015-2016
19.5%		18.6%	15.1%		19.5%
Smarter Balanced Assessment English Language Arts- Growth Rate			Smarter Balanced Assessment Mathematics- Growth Rate		
Matched Cohort	Growth Rate	Avg. % of Target Achieved	Matched Cohort	Growth Rate	Avg. % of Target Achieved
N/A	22.6%	43.6%	N/A	30.6%	52.3%



\*Self-reported data



## Reading Benchmark Assessment Results

### Percentage and Number of Students at Proficiency in Reading

	Fall 2016-2017	Winter 2016-2017
Kindergarten	N/A	N/A
1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	N/A	N/A
2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	<b>28%</b> (9)	<b>44%</b> (15)
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	<b>27%</b> (8)	<b>33%</b> (11)
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	<b>23%</b> (9)	<b>49%</b> (20)
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	<b>23%</b> (7)	<b>25%</b> (7)



**Math Benchmark Assessment Results**  
**Percentage of and Number of Students at Proficiency in Math**

Grade Level	Fall 2016-2017	Winter 2016-2017
Kindergarten	N/A	N/A
1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	N/A	N/A
2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	<b>39%</b> (13)	<b>44%</b> (15)
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	<b>39%</b> (12)	<b>38%</b> (13)
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	<b>47%</b> (18)	<b>34%</b> (15)
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	<b>30%</b> (9)	<b>25%</b> (7)





# Next Generation Accountability Report: 2015-16

Choose a District

Choose a School

Norwich School District	Uncas Network School_1041911
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Choose a District, then Choose a School. To refresh the District list, clear the School name.

No.	Indicator	Index/ Rate	Target	Points Earned	Max Points	% Points Earned	State Avg Index/Rate
1a.	ELA Performance Index – All Students	52.6	75	35.1	50	70.2%	67.7
1b.	ELA Performance Index – High Needs Students	50.9	75	34.0	50	67.9%	56.7
1c.	Math Performance Index – All Students	48.5	75	32.4	50	64.7%	61.4
1d.	Math Performance Index – High Needs Students	47.1	75	31.4	50	62.7%	49.9
1e.	Science Performance Index – All Students	42.2	75	28.1	50	56.3%	57.5
1f.	Science Performance Index – High Needs Students	39.9	75	26.6	50	53.2%	47.0
2a.	ELA Avg. Percentage of Growth Target Achieved – All Students	43.6%	100	43.6	100	43.6%	63.8%
2b.	ELA Avg. Percentage of Growth Target Achieved – High Needs Students	41.7%	100	41.7	100	41.7%	58.3%
2c.	Math Avg. Percentage of Growth Target Achieved – All Students	52.3%	100	52.3	100	52.3%	65.0%
2d.	Math Avg. Percentage of Growth Target Achieved – High Needs Students	55.1%	100	55.1	100	55.1%	57.4%
4a.	Chronic Absenteeism – All Students	8.8%	<=5%	42.4	50	84.8%	9.6%
4b.	Chronic Absenteeism – High Needs Students	9.5%	<=5%	40.9	50	81.8%	15.6%
5	Preparation for CCR – % taking courses	N/A	75%				67.6%
6	Preparation for CCR – % passing exams	N/A	75%				40.7%
7	On-track to High School Graduation	N/A	94%				85.7%
8	4-year Graduation - All Students (2015 Cohort)	N/A	94%				87.2%
9	6-year Graduation - High Needs Students (2013 Cohort)	N/A	94%				78.6%
10	Postsecondary Entrance (Class of 2015)	N/A	75%				71.9%
11	Physical Fitness (estimated part rate) and (fitness rate)	100.0%   21.9%	75%	14.6	50	29.2%	89.2%   50.5%
12	Arts Access	N/A	60%				47.5%
<b>Accountability Index:</b>				<b>478.1</b>	<b>850</b>	<b>56.3%</b>	

These statistics represent the results from the second year of Connecticut's Next Generation Accountability Model for districts and schools. These statistics represent the results from the second year of Connecticut's Next Generation Accountability Model for districts and schools. For detailed information and resources about every indicator including the rationale for its inclusion, the methodology used as well as links to resources, research, and evidence-based strategies, please consult the document titled [Using Accountability Results to Guide Improvement](#) which is available on the [Next Generation Accountability Resources page](#) of the CSDE Performance Office.

This model is the direct result of an extensive consultation process over a two year period. The CSDE sought feedback from district and school leaders, Connecticut educators, state and national experts, CSDE staff, and many others. This model was originally outlined in Connecticut's flexibility application to the U.S. Department of Education and formally approved by the USED in August 2015 and is now included in Connecticut's state plan for the Every Student Succeeds Act.

Gap Indicators	Non-High Needs Rate	High Needs Rate	Size of Gap	State Gap Mean + 1 Stdev**	Is Gap an Outlier?
Achievement Gap Size Outlier?					N
ELA Performance Index Gap	N/A	50.9	N/A	16.6	
Math Performance Index Gap	N/A	47.1	N/A	19.1	
Science Performance Index Gap	N/A	39.9	N/A	17.3	
Graduation Rate Gap (2013 Cohort)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

\*\* If the Non-High Needs Rate exceeds the ultimate target (75% for Performance Index and 94% for graduation rate), then the ultimate target is employed and used for gap calculation. \*\*\* If size of gap exceeds the state mean gap plus one standard deviation, then the gap is an outlier.

Participation Rate	Rate
ELA – All Students	100.0%
ELA – High Needs Students	100.0%
Math – All Students	100.0%
Math – High Needs Students	100.0%
Science – All Students	100.0%
Science – High Needs Students	100.0%

School Code: 1041911



## Benefits of Network participation for Uncas Network School

- The percentage of Uncas Network School students scoring at/above level 3 in math on the Smarter Balanced Assessment increased from 15.1% in 2014-15 to 19.5% in 2015-16.
- The percentage of students considered chronically absent decreased from 12.3 percent in 2014-15 to 8.8 percent in 2015-16.
- The suspension rate decreased from 5.9 percent in 2014-15 to 3.4 percent in 2015-16.
- Increased access to technology has allowed teachers to integrate 21st century skills into daily instruction.
- Targeted social/emotional support has positively impacted suspension data and chronic absenteeism.
- Additional teacher collaboration time built into the master schedule focused on data analysis and designing instruction to meet the rigors of Connecticut Core Standards.



## **Under the close monitoring and supervision of the Turnaround Office, Uncas Network School's next steps for 2017-18 are:**

- Increased focus and sense of urgency on improvement of literacy achievement.
- Revised instructional leadership plan including a regular classroom walkthrough schedule, focused on literacy and math instruction, submitted monthly to the Turnaround Office Point of Contact.
- Continue ReadConn professional learning modules for K-3 teachers to support the implementation of the Connecticut Core Standards in English Language Arts: foundational skills and comprehensive reading instruction.
- The attendance task force will continue to focus on supporting individual students, and their families with differentiated supports, as well as home visits, to continue to reduce chronic absenteeism.
- Establish and strengthen community partnerships to support Uncas with providing students and families with the appropriate supports, such as mental health services.



## The Turnaround Office's next steps for 2017-18:

- Provide intensive and regular technical assistance with a focus on effective literacy and math instruction to improve student outcomes.
- Bi-weekly school visits to conduct classroom walkthroughs specifically focused on reading and math in order to provide feedback and technical assistance.
- Connect Uncas Network School with schools that demonstrate a high level of reading achievement.
- Assist with the analysis of Smarter Balanced Assessment growth results and new accountability index in order to improve instructional practice, with a specific focus on reading instruction.
- In the fall of 2017, Uncas Network School will meet with the Accountability and Support Committee of the State Board of Education to provide updates on the school's progress.





# COMMISSIONER'S NETWORK FAST FACTS

## UNCAS NETWORK SCHOOL GRADES K-5 COHORT III — ENTERED NETWORK FALL 2014 Norwich Public Schools

### SUCCESS

Purposeful alterations to the master schedule at Uncas Network School have created more opportunities for inclusive practices. Strong implementation of the workshop model with differentiated student supports are in place. Daily objectives (What, Why, and How) are posted in all classrooms to focus teaching and learning. Full-time art and music enrichment are scaffolding literacy and math instruction. Foundations, a new multisensory, foundational skills program in kindergarten and first grade, has proved to be very engaging to students and is improving writing and decoding skills of primary level students. Actively connecting with families has increased student engagement school-wide.



### COMMISSIONER'S NETWORK FUNDING

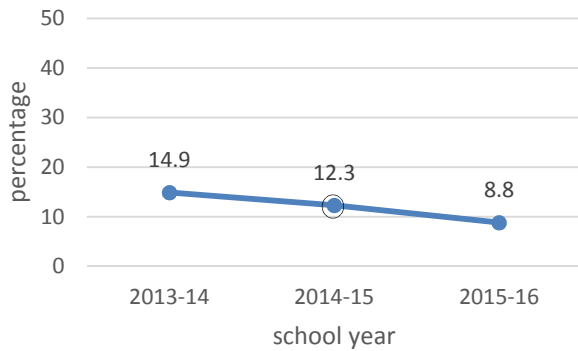
Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
\$601,754	\$500,000	\$350,000

### PRIORITIES

<b>Talent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>J Use student data to guide intentional instructional planning with differentiated supports</li> <li>J Engage in instructional rounds to ensure consistent implementation of a rigorous Common Core aligned curriculum and sharing of best teacher practice throughout the school</li> </ul>
<b>Academics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>J Promote collaboration among interventionists, certified support staff, and classroom teachers so that students receive targeted instruction based on individual need</li> <li>J Encourage collaboration between classroom teachers and art and music teachers to ensure standards-based curricula alignment</li> </ul>
<b>Climate/Culture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>J Implement Restorative Practices to enhance systems of recognition, student ownership and accountability as well as building a stronger school community</li> <li>J Continue efforts to improve student average daily attendance and reduce chronic absenteeism</li> </ul>
<b>Operations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>J Implement a unified intervention block at each grade level to maximize instructional time</li> <li>J Revise the master schedule to create more opportunities for inclusive practices</li> </ul>

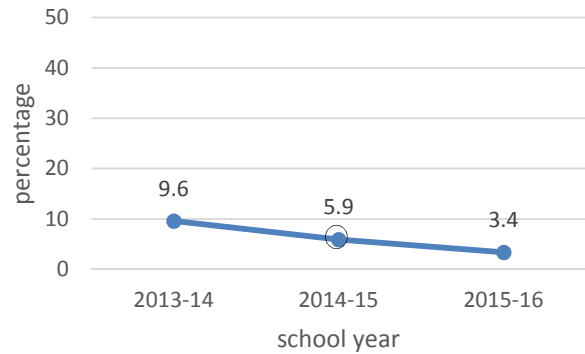
**LEADING AND LAGGING INDICATORS OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT:**

**Chronic Absenteeism**



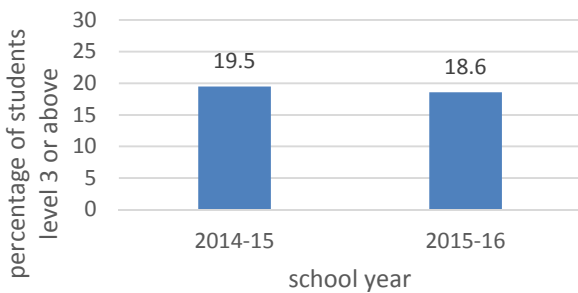
Chronic absenteeism increased by 6.1 percentage points from the 2013-14 baseline year to 2015-16

**Suspension Rate**



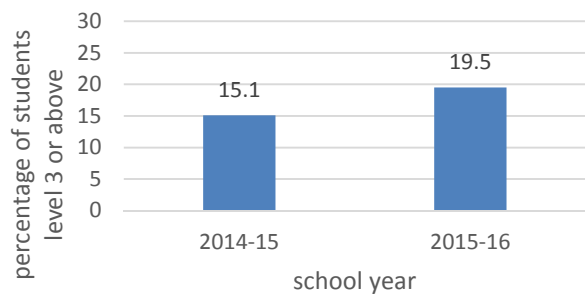
Suspension rate decreased by 6.2 percentage points from the 2013-14 baseline year to 2015-16

**Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium  
 ELA**



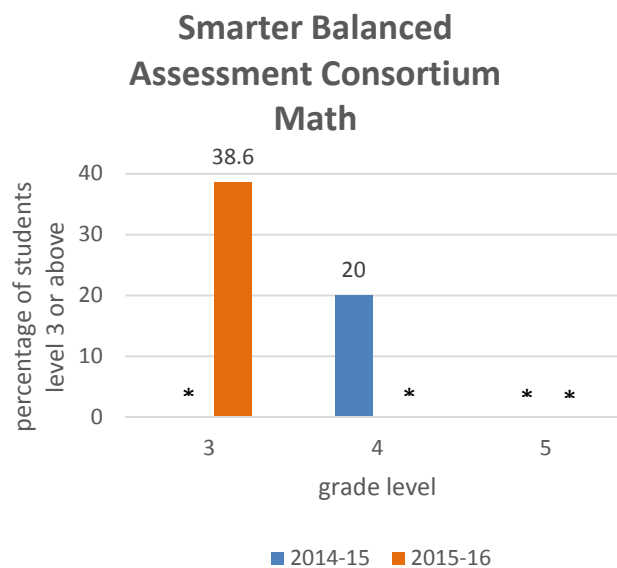
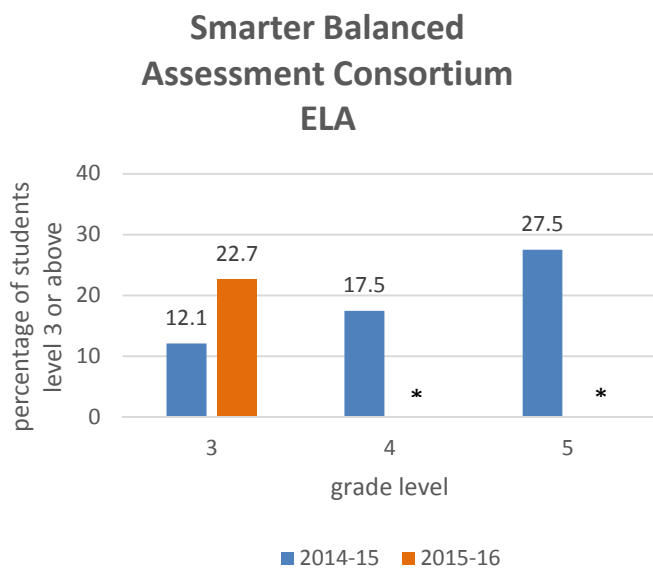
The percentage of students at level 3 or above in ELA decreased by 0.9 percentage points

**Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium  
 Math**



The percentage of students at level 3 or above in math increased by 4.4 percentage points





\* Data suppressed to ensure student data privacy

#### NEXT STEPS:

- )] Engage in monthly professional development aligned to consistent implementation of the new math curriculum units
- )] Provide push-in and pull-out targeted interventions to both accelerate and support individual student learning needs
- )] Engage in school climate trainings provided by the Connecticut State Department of Education to support the implementation of Restorative Practices and building a stronger school community