

**V.A.**

**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 Wilbur Cross High School, New Haven, 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:

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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 Wilbur Cross High 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, I am recommending that the Wilbur Cross High School in New Haven remain in the Network for an additional year. Upon approval, this would be the final year for Wilbur Cross High School in the 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. Note: This is not necessarily the case for Wilbur Cross High School which saw increased levels of funding when the state determined that the school would implement school-wide academies rather than just one Internationals Academy.

## **History/Background:**

Wilbur Cross School currently serves 1,490 students in grades nine through twelve. The school has seen a steady increase in enrollment from 1,358 students in 2012-13 to 1,446 in 2015-16. Each year during its tenure in the Commissioner's Network, the school's enrollment increases dramatically from the first day of school until the last day of school, sometimes by as much as 300 students. In 2016-17, the school reports 68 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Seventeen percent of the students are identified as needing special education services, and 22 percent are English learners (ELs). Approximately 58 percent of the students are Hispanic and 29 percent are Black.

Wilbur Cross High School entered the Commissioner's Network in the fall of 2013. Prior to receiving State Board approval to enter the Network, an Operations and Instructional Audit was conducted on April 25, 2013. The audit revealed that school leadership had changed six times in ten years, and it was difficult to determine whether there was a consistent philosophy or vision when dealing with the wide range of issues that exist at the school. The quality of teaching and learning was inconsistent, including a lack of academic rigor and student engagement, lack of high expectations for all students, and inconsistent implementation of professional development and teacher evaluation plans. Truancy and attendance were critical factors in the lack of student achievement. Families expressed concern for the lack of family support in spite of the availability of several community support groups and wraparound service providers.

The Wilbur Cross High School Turnaround Plan for application to the Commissioner's Network initially supported the implementation of one International Academy. However, in subsequent years, the school was required to plan and implement school-wide, career-themed academies which resulted in an increased level of funding in its four years in the Commissioner's Network. While there are improvements in some areas, the increased level of funding for reform implementation at Wilbur Cross High School has not resulted in gains in student academic outcomes expected for Commissioner's Network schools.

## **Achievement Data:**

		<b>Smarter Balanced Assessment English Language Arts Percentage of Students at Level 3 or above</b>		<b>Smarter Balanced Assessment Math Percentage of Students at Level 3 or above</b>	
Grade	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	
11	25.2	--	*	--	
		<b>SAT English Language Arts Percentage of Students at Level 3 or Above</b>		<b>SAT Math Percentage of Students at Level 3 or Above</b>	
Grade	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	
11	--	31.2	--	10.6	

\* suppressed to ensure student data privacy

- In 2014-15, 25.2 percent of Wilbur Cross Grade 11 students scored Level 3 or above on the English/Language Arts Smarter Balanced Assessment. The percentage of Grade 11 students scoring Level 3 or above in 2015-16 was suppressed to ensure student data privacy.
- In 2015-16, 31.2 percent of Wilbur Cross Grade 11 students scored Level 3 or above on the English/Language Arts SAT. The percentage of Grade 11 students scoring Level 3 or above on the math SAT was 10.6.

### **Improvements:**

- The suspension rate has decreased from 24.7 percent in 2012-13 to 8.6 percent in 2015-16. Year-to-date 2016-17 suspension rate is 5.6 percent.
- The four-year graduation cohort rate has improved from 64.3 percent in 2012-13 to 73.7 percent in 2015-16 as reported by Wilbur Cross High School.
- The number and enrollment of students in Advanced Placement and Dual Enrollment courses has increased to 16 Advanced Placement with enrollment of 570 students during 2016-17 and 3 Dual Enrollment courses with an enrollment of 123 students during 2016-17.
- Student enrollment has increased from 1,358 students in 2012-13 to 1,490 (self-reported) in 2016-17, indicating Wilbur Cross High School is increasingly a school choice preference within New Haven Public Schools.
- The four school-wide, career-themed academies provide opportunities to personalize student learning focused on students' postsecondary career and college plans and provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate on creating authentic project-based curriculum and examining student work. The academy structure also provides time for teachers to participate in Child Study teams to plan interventions for chronic absenteeism, discipline, and academic deficiencies.

### **Continued Areas of Concern:**

- Chronic absenteeism has decreased from 52.4 percent prior to entrance into the Commissioner's Network to 41.6 percent in 2015-16, and 32 percent (self-reported) in 2016-17 year-to-date. This decrease fails to meet the expected gain for a Commissioner's Network school and reflects the need for technical assistance focused on helping the school's leadership and attendance teams develop Tier I and Tier II attendance strategies.
- The percentage of students meeting Level 3 or above in 2015-16 on the SAT English/Language Arts was only 31.2 percent and only 10.6 percent on the SAT math. This establishes a clear need to improve instruction of literacy and math at all grade levels.
- In 2016-17 the percentage of Grade 9 students meeting proficiency on benchmark assessments for English/Language Arts decreased from 55 percent in fall to 38.5 percent on the winter assessment. Likewise, the percentage of Grade 10 students meeting proficiency on benchmark assessments for math decreased from 32.2 percent in fall 2016-17 to 25.1 percent on the winter 2016-17 assessment. 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 reflects a variability in instructional practice across the grade levels.

- While the four-year cohort graduation rate has improved to 73.7 percent (self-reported) in 2015-16, this rate does not meet the state average of 87 percent. There is a continued need for emphasis on high expectations for all students, improvement of instructional practice, and an improved focus on providing educational guidance so that students understand the effort needed to attain college and career readiness.
- While 75 percent of families participate consistently in student-led conferencing, the school still needs to develop a consistently implemented family engagement plan based on the Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Engagement, with a specific focus on educating families about the importance of regular school attendance.

### **Next Steps:**

From April 2017 forward, Wilbur Cross High School should continue strategies that have shown improvement over the past four years, and abandon those that have not. The CSDE Turnaround Office will provide more intensive monitoring and supports as Wilbur Cross High School enters Year 5 of the Commissioner's Network, prioritizing the following:

- Increased focus and sense of urgency on the part of the current school attendance team for improvement of chronic absenteeism rate. The Turnaround Office consultant assigned to Wilbur Cross High School will provide monthly technical assistance to the leadership and attendance teams in the development, implementation and monitoring of Tier I and Tier II strategies to establish the importance of attendance.
- Plan specific and highly focused professional development targeting instructional practices for improvement of student engagement, differentiation and academic rigor. The Turnaround Office consultant assigned to Wilbur Cross High School will provide technical assistance to develop the capacity of school leadership, including academy lead teachers, to provide timely feedback to teachers. The Turnaround Office will also assist academy lead teachers in the development of common planning time agendas that focus on instruction and how all academy teachers can work together to improve student outcomes in math and English/Language Arts. This includes strengthening the school's cross-disciplinary approach to curriculum and lesson planning.
- Increased focus on building capacity of the school-wide data team, specifically to analyze academic data and provide feedback and technical assistance. The Turnaround Office consultant assigned to Wilbur Cross High School will meet monthly with the school's school-wide data team to identify root causes of poor student academic outcomes in math and English/Language Arts and to implement strategies to improve instructional practice.
- Development of a sustainable family engagement plan focused on improving student outcomes in math and English/Language Arts and chronic absenteeism. The Turnaround Office consultant assigned to Wilbur Cross High School will engage consultants from the Office of Student Supports to provide assistance in the development of a family engagement plan which includes components of the Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Engagement.

- Continue to invest in developing strong academies focused on creating a positive, personalized school learning environment in partnerships with the Foundation for the Arts and Trauma, the Internationals Network for Public Schools and ALIVE New Haven. These partnerships support staff efforts in the planning and implementation of student interventions for academics, chronic absenteeism, and wrap-around services in addition to assisting teachers in the development of effective protocols for Child Study teams, building student connectedness to the school and cross-disciplinary project-based learning.
- Report to the State Board of Education's Accountability and Support Committee to discuss progress and receive feedback for continued improvement.

Prepared by: Leslie Carson, 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**  
**Wilbur Cross High School, New Haven**  
**Recommendation for a One-Year Extension**

**Desi D. Nesmith**

# School Demographics\*

1,490 students, Grades 9-12

68.4% Free/Reduced Lunch

17.3% Students with Disabilities

22.4% English Learners

29.2% Black

57.7% Hispanic

\*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*
50.5%	41.6%	32%	9.3%	8.6%	5.6%
SAT Level 3 or 4--ELA			SAT Level 3 or 4--Math		
2014-2015		2015-2016	2014-2015	2015-2016	
NA		31.2%	NA	10.6%	

\*Self-reported data

## English/Language Arts Benchmark Assessment Results

### Percentage and Number of Students at Proficiency in English/Language Arts

Grade Level	Fall 2016-2017	Winter 2016-2017
9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	55.0% (217)	38.5% (152)
10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	44.1% (169)	51.3% (197)
11th Grade	38.6% (128)	59.9% (199)
12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	45.2% (171)	63.2% (239)

## Math Benchmark Assessment Results

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

Grade Level	Fall 2016-2017	Winter 2016-2017
9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	17.9% (71)	47.4% (187)
10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	32.2% (123)	25.1% (96)
11 <sup>th</sup> Grade	22.6% (75)	41.8% (139)
12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	52.1% (197)	69.0% (261)

# Next Generation Accountability Report: 2015-16

Choose a District

Choose a School

 New Haven School  
 District

Wilbur Cross High School\_0936111

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	47.0	75	62.7	100	62.7%	67.7
1b.	ELA Performance Index – High Needs Students	42.3	75	56.4	100	56.4%	56.7
1c.	Math Performance Index – All Students	42.4	75	56.5	100	56.5%	61.4
1d.	Math Performance Index – High Needs Students	38.7	75	51.6	100	51.6%	49.9
1e.	Science Performance Index – All Students	44.1	75	58.7	100	58.7%	57.5
1f.	Science Performance Index – High Needs Students	38.9	75	51.9	100	51.9%	47.0
2a.	ELA Avg. Percentage of Growth Target Achieved – All Students	N/A	100				63.8%
2b.	ELA Avg. Percentage of Growth Target Achieved – High Needs Students	N/A	100				58.3%
2c.	Math Avg. Percentage of Growth Target Achieved – All Students	N/A	100				65.0%
2d.	Math Avg. Percentage of Growth Target Achieved – High Needs Students	N/A	100				57.4%
4a.	Chronic Absenteeism – All Students	41.6%	<=5%	0.0	50	0.0%	9.6%
4b.	Chronic Absenteeism – High Needs Students	47.5%	<=5%	0.0	50	0.0%	15.6%
5	Preparation for CCR – % taking courses	42.7%	75%	28.5	50	56.9%	67.6%
6	Preparation for CCR – % passing exams	18.9%	75%	12.6	50	25.2%	40.7%
7	On-track to High School Graduation	84.6%	94%	45.0	50	90.0%	85.1%
8	4-year Graduation - All Students (2015 Cohort)	66.2%	94%	70.5	100	70.5%	87.2%
9	6-year Graduation - High Needs Students (2013 Cohort)	72.5%	94%	77.1	100	77.1%	78.6%
10	Postsecondary Entrance (Class of 2015)	52.6%	75%	70.1	100	70.1%	71.9%
11	Physical Fitness (estimated part rate) and (fitness rate)	49.9%   42.9%	75%	0.0	50	0.0%   89.2%   50.5%	
12	Arts Access	62.8%	60%	50.0	50	100.0%	47.5%
Accountability Index				691.5	1250	55.3%	

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

Gap Indicators	Non-High Needs Rate	High Needs Rate	Size of Gap	State Gap Mean + 1	Is Gap an Outlier?
Achievement Gap Size Outlier?					N
ELA Performance Index Gap	56.6	42.3	14.3	16.6	
Math Performance Index Gap	49.9	38.7	11.3	19.1	
Science Performance Index Gap	53.8	38.9	14.9	17.3	
Graduation Rate Gap (2013 Cohort)	76.2%	72.5%	3.7%	13.0%	N

If the Non-High Needs Rate exceeds the ultimate target (75 for Performance Index and 94% for graduation rate), then the ultimate target is displayed and used for gap calculations. \*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	84.7%
ELA – High Needs Students	83.3%
Math – All Students	84.7%
Math – High Needs Students	83.3%
Science – All Students	80.9%
Science – High Needs Students	77.9%

School Code: 0936111

# Benefits of Network Participation for Wilbur Cross High School

- Increased four-year cohort graduation rate from 64.3 percent in 2012-13 to 73.7 percent (self-reported) in 2015-16.
- Decreased suspension and chronic absenteeism rates through implementation of Tier I, Tier II and Tier III interventions.
- Increased number and enrollment of students in Advanced Placement (AP) and Dual Enrollment courses to 16 AP courses enrolling 570 students in 2016-17 and 3 Dual Enrollment courses enrolling of 123 students in 2016-17, an increase from 314 students enrolled in AP courses in 2012-13.
- School-wide, career-themed academy structure provides opportunities to personalize student learning and provides teachers time to collaborate on creating authentic project-based curriculum, examining student work and designing interventions for students through Child Study teams.
- Improvement in family engagement, with consistent participation of 75 percent of families in student-led conferencing.
- Increased student enrollment from 1,358 in 2012-13 to 1,490 in 2016-17, indicating the school is increasingly a school choice preference.



## **Under the Close Monitoring and Supervision of the Turnaround Office, Wilbur Cross High School Next Steps for 2017-18 are:**

- Build internal capacity of leadership team using CSDE resources.
- Plan specific and highly focused professional development for the 2017-18 school year with follow-up biweekly classroom walkthroughs focused on student engagement.
- Increased focus on building capacity of the school-wide data team, specifically to analyze student academic outcomes and to provide feedback and technical assistance to teachers to improve instructional practice.
- Increased focus and sense of urgency on the part of the current school attendance team for improvement of chronic absenteeism rate.
- Development of a sustainable family engagement plan focused on improving student outcomes in math and English/Language Arts and chronic absenteeism.



## The Turnaround Office's Next Steps for 2017-18:

- Assist academy lead teachers in the development of common planning time protocols that focus on instruction and improving student outcomes.
- Meet at least once monthly with school-wide data team to analyze academic data and to identify root causes of poor academic performance, providing feedback and technical assistance.
- Biweekly school visits to conduct classroom walkthroughs specifically focused on instruction, differentiation and student engagement, providing feedback and technical assistance.
- Plan specific and highly focused professional development for 2017-18 school year focused on effective instruction to improve student outcomes.
- Provide monthly technical assistance to leadership and attendance teams for development, implementation and monitoring of Tier I and Tier II strategies for improvement of chronic absenteeism.
- Engage assistance from CSDE Student Support Office to provide assistance with the development of a family engagement plan focused on improving student outcomes and chronic absenteeism.
- Coordinate a meeting whereby Wilbur Cross High School reports to the State Board of Education's Accountability and Support Committee.





# COMMISSIONER'S NETWORK FAST FACTS

**WILBUR CROSS HIGH SCHOOL  
GRADES 9-12**  
COHORT II — ENTERED NETWORK FALL 2013  
New Haven Public Schools

## SUCCESS

Wilbur Cross High School began the implementation of a schoolwide structure of smaller learning communities beginning in 2015-16 after successful implementation of the school's Internationals Academy in 2014-15. The school's four-year graduation rate has increased from 64 percent in 2012-13 to 66.2 percent in 2014-15. The percentage of students with one or more behavior referrals has decreased from 19 percent in 2011-12 to 11 percent in 2015-16.

## COMMISSIONER'S NETWORK FUNDING

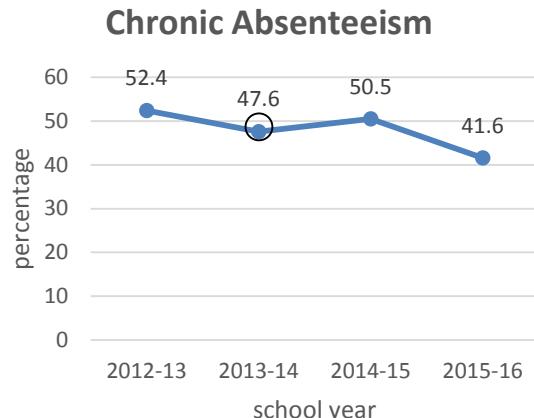
Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
\$743,546	\$633,392	\$1,113,000	\$850,000



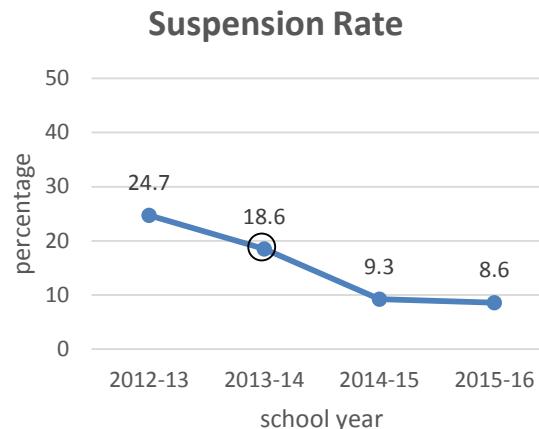
## PRIORITIES

<b>Talent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The Commissioner's Network partially funds staff positions which are important to the successful implementation of smaller learning communities, including an internship coordinator, a college and career center coordinator and a student retention specialist</li></ul>
<b>Academics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Focused professional development on improving instructional practice, academic rigor, differentiation, student engagement and interdisciplinary project-based learning</li><li>Summer professional development and team collaboration allowed opportunities for smaller learning community teams to develop effective cross-disciplinary project-based learning to engage students in authentic learning experiences</li></ul>
<b>Climate/Culture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Provide high impact wraparound services in partnership with the Foundation for the Arts and Trauma, and Southern Connecticut State University interns program</li><li>Well-trained youth development specialists using restorative approaches support systems of discipline and youth development</li></ul>
<b>Operations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Wednesday afternoon early release time supports smaller learning community development, interdisciplinary project-based learning planning, and data team protocols</li></ul>

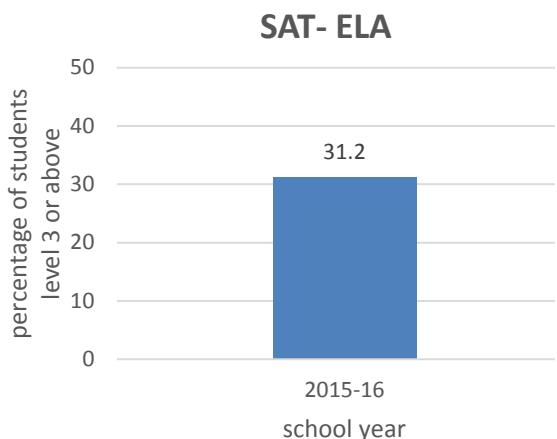
## LEADING AND LAGGING INDICATORS OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT:



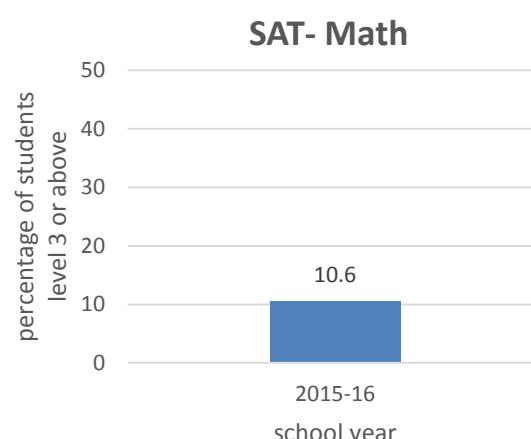
Chronic absenteeism decreased by 10.8 percentage points from the 2012-13 baseline year to 2015-16



Suspension rate decreased by 16.1 percentage points from the 2012-13 baseline year to 2015-16



SAT baseline for the 2015-16 school year shows 31.2 percent of students at level 3 or above in ELA



SAT baseline for the 2015-16 school year shows 10.6 percent of students at level 3 or above in math

○ Year entered the Commissioner's Network

## NEXT STEPS:

- Continue efforts to improve the rate of chronic absenteeism
- Implement project-based learning to improve student engagement and reduction of teacher-led classrooms across all four smaller learning communities
- Find financial means at the district level to sustain school-wide smaller learning communities when Commissioner's Network funding ends