

# IX.B.

## CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION Hartford

### TO BE PROPOSED:

May 2, 2018

**RESOLVED**, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-223h of the Connecticut General Statutes, approves continued participation of East Hartford Middle School, East Hartford, in the Commissioner's Network for an additional year commencing July 1, 2018, 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 second day of May, Two Thousand Eighteen.

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:** May 2, 2018

**SUBJECT:** Approval of Commissioner's Network Extension for East Hartford Middle School, East Hartford

*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 East Hartford Middle School in East Hartford 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 15 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.

## **Background:**

East Hartford Middle School currently serves 1,047 students in grades six through eight. One hundred percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Approximately 47 percent of the students are Hispanic, 32 percent are Black, and 11 percent are English Learners. Nineteen percent of the students are identified as needing special education services. Thirty-seven of the 198 identified special education students are in specialized programs at East Hartford Middle School. Nineteen percent of these students are automatically placed at East Hartford Middle School due to their needs and the range of services the school can provide.

East Hartford Middle School entered the Commissioner's Network in the fall of 2015. Prior to receiving State Board approval to enter the Network, an Operations and Instructional Audit was conducted on May 6, 2015. The audit indicated several challenges impeding success. 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 quality of curriculum. There was a need for increased instructional resources and technology to support Tier 1 instruction, as well as to further develop interventions.

To move toward sustainability, East Hartford Middle School has received a decreased level of funding in each of the three years in the Commissioner's Network. 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 at East Hartford Middle School may reflect the variability in instructional practice across classrooms and the need for increased professional learning. The school's Leadership Team has been a good steward of Network funds and has worked to ensure that all spending and current resources are maximized for student benefit.

## **Improvements:**

- The percentage of East Hartford Middle School students meeting or exceeding the achievement standard in English Language Arts (ELA) on the Smarter Balanced Assessment increased from 28.7 percent in 2015-16 to 31.5 percent in 2016-17.
- The percentage of East Hartford Middle School students in Grade 6 meeting or exceeding the achievement standard in English Language Arts (ELA) on the Smarter Balanced Assessment increased from 28.2 percent in 2015-16 to 31.9 percent in 2016-17.
- The percentage of East Hartford Middle School students in Grade 8 meeting or exceeding the achievement standard in English Language Arts (ELA) on the Smarter Balanced Assessment increased from 27.2 percent in 2015-16 to 33.1 percent in 2016-17.
- The percentage of East Hartford Middle School students in Grade 7 meeting or exceeding the achievement standard in mathematics on the Smarter Balanced Assessment increased from 13.2 percent in 2015-16 to 16.8 percent in 2016-17.
- There has been a 34.6 percent decrease in the number of in-school suspension actions since joining the Commissioner's Network in 2015.

### **Continued Areas of Focus:**

- The percentage of students meeting or exceeding the achievement standards in mathematics on the Smarter Balanced Assessment decreased from 12.2 percent in 2015-16 to 10.7 percent in 2016-17. This decrease fails to meet the expected gains for a Commissioner's Network school.
- The Performance Index for both ELA and Math show minimal gains. The index score for ELA was 54.5 in 2015-16 and 54.8 in 2016-17. The index score for math was 44.7 in 2015-16 and 44.1 in 2016-17. This demonstrates a continued need to improve instruction in literacy and mathematics, implementation of a tiered model of intervention, and ensuring the curriculum is aligned to the inherent rigor of the Connecticut Core Standards, as measured by Smarter Balanced Assessment.
- 2016-17 Smarter Balanced Growth Model reports the growth rate for ELA as 29.6 percent and math as 28.7 percent. The average percentage of target achieved for ELA is 52.1 percent and math 51.5 percent.
- The suspension rate has increased from 18.6 percent in 2015-16 to 20.5 percent in 2016-17. This lack of an expected decrease fails to meet the expected gains for a Commissioner's Network school.
- The percentage of students who were chronically absent in 2016-17 was 12.4 percent which is an increase from the past two years. The rate was 11.9 percent in 2014-15 and 9.5 percent in 2016-17.

### **Next Steps:**

During the 2018-19 school year, East Hartford Middle 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 East Hartford Middle School 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 chronic absenteeism rate, suspension rate, and achievement levels in literacy and math.
- In partnership with the Turnaround Office consultant, the district must provide greater professional development to the leader and teachers and provide on-going support on effective instruction and deep understanding of standards in mathematics and literacy. Professional learning should focus on curriculum alignment with CCSS clusters, effective use of Interim Assessment Blocks and formative assessment to inform instruction, incorporating the close reading process and reading strategies across content areas through the Project Cali model, and intentional instructional planning with a focus on student directed activities.
- Mandated enrollment for a team of special education teachers and literacy specialists in the 2018-19 ReadConn professional learning modules to support the implementation of the Connecticut Core Standards in English Language Arts: foundational reading skills and explicit reading instruction regardless of reading approach, model, or program used in the school.

- Continue to engage students in an attendance plan to enhance the “All-In – Every Child, Every Day” campaign to improve daily attendance and reduce chronic absenteeism. Expand “Sky is the Limit” mentor program for chronically absent students and home contacts for students.
- Strengthen the school-wide behavior system by focusing on social emotional learning (SEL), restorative practices, and cultural competence to meet the needs of the students. SEL Second Step curriculum implementation through advisory blocks, continuation of restorative practices implementation with a focus on building and strengthening relationships through weekly “Community Circles” with students, and professional development on “kid talk” to increase effective communication.
- In order to sustain a sense of urgency in addressing the school climate needs, ongoing professional learning focused on cultural competency and conversations about intentional and unconscious bias shall be provided.
- Continue parent engagement through the development of a parent focus group that will center on student achievement and social emotional learning.
- Report to the State Board of Education’s Accountability and Support Committee to discuss progress and receive feedback for continued improvement.

**Recommendation:**

The CSDE recommends that the SBE approve an additional fourth year of participation in the Commissioner’s Network for East Hartford Middle School at a funding level to be determined by CSDE, within state budget appropriations.

Prepared by: Jennifer Webb, Education Consultant, Turnaround Office

Approved by: Desi D. Nesmith, Chief Turnaround Officer



# Next Generation Accountability Report: 2016-17

Choose a District Choose a School School Category (1-5) (1 is highest) State Support Designation (Cat. 4 and 5 schools only) School of Distinction?

|                               |                                     |                  |            |    |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------|------------|----|
| East Hartford School District | East Hartford Middle School_0435111 | 4                | FOCUS MATH | No |
|                               |                                     | Grade Range: 6-8 |            |    |

*Choose a District, then Choose a School. To refresh the District List, clear the School name.*

| No:                         | Indicator  | Index/Rate <sup>1</sup> | Target | Points Earned | Max Points | % Points Earned | State Avg Index/Rate |       |       |
|-----------------------------|--|-------------------------|--------|---------------|------------|-----------------|----------------------|-------|-------|
| 1a.                         | ELA Performance Index – All Students                                 | 54.8                    | 75     | 36.5          | 50         | 73.0%           | 67.1                 |       |       |
| 1b.                         | ELA Performance Index – High Needs Students                          | 49.5                    | 75     | 33.0          | 50         | 66.0%           | 55.9                 |       |       |
| 1c.                         | Math Performance Index – All Students                                | 44.1                    | 75     | 29.4          | 50         | 58.8%           | 62.2                 |       |       |
| 1d.                         | Math Performance Index – High Needs Students                         | 40.5                    | 75     | 27.0          | 50         | 54.0%           | 50.5                 |       |       |
| 1e.                         | Science Performance Index – All Students                             | 43.7                    | 75     | 29.1          | 50         | 58.2%           | 55.3                 |       |       |
| 1f.                         | Science Performance Index – High Needs Students                      | 39.2                    | 75     | 26.2          | 50         | 52.3%           | 45.2                 |       |       |
| 2a.                         | ELA Avg. Percentage of Growth Target Achieved – All Students         | 49.5%                   | 100    | 49.5          | 100        | 49.5%           | 55.4%                |       |       |
| 2b.                         | ELA Avg. Percentage of Growth Target Achieved – High Needs Students  | 49.2%                   | 100    | 49.2          | 100        | 49.2%           | 49.8%                |       |       |
| 2c.                         | Math Avg. Percentage of Growth Target Achieved – All Students        | 47.8%                   | 100    | 47.8          | 100        | 47.8%           | 61.7%                |       |       |
| 2d.                         | Math Avg. Percentage of Growth Target Achieved – High Needs Students | 48.6%                   | 100    | 48.6          | 100        | 48.6%           | 53.7%                |       |       |
| 4a.                         | Chronic Absenteeism – All Students                                   | 12.4%                   | ≤5%    | 35.3          | 50         | 70.6%           | 9.9%                 |       |       |
| 4b.                         | Chronic Absenteeism – High Needs Students                            | 13.2%                   | ≤5%    | 33.5          | 50         | 67.0%           | 15.8%                |       |       |
| 5                           | Preparation for CCR – % taking courses                               |                         | 75%    | 0.0           | 0          |                 | 70.7%                |       |       |
| 6                           | Preparation for CCR – % passing exams                                |                         | 75%    | 0.0           | 0          |                 | 43.5%                |       |       |
| 7                           | On-track to High School Graduation                                   | 83.7%                   | 94%    | 44.5          | 50         | 89.0%           | 87.8%                |       |       |
| 8                           | 4-year Graduation All Students (2016 Cohort)                         |                         | 94%    | 0.0           | 0          |                 | 87.4%                |       |       |
| 9                           | 6-year Graduation - High Needs Students (2014 Cohort)                |                         | 94%    | 0.0           | 0          |                 | 82.0%                |       |       |
| 10                          | Postsecondary Entrance (Class of 2016)                               |                         | 75%    | 0.0           | 0          |                 | 72.0%                |       |       |
| 11                          | Physical Fitness (estimated part rate) and (fitness rate)            | 89.7%                   | 47.4%  | 75%           | 15.8       | 50              | 31.6%                | 92.0% | 51.6% |
| 12                          | Arts Access  |                         | 60%    | 0.0           | 0          |                 | 50.5%                |       |       |
| <b>Accountability Index</b> |  |                         |        | <b>505.4</b>  | <b>900</b> | <b>56.2%</b>    |                      |       |       |

These statistics represent the results from the third 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](#).

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.

<sup>1</sup> Unrounded index/rates are used in calculations. Values rounded to 1 decimal are displayed.

| 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                  | 63.3                | 49.5            | 13.8        | 16.6                       |                    |
| Math Performance Index Gap                 | 50.0                | 40.5            | 9.5         | 18.5                       |                    |
| Science Performance Index Gap              | 49.9                | 39.2            | 10.6        | 16.5                       |                    |
| Six-Year Graduation Rate Gap (2014 Cohort) |                     |                 |             |                            | N/A                |

\*\* If the Non-High Needs Rate exceeds the ultimate target (75 for Performance Index and 84% for graduation rate), then the ultimate target is displayed and used for gap calculations. \*\*\* Size of gap exceeds the state mean gap plus one standard deviation, then the gap is an outlier.

| Participation Rate            | Rate  |
|-------------------------------|-------|
| ELA – All Students            | 97.8% |
| ELA – High Needs Students     | 96.9% |
| Math – All Students           | 93.2% |
| Math – High Needs Students    | 92.4% |
| Science – All Students        | 98.1% |
| Science – High Needs Students | 98.2% |



# COMMISSIONER'S NETWORK FAST FACTS

## EAST HARTFORD MIDDLE SCHOOL GRADES 6-8

COHORT IV — ENTERED NETWORK FALL 2015  
East Hartford Public Schools

### SUCCESS

East Hartford Middle School (EHMS) has established a clear vision for 2017-18 that is based on rigorous instruction aligned to standards, intentional instructional planning, supporting students through a Tier II math intervention program, reducing chronic absenteeism, and Restorative Practices. These pillars represent the work being done to reinforce continuous improvement, high expectations, and preparation. EHMS has made the commitment to engaging students, staff, and families in the process of academic achievement and social/emotional growth.



### COMMISSIONER'S NETWORK FUNDING

| Year 1    | Year 2    | Year 3    |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| \$900,016 | \$780,000 | \$750,000 |

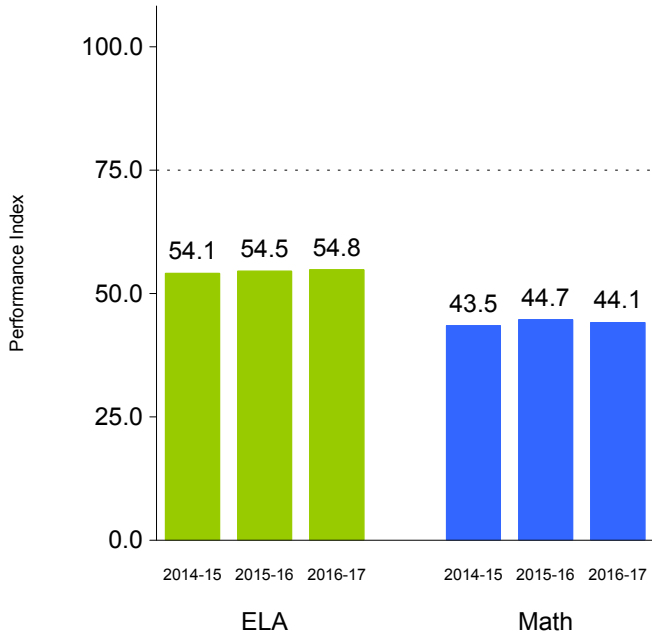
### PRIORITIES

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>Talent</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build teacher capacity to implement rigorous instruction to align with Connecticut Core Standards.</li> <li>• On-site professional learning to build teacher capacity to support Social-Emotional Learning, Restorative Practices, Cultural Competence, Mindfulness, Team Structures, and Intentional Planning.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Academics</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement a Tier II math intervention program to support students five days per week.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Climate/Culture</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support social and emotional learning and academic needs of students through a social worker and tutors.</li> <li>• With support from an attendance coordinator, increase average daily student attendance and reduce chronic absenteeism.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Operations</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide one-to-one devices for all students at EHMS.</li> </ul>  |

**LEADING AND LAGGING INDICATORS OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

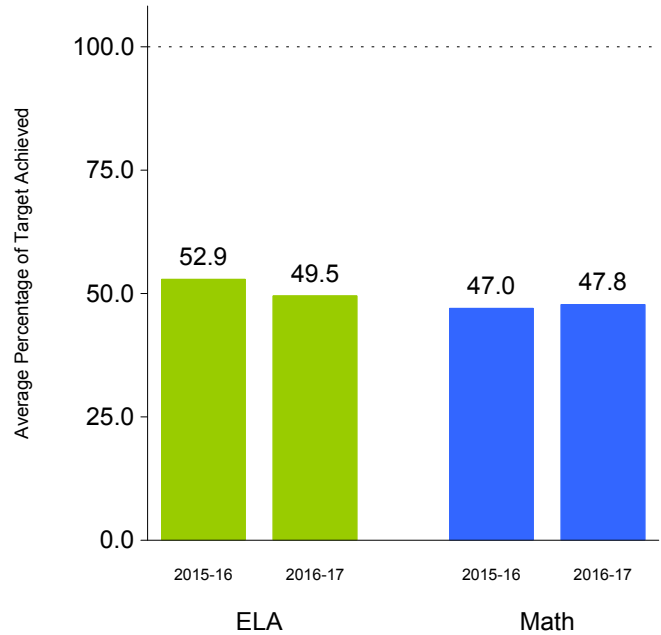
**Academic Achievement**

The Performance Index represents average performance of students in a subject area. When the index is 75 or better, the students are on average, performing solidly in the desired achievement level. The target for 2029-30 is 75.0 as indicated by the dotted line in the chart.



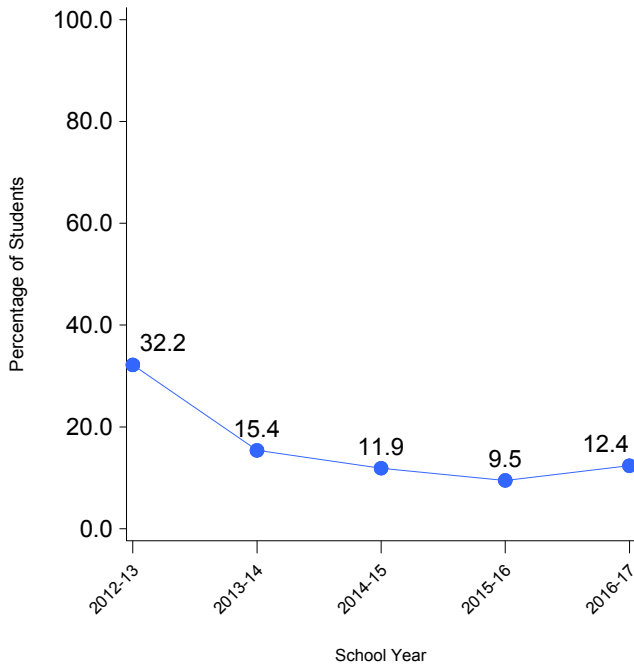
**Academic Growth (Matched Students)**

The Average Percentage of Target Achieved is a percentage of the individualized growth target achieved by students on average. The target for 2029-30 is 100% as indicated by the dotted line in the chart.



**Chronic Absenteeism**

The percentage of students who missed at least 10% of their enrolled school days for any reason.



**Suspension Rate**

The percentage of students who received at least one suspension or expulsion during the school year.

