

**V.A.**

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Hartford**

**TO BE PROPOSED:**

May 3, 2017

**RESOLVED**, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-223h of the Connecticut General Statutes, approves continued participation of Crosby High School, Waterbury, 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 third day of May, 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:** May 3, 2017

**SUBJECT:** Commissioner's Network Extension for Crosby High School in Waterbury

*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 Crosby High School in Waterbury remain in the Network for an additional year. This will be the fifth and final year of participation for Crosby High School 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 ordinarily decreases in order to promote financial sustainability of its turnaround over time. However, this has not been the case for Crosby High School, which saw increased levels of funding when the state determined that the school required additional resources to fully implement the school-wide smaller learning communities approved in the school's Turnaround Plan.

**History/Background:**

Crosby High School currently serves 1,103 students in grades nine through twelve. In 2016-17, the school reports 100 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Twenty-four percent of the students are identified as needing special education services. Crosby High School receives approximately 85-100 special education students each year from feeder middle schools who have been identified for special education services during Grades K-8. Sixteen percent are English learners (ELs). Approximately 54 percent of the students are Hispanic and 27 percent are Black. The current school principal began her leadership at Crosby High School in the fall of 2013-14 during the school’s first year in the Commissioner’s Network.

Crosby 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 February 25-26, 2013. The audit revealed the lack of a school climate plan outlining vision, expectations and actions to bring about improvement. 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. Staff morale in the school was low, primarily due to the number and severity of discipline issues. The audit also revealed a very weak connection between Crosby High School and the families of the students it serves.

The Crosby High School Turnaround Plan for application to the Commissioner’s Network initially supported the implementation of school-wide smaller learning communities in partnership with Project Grad. It became clear to the state that the partnership was not successful, and the school severed its partnership with Project Grad in 2014. The school’s Freshman Academy opened in 2013-14 in partnership with the New Tech Network. Beginning in the 2015-16, after receiving technical assistance from the CSDE Turnaround Office education consultant assigned to work with Crosby, the school implemented school-wide, career-themed smaller learning communities. The school’s Recuperative Academy, established in 2015-16, provides credit recovery support and interventions for students who are over-aged, under-credited and at risk for dropping out or not graduating with their cohort. While there have been improvements in some areas, Crosby High School has not produced the 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 Mathematics 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	13.2	*	3.4	*
	<b>SAT English Language Arts Percentage of Students at Level 3 or Above</b>		<b>SAT Mathematics 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	*	24.4	*	8.9

*\* The Connecticut State Department of Education did not administer these assessments at this time.*

- In 2014-15, 13.2 percent of Crosby High School Grade 11 students scored at Level 3 or above on the English/Language Arts Smarter Balanced Assessment. The percentage of Grade 11 students scoring at Level 3 or above on the Smarter Balanced Assessment in mathematics was 3.4.
- In 2015-16, 24.4 percent of Crosby High School Grade 11 students scored at Level 3 or above on the English/Language Arts SAT. The percentage of Grade 11 students scoring at Level 3 or above on the mathematics SAT was 8.9.
- In 2016-17, the percentage of Grade 9 students meeting proficiency on English/Language Arts benchmark assessments decreased from 1 percent in fall to zero in winter. The percentage of Grade 9 students meeting proficiency on mathematics benchmark assessments improved from 3 percent in fall to 10 percent in winter.
- In 2016-17, the percentage of Grade 10 students meeting proficiency on English/Language Arts benchmark assessments decreased from 10 percent in fall to 1 percent in winter. The percent of Grade 10 students meeting proficiency on mathematics benchmark assessments improved from 4 percent in fall to 24 percent in winter.

### **Improvements:**

- In its first year of implementation in 2015-16, the school's Recuperative Academy provided credit recovery support and interventions for over-aged, under-credited students. At the conclusion of the 2015-16 school year, the 15 seniors enrolled graduated on time with their cohort in June 2016. Currently, the Recuperative Academy has 16 seniors enrolled with 15 projected to graduate on time with their cohort in June 2017.
- The four-year graduation cohort rate has improved from 65.2 percent in 2012-13 to 74.1 percent in 2015-16 (as reported by Crosby High School), a gain of nearly 10 percentage points in three years.
- During 2016-17, the percentage of Grade 9 students on track to earn credit in all four core content courses at this time is 93 percent, compared to 81 percent for the same time period in 2015-16. This gain of 12 percentage points demonstrates substantial progress in early intervention to keep students on track for graduation.
- The number and enrollment of students in Advanced Placement and Dual Enrollment courses has increased since 2012-13.
- The four school-wide, career-themed smaller learning communities provide opportunities to personalize student learning focused on students' postsecondary career and college plans and provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate on creating engaging student-centered, authentic project-based curriculum. With assistance from the Buck Institute for Learning and the New Tech Network, teachers in the Freshman Academy are currently in Year 3 implementation of cross-disciplinary project-based learning, and Grade 10 teachers are currently in Year 2. CSDE Turnaround Office classroom observations have revealed improvements in student-centered instruction, including greater differentiation of instruction, improved student discourse, and reductions in off-task student behavior.
- The smaller learning community structure also provides time for teachers to collaborate in the development of common teacher and student protocols. As a result of these collaborative

efforts, teachers have become accountable to one another for making sure students move to class quickly, for example, resulting in hallways clear of students after the tardy bell rings and bell-to-bell instruction in all classrooms. Each teacher team has also developed and implemented protocols for looking at student data.

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

- In spite of intensive efforts in partnership with Attendance Works, Crosby's School Governance Council and community wraparound service providers, at Crosby High School the chronic absenteeism rate remains high at 31.0 percent (self-reported), current 2016-17. This fails to meet the expectation for a Commissioner's Network school and reflects the need for much more intensive technical assistance focused on helping the school's leadership and attendance teams develop Tier I and Tier II strategies. School leaders must re-double their commitment and efforts to reduce absenteeism. The school reports that large numbers of those students chronically absent are as a result of discipline suspensions, suggesting a need for technical assistance in the implementation of restorative practices.
- The percentage of students meeting Level 3 or above on the SAT English/Language Arts was 24.4 percent in 2015-16 and 8.9 percent on the SAT mathematics. This establishes a clear, urgent need to improve instruction and interventions for literacy and mathematics at all grades, ensuring that curriculum aligns to the Connecticut Core standards and the redesigned SAT.
- While four-year cohort graduation rate has improved to 74.1 percent (self-reported) in 2015-16, this rate does not meet the state average of 87 percent. This is likely an outcome of the high chronic absenteeism. There is a continued need for emphasis on high expectations for all students, improvement of instructional practice, opportunities for credit recovery, and an improved focus on providing educational guidance so that students understand the effort needed to attain college- and career-readiness.
- Crosby High School offers many opportunities for families to participate in school events such as Open House, SAT night, Financial Aid night and PTO meetings. However, limited numbers of parents attend, suggesting the need to develop a more family-centered parent engagement plan that reaches into the community, 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 May 2017 forward, Crosby High School should continue strategies that have shown improvement over the past four years, including strategies to improve the number of Grade 9 students on track for graduation and the opportunities for credit recovery and interventions offered through the Recuperative Academy, and abandon those that have not. The CSDE Turnaround Office will provide more intensive monitoring and supports as Crosby High School enters Year 5 of the Commissioner's Network. The Year 5 plan will prioritize the following:

- Increased focus and sense of urgency on the part of the current school attendance team for improvement of the chronic absenteeism rate. The Turnaround Office consultant assigned to

Crosby High School will provide monthly technical assistance to the leadership and attendance team in the development, implementation and monitoring of Tier I and Tier II strategies to establish the importance of attendance. Turnaround Office technical assistance will also include professional development and support for implementation of restorative practices designed to reduce the number of absences due to suspensions.

- Plan specific and highly focused professional development targeting Tier I instructional practices for improvement of student engagement, differentiation and academic rigor. The Turnaround Office consultant assigned to Crosby 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 mathematics 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 and smaller learning community data teams, specifically to analyze academic data and to provide feedback and technical assistance. The Turnaround Office consultant will meet monthly with the school's data teams to identify root causes of poor student academic outcomes in mathematics and English/Language Arts and to implement strategies to improve instructional practice and classroom interventions. The Turnaround Office will also provide technical assistance in the development of a more extensive menu of interventions for reading and mathematics, including the current Read 180, SRA Flex literacy and supports from push-in mathematics and literacy interventionists.
- Development of a sustainable family engagement plan focused on improving student outcomes in mathematics and English/Language Arts and chronic absenteeism. The Turnaround Office consultant will engage consultants from the Office of Student Supports to provide assistance in the development of a family engagement plan that includes components of the Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Engagement.
- Continue to invest in developing strong smaller learning communities focused on creating a positive, personalized school learning environment in partnership with the New Tech Network, the Buck Institute for Learning and community organizations providing wraparound services for students. These partnerships support staff efforts in planning and implementation of student interventions for academics and chronic absenteeism in addition to assisting teachers in the development of effective instructional strategies 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  
May 3, 2017  
Commissioner's Network  
Crosby High School, Waterbury  
Recommendation for a One-Year Extension**

**Desi D. Nesmith**

# School Demographics\*

1,103 students, Grades 9-12

100% Free/Reduced Lunch

24% Students with Disabilities

16% English Learners

27% Black

54% 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*
34.6%	32.0%	31.0%	36.0%	41.8%	40.0%
SAT Level 3 or 4--ELA			SAT Level 3 or 4--Math		
2014-2015	2015-2016		2014-2015	2015-2016	
NA	24.4%		NA	8.9%	

\*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	1% (3)	0% (0)
10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	10% (28)	1% (3)
11 <sup>th</sup> Grade	NA	NA
12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	NA	NA



## 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	3% (8)	10% (27)
10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	4% (11)	24% (69)
11 <sup>th</sup> Grade	NA	NA
12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	NA	NA





# Next Generation Accountability Report: 2015-16

Choose a District

Choose a School

Waterbury School District	Crosby High School_1516211
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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	43.9	75	58.5	100	58.5%	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	38.5	75	51.4	100	51.4%	61.4
1d.	Math Performance Index – High Needs Students	37.4	75	49.8	100	49.8%	49.9
1e.	Science Performance Index – All Students	37.3	75	49.7	100	49.7%	57.5
1f.	Science Performance Index – High Needs Students	36.1	75	48.2	100	48.2%	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	32.0%	<=5%	0.0	50	0.0%	9.6%
4b.	Chronic Absenteeism – High Needs Students	33.0%	<=5%	0.0	50	0.0%	15.6%
5	Preparation for CCR – % taking courses	77.5%	75%	50.0	50	100.0%	67.6%
6	Preparation for CCR – % passing exams	8.0%	75%	5.3	50	10.7%	40.7%
7	On-track to High School Graduation	30.4%	94%	16.2	50	32.4%	85.1%
8	4-year Graduation - All Students (2015 Cohort)	69.7%	94%	74.2	100	74.2%	87.2%
9	6-year Graduation - High Needs Students (2013 Cohort)	68.4%	94%	72.7	100	72.7%	78.6%
10	Postsecondary Entrance (Class of 2015)	52.8%	75%	70.3	100	70.3%	71.9%
11	Physical Fitness (estimated part rate) and (fitness rate)	7.7%   68.2%	75%	0.0	50	0.0%	89.2%   50.5%
12	Arts Access	26.9%	60%	22.4	50	44.9%	47.5%
<b>Accountability Index</b>				<b>625.3</b>	<b>1250</b>	<b>50.0%</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	Is Gap an Outlier?
Achievement Gap Size Outlier?					N
ELA Performance Index Gap	50.7	42.3	8.3	16.6	
Math Performance Index Gap	43.7	37.4	6.3	19.1	
Science Performance Index Gap	44.4	36.1	8.2	17.3	
Graduation Rate Gap (2013 Cohort)	82.6%	68.4%	14.2%	13.0%	Y

*\*\*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 plus one standard deviation, then the gap is an outlier.*

Participation Rate	Rate
ELA – All Students	90.2%
ELA – High Needs Students	88.9%
Math – All Students	90.2%
Math – High Needs Students	88.9%
Science – All Students	96.1%
Science – High Needs Students	97.1%

School Code: 1516211



# Benefits of Network Participation for Crosby High School

- Increased four-year cohort graduation rate from 65.2 percent in 2012-13 to 74.1 percent (self-reported) in 2015-16. Implementation of the Recuperative Academy in 2015-16 improved four-year graduation rate for over-aged, under-credited students.
- Increase in the year-to-date percentage of Grade 9 students on track to earn credits in all core courses from 81 percent in 2015-16 to 93 percent in 2016-17 (self-reported).
- Increased number and enrollment of students in Advanced Placement (AP) and Dual Enrollment courses.
- Improved student engagement resulting from school-wide, career-themed smaller learning community structure that 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. The smaller learning community structure also provides teacher teams with opportunities to develop and implement common teacher and student protocols.



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

- Increased focus and sense of urgency on the part of the current school attendance team for improvement of chronic absenteeism rate and reduction of absences due to suspensions.
- 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 smaller learning community and school-wide data teams, specifically to analyze student academic outcomes and to provide feedback and technical assistance to teachers to improve instructional practice and interventions.
- Development of a sustainable family engagement plan focused on improving student outcomes in math and English/Language Arts and chronic absenteeism.
- Continued focus on development of strong smaller learning communities focused on creating a positive, personalized school learning environment .



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

- 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.
- Provide technical assistance for implementation of restorative practices to reduce suspension rate and improve chronic absenteeism.
- Meet at least once monthly with school-wide and smaller learning community data teams to analyze academic data and to identify root causes of poor academic performance, providing feedback and technical assistance.
- Plan specific and highly focused professional development for 2017-18 school year focused on effective instruction and interventions to improve student outcomes.
- Biweekly school visits to conduct classroom walkthroughs specifically focused on instruction, differentiation and student engagement, providing feedback and technical assistance.
- 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 Crosby High School reports to the State Board of Education's Accountability and Support Committee.





# COMMISSIONER'S NETWORK FAST FACTS

**CROSBY HIGH SCHOOL**  
**GRADES 9-12**  
 COHORT II — ENTERED NETWORK FALL 2013  
 Waterbury Public Schools

## SUCCESS

The Recuperative Academy uses a blended learning approach to address the needs of over-age/under-credited students, resulting in all seniors assigned to the program in 2015-16 graduating on time. Attention to culturally responsive teaching, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), and implementation of new discipline strategies resulted in reductions in the number of students with behavior referrals.



## COMMISSIONER'S NETWORK FUNDING

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
\$544,719	\$500,320	\$1,192,000	\$800,000

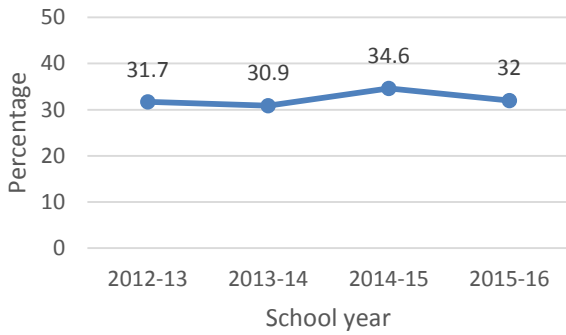
## PRIORITIES

<b>Talent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professional development to improve student engagement with use of project-based learning and culturally responsive teaching strategies.</li> <li>Select teacher professional development with Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), an in-school academic support program.</li> </ul>
<b>Academics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to implement the school's Recuperative Program focusing on improving graduation rates for students identified as over-age and/or under-credited.</li> <li>Support college and career planning for students to keep them on track for graduation by the school's College and Career Access Center coordinator.</li> </ul>
<b>Climate/Culture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue technical assistance and professional development from Attendance Works focusing on reducing chronic absenteeism.</li> <li>Up to 20 young men participating in Developing Tomorrow's Professionals, a state-supported leadership development program for young men.</li> </ul>
<b>Operations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purchase instructional technology equipment to increase access to resources needed to facilitate engaging project-based learning.</li> </ul>



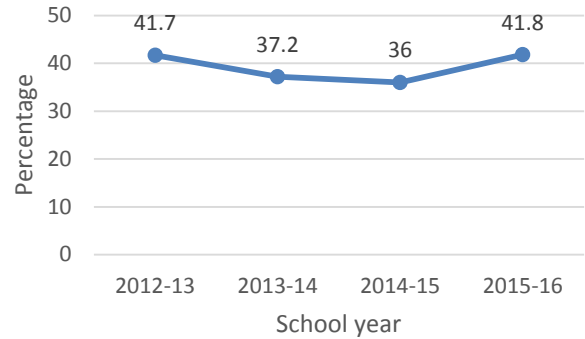
**LEADING AND LAGGING INDICATORS OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

**Chronic Absenteeism**



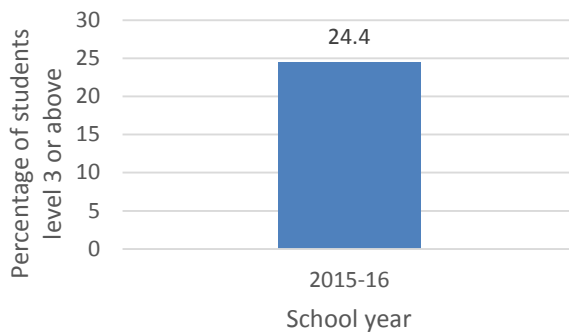
Chronic absenteeism increased by 0.3 percentage points from the 2012-13 baseline year to 2015-16.

**Suspension Rate**



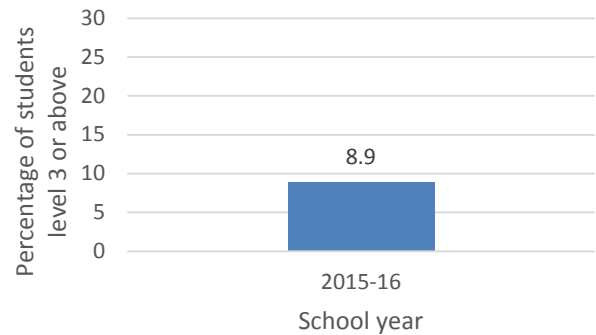
The suspension rate increased by 0.1 percentage point from the 2012-13 baseline year to 2015-16.

**SAT- ELA**



SAT baseline for the 2015-16 school year shows 24.4 percent of students at level 3 or above in ELA.

**SAT- Math**



SAT baseline for the 2015-16 school year shows 8.9 percent of students at level 3 or above in math.

 Year entered the Commissioner's Network

**NEXT STEPS**

- Implementation in 2016-17 of schoolwide smaller learning communities for grades 9-12.
- Continuation of efforts to improve the rate of chronic absenteeism and to reduce the number of students with one or more incidents of in-school suspension/out-of-school suspensions/expulsions.
- Implementation of project-based learning to improve student engagement across all four smaller learning communities.