

**V.D.**

**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 Paul Laurence Dunbar School, Bridgeport, in the Commissioner's Network for an additional and final 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 Paul Laurence Dunbar School in Bridgeport

*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 Paul Laurence Dunbar School in Bridgeport remain in the Network for a fifth and final 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 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:**

Paul Laurence Dunbar School currently serves 397 students in Grades Pre-Kindergarten through eight. One hundred percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Ten percent of the students are identified as needing special education services, and 0 percent are English learners (ELs). Approximately 47 percent of the students are Hispanic and 46 percent are Black.

Paul Laurence Dunbar 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 28, 2013, and March 1, 2013. The audit revealed that serious student misbehavior was impeding learning and had created an atmosphere where students did not feel safe. Fighting and verbal confrontations were serious issues in the school and interrupted the learning process on a regular basis. Observations and interviews indicated that the school leadership lacked the urgency to make changes in order to dramatically improve student outcomes. Classroom observations revealed that instruction varied from classroom to classroom with little evidence of differentiation.

For sustainability purposes, Paul Laurence Dunbar has received a decreased level of funding in each of its four 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 Paul Laurence Dunbar may reflect a significant turnover in teaching staff with less experienced teachers entering each year, as well as variability in instructional practice across classrooms.

**Improvements:**

- The suspension rate has decreased from 32.3 percent in 2013-14 to 16.1 percent in 2015-16.

**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
14.3%	9.5%	5.7%	2.3%

**Continued Areas of Concern:**

- The percentage of Paul Laurence Dunbar students scoring at/above level 3 in math on the Smarter Balanced Assessment decreased from 5.7 percent in 2014-15 to 2.3 percent in 2015-16. This decrease fails to meet the expected gains for a Commissioner’s Network school, and reflects poorly on the implementation of the school improvement plan and instructional leadership.
- The percentage of Paul Laurence Dunbar students scoring at/above level 3 in ELA on the Smarter Balanced Assessment decreased from 14.3 percent in 2014-15 to 9.5 percent in 2015-16. This decrease fails to meet the expected gains for a Commissioner’s Network school, and

reflects poorly on the implementation of the school improvement plan and instructional leadership.

- The percentage of students in Grade 4 considered proficient in reading on the i-Ready benchmark assessment decreased from 6 percent in fall 2016 to 3 percent in winter 2017. This establishes a clear, urgent need to improve instruction of literacy in Grade 4 because no student could demonstrate on the test what they know and can do in reading at the grade four level at the midpoint of the school year and fails to meet the expected gains of a Commissioner's Network school.
- The percentage of students in Grade 7 considered proficient in mathematics on i-Ready benchmark assessment decreased from 3 percent in fall 2016 to 0 percent in winter 2017. This establishes a clear, urgent need to improve instruction of mathematics in the middle grades because no student could demonstrate on the test what they know and can do in math at the grade seven level at the midpoint of the school year and fails to meet the expected gains of a Commissioner's Network school.
- Paul Laurence Dunbar has not provided its new teachers with specific professional development on effective instruction which, unfortunately, reflects poorly on instructional leadership.
- Chronic absenteeism has decreased from 30.4 percent in 2013-14 to 26.6 percent in 2015-16. The self-reported year to date percent is 20.6. This decrease also fails to meet the expected gains for a Commissioner's Network school.

### **Next Steps:**

From May 2017 forward, Paul Laurence Dunbar School will continue strategies that have shown some improvement over the past three years, and abandon those that have not. The CSDE Turnaround Office will provide more intensive monitoring and supports as Dunbar enters Year 5 of the Commissioner's Network. The Year 5 plan will prioritize the following:

- A revised and intensive instructional leadership plan including a regular classroom walkthrough schedule submitted monthly to the Turnaround Office Point of Contact.
- As a result of feedback on walkthroughs and aligned professional development, administration will communicate a common understanding of what effective instruction looks like and enforce high expectations school-wide.
- An increased focus and sense of urgency on improvement of chronic absenteeism rate, literacy and math achievement.
- The district must provide greater professional development to the leader and teachers and on-going support on effective instruction.
- In order to create a sense of urgency in addressing school climate needs, the Turnaround Office Consultant will work directly with the school in the implementation of Restorative Practices.
- Mandated enrollment for a school team in the 2017-18 ReadConn professional learning modules for K-3 teachers 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.

- Report to the State Board of Education's Accountability and Support Committee to discuss progress and receive feedback for continued improvement.

Prepared by: Iris White, 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**

**Paul Laurence Dunbar, Bridgeport Public Schools**

**Recommendation for a One-Year Extension**

**Desi D. Nesmith**

# Paul Laurence Dunbar School Demographics\*

397 students, Grades PreK-8

100% Free/Reduced Lunch

10% Students with Disabilities

0% English Learners

46% Black

47% Hispanic

\*Self-reported data for 2016-17



# Leading & Lagging Indicators

Chronic Absenteeism			Suspension Rate		
2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017 YTD*	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017 YTD*
28.7%	26.6%	20.6%	23.3%	16.1%	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
14.3%		9.5%	5.7%		2.3%
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
146	15.1%	36.8%	146	9.6%	26.5%



\*Self-reported data



# Reading Benchmark Assessment Results

## Percentage and Number of Students at Proficiency in Reading

	Fall 2016-2017	Winter 2016-2017
Kindergarten	0% (0)	41% (16)
1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	0% (0)	9% (3)
2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	0% (0)	12% (5)
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	11% (4)	21% (8)
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	6% (2)	3% (1)
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	0% (0)	6% (2)
6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	0% (0)	0% (0)
7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	10% (3)	10% (3)
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	5% (2)	8% (3)



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

Grade Level	Fall 2016-2017	Winter 2016-2017
Kindergarten	3% (1)	26% (10)
1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	0% (0)	3% (1)
2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	0% (0)	0% (0)
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	0% (0)	5% (2)
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	0% (0)	6% (2)
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	0% (0)	0% (0)
6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	0% (0)	0% (0)
7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	3% (1)	0% (0)
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	3% (1)	3% (1)





# Next Generation Accountability Report: 2015-16

Choose a District

Choose a School

Bridgeport School District	Dunbar School_0154111
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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	46.1	75	30.8	50	61.5%	67.7
1b.	ELA Performance Index – High Needs Students	46.1	75	30.8	50	61.5%	56.7
1c.	Math Performance Index – All Students	35.5	75	23.7	50	47.3%	61.4
1d.	Math Performance Index – High Needs Students	35.5	75	23.7	50	47.3%	49.9
1e.	Science Performance Index – All Students	39.6	75	26.4	50	52.8%	57.5
1f.	Science Performance Index – High Needs Students	39.6	75	26.4	50	52.8%	47.0
2a.	ELA Avg. Percentage of Growth Target Achieved – All Students	36.8%	100	36.8	100	36.8%	63.8%
2b.	ELA Avg. Percentage of Growth Target Achieved – High Needs Students	36.8%	100	36.8	100	36.8%	58.3%
2c.	Math Avg. Percentage of Growth Target Achieved – All Students	26.5%	100	26.5	100	26.5%	65.0%
2d.	Math Avg. Percentage of Growth Target Achieved – High Needs Students	26.5%	100	26.5	100	26.5%	57.4%
4a.	Chronic Absenteeism – All Students	26.6%	<=5%	6.9	50	13.7%	9.6%
4b.	Chronic Absenteeism – High Needs Students	26.6%	<=5%	6.9	50	13.7%	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	65.8%	94%	35.0	50	70.0%	85.1%
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%   51.9%	75%	34.6	50	69.1%	89.2%   50.5%
12	Arts Access	N/A	60%				47.5%
<b>Accountability Index</b>				<b>371.5</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>41.3%</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	46.1	N/A	16.6	
Math Performance Index Gap	N/A	35.5	N/A	19.1	
Science Performance Index Gap	N/A	39.6	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 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	100.0%
ELA – High Needs Students	100.0%
Math – All Students	100.0%
Math – High Needs Students	100.0%
Science – All Students	96.2%
Science – High Needs Students	96.2%

School Code: 0154111



# Benefits of Network participation for Paul Laurence Dunbar School

- The suspension rate decreased from 32.3 percent in 2013-14 to 16.1 percent in 2015-16.
- Provided training to teachers and on-going support for the school-wide implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports.
- Implementation of i-Ready intervention tools to provide strategies to address student deficits at their individual reading levels.
- Expanded the school to include a Pre-K program.



# **Under the close monitoring and supervision of the Turnaround Office, Paul Laurence Dunbar's next steps for 2017-18 are:**

- A revised and intensive instructional leadership plan including a regular classroom walkthrough schedule submitted monthly to the Turnaround Office Point of Contact.
- As a result of feedback on walkthroughs and aligned professional development, administration will communicate a common understanding of what effective instruction looks like and enforce high expectations school-wide.
- An increased focus and sense of urgency on improvement of chronic absenteeism rate, literacy and math achievement.
- The district must provide greater professional development to the leader and teachers and on-going support on effective instruction.
- In order to create a sense of urgency in addressing school climate needs, the Turnaround Office Consultant will work directly with the school in the implementation of Restorative Practices.
- Mandated enrollment for a school team in the 2017-18 ReadConn professional learning modules for K-3 teachers 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.
- Report to the State Board of Education's Accountability and Support Committee to discuss progress and receive feedback for continued improvement.



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

- Provide technical assistance and support to help Dunbar School strengthen its overall school climate and implement restorative practices.
- Provide intensive and regular technical assistance with a focus on effective literacy and math instruction to improve student outcomes.
- Regular school visits to conduct classroom walkthroughs specifically focused on reading and math in order to provide feedback and technical assistance.
- Assist with the analysis of Smarter Balanced Assessment growth results and new accountability index in order to improve instructional practice.





# COMMISSIONER'S NETWORK FAST FACTS

**PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR SCHOOL**  
**GRADES K-8**  
 COHORT II— ENTERED NETWORK FALL 2013  
 Bridgeport Public Schools

## SUCCESS

Paul Laurence Dunbar's focus on the implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, as well as strengthening effective classroom management strategies, has resulted in a 23.5 percentage point decrease in suspensions. The attention to improved school culture and climate has contributed to a positive rapport among teachers and students, a reduction in office referrals, and a steady decrease in chronic absenteeism.



## COMMISSIONER'S NETWORK FUNDING

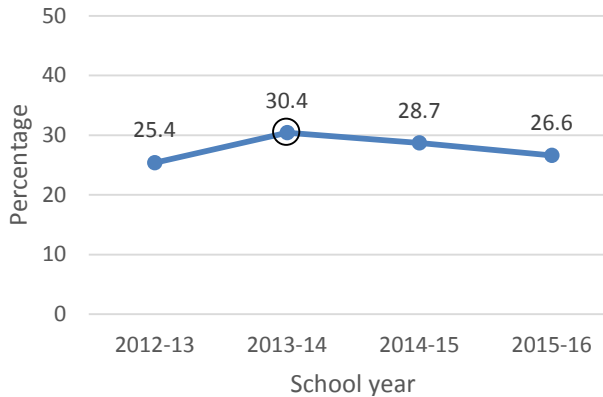
Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
\$1,289,999	\$1,249,308	\$500,000	\$230,000

## PRIORITIES

<b>Talent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve teacher effectiveness through professional development and coaching focused exclusively on literacy and math instruction.</li> </ul>
<b>Academics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use assessment data to identify student learning needs and plan interventions.</li> <li>Strengthen the Literacy Core Instructional Block through continued implementation of Readers and Writers Workshop.</li> <li>Implementation of math centers to improve student proficiency in math.</li> </ul>
<b>Climate/Culture</b>	N/A
<b>Operations</b>	N/A

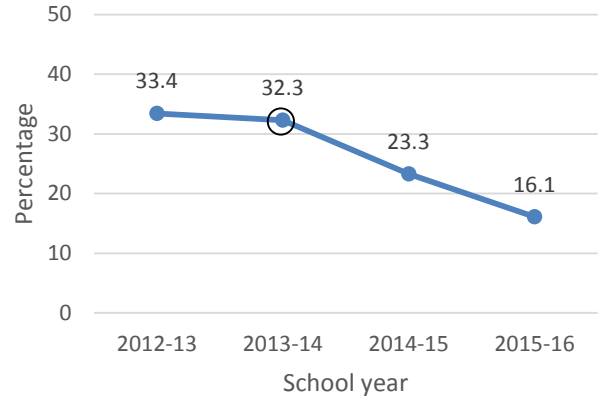
**LEADING AND LAGGING INDICATORS OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

**Chronic Absenteeism**



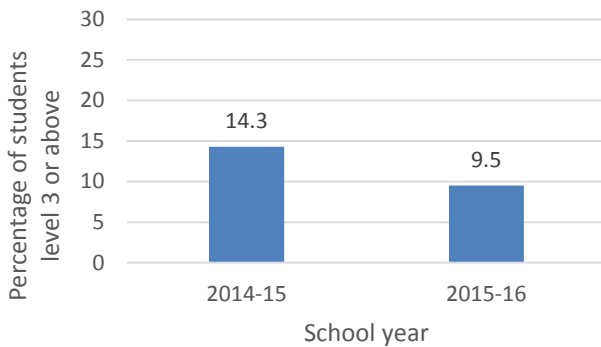
Chronic absenteeism increased by 1.2 percentage points from the 2012-13 baseline year to 2015-16.

**Suspension Rate**



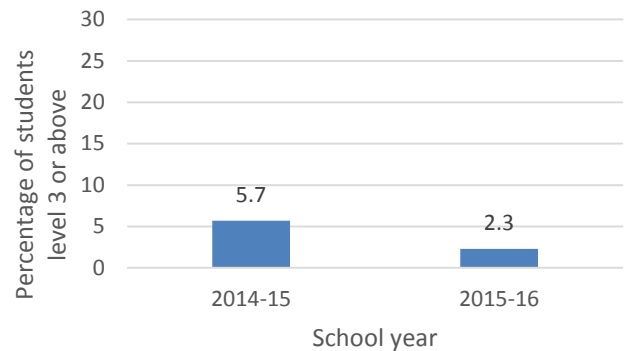
The suspension rate decreased by 17.3 percentage points from the 2012-13 baseline year to 2015-16.

**Smarter Balanced Assessment  
 ELA**



The percentage of students at level 3 or above in ELA decreased by 4.8 percentage points.

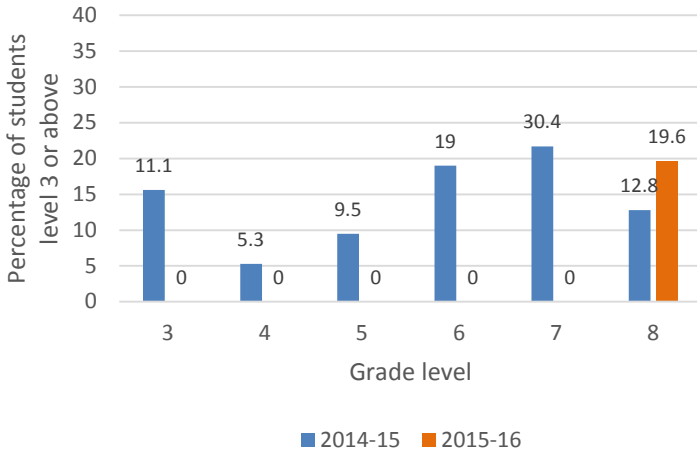
**Smarter Balanced Assessment  
 Math**



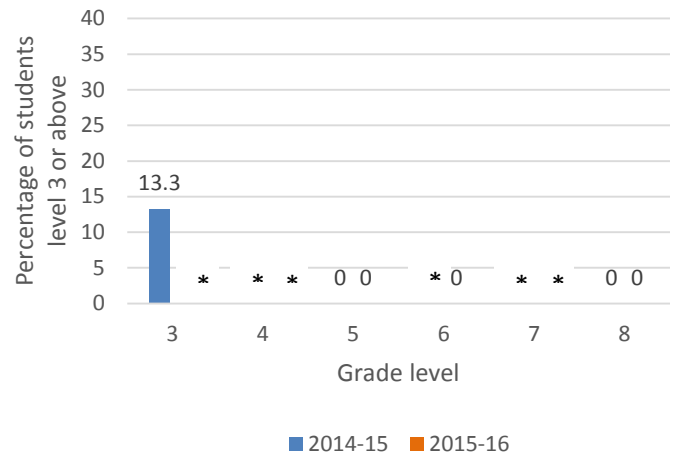
The percentage of students at level 3 or above in math decreased by 3.4 percentage points.



### Smarter Balanced Assessment ELA



### Smarter Balanced Assessment Math



\* Data suppressed to ensure student data privacy.

#### NEXT STEPS

- Administrative Team will closely monitor student growth using the iReady interventions and data.
- Administrative Team will closely monitor student growth through regular horizontal and vertical data teams and data collection and analysis.
- Regional educational service center (RES-C) partner, Cooperative Educational Services (CES), will provide embedded coaching to strengthen the core literacy and numeracy instructional blocks.