

V.B.

**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 Walsh Elementary School, Waterbury in the Commissioner's Network for an additional and final year commencing July 1, 2017, 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 Walsh Elementary 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 Walsh Elementary School in Waterbury remain in the Network for an additional 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:

Walsh Elementary School currently serves 396 students in Pre-Kindergarten through Grade Five. Seventy-eight percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Thirteen percent of the students are identified as needing special education services, and 16 percent are English learners. Approximately 63 percent of the students are Hispanic and 27 percent are Black.

Walsh Elementary School entered the Commissioner’s Network in the fall of 2013. Prior to receiving State Board approval to enter the Network in 2013, an Operations and Instructional Audit as well as a Needs Assessment were conducted. The audit and assessment indicated several challenges impeding success. These included low and declining academic achievement, a culture of low student expectations, inconsistent instructional quality and rigor, inadequate professional development, unclear student behavioral expectations, weak student engagement, and high chronic absenteeism. In 2012-13, the year prior to entering the Commissioner’s Network, Walsh had the lowest performance of any elementary school in the district.

The school’s leadership team and teachers have been able to enact sustainable change in academic performance, staff development, and student engagement, as evidenced by the meaningful positive trend in student scores, teacher-reported satisfaction, and continuous improvement in student attendance/discipline statistics. Additionally, the school has received a decreased level of Commissioner’s Network funding in each of the past three years, and has successfully implemented with fidelity its effective Project Child reform instructional model into basic, self-sustaining school operations.

Achievement Data:

School-wide Achievement Data

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	
2014-15	2015-16	2014-15	2015-16
7.2%	16.6%	3.2%	10.9%

Improvements:

- The percentage of Walsh students meeting or exceeding the achievement standard in English Language Arts (ELA) on the Smarter Balanced Assessment increased from 7.2 percent in 2014-15 to 16.6 percent in 2015-16, representing a 9.4 percentage point gain in a single year.

- The percentage of students meeting or exceeding the achievement standards in Mathematics on the Smarter Balanced Assessment increased from 3.2 percent in 2014-15 to 10.9 percent in 2015-16, representing a one-year gain of 7.7 percentage points.
- The percentage of students considered chronically absent meaningfully decreased from 21.4 percent in 2014-15 to 12.9 percent in 2015-16. This positive trend continues with a year-to-date chronic absenteeism rate of 7.7 percent through March 2017.
- The suspension rate has decreased from 16.8 percent in 2014-15 to 10.5 percent in 2015-16. Through March 2017, this positive trend continues with suspension incidents down significantly (-53%), compared to the same YTD time period in 2015-16.
- The past three implementation years of the transformative, research-based Project Child instructional model have fueled this strong student improvement through the structured integration of effective teaching methodologies and classroom management practices, job-embedded coaching, team teaching, and differentiated instruction.

Continued Areas of Concern:

- While recent growth trends have been strong, continued improvement of overall mathematics proficiency continues as an important and urgent focus area for instruction and intervention.
- More intensive supplemental reading support through small group reading instruction and tiered SRBI programs will be an area of focus to elevate reading achievement levels. The percentage of students at ELA proficiency in Grades 3-5 on the winter mClass benchmark assessment decreased between two to four points from the fall period, as tested skills also increased in difficulty.
- Student-based culture and climate improvements will continue through the practice of achieving common expectations as well as peer conflict resolution strategies.

Next Steps:

During the 2017-18 school year, Walsh Elementary School will continue strategies that have proven effective over the past four years, and target areas requiring further growth and development. The Year 5 plan will prioritize the following:

- Strengthening student mathematics performance through support and intervention strategies, including small group differentiated instruction; supplemental intervention groups (in addition to core classes) addressing number sense, operations and procedural fluency; added iReady math program practice; data team monitoring; and professional development.
- Leveraging trained teachers and internal coaching capacity to sustain the impact of the Project Child instructional model.
- Increasing science proficiency through additional class time supporting inquiry-based activities, as well as science content integrated into specials and after-school activities.

- Further reducing chronic absenteeism with an emphasis on targeting students and families in specific student groups, particularly special education and English learners, who are still showing above average rates of absenteeism.
- Continue the long-term school climate improvement trend and incident reduction through monitoring, intervention, and prevention strategies that are implemented through the school prevention specialist.
- Report to the State Board of Education’s Accountability and Support Committee to discuss progress and receive feedback for continued improvement.

Prepared by: Mike Kent, 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

Walsh Elementary School, Waterbury

Recommendation for a One-Year Extension

Desi D. Nesmith

Walsh Demographics

396 students, Grades PreK-5

78% Free/Reduced Lunch

13% Students with Disabilities

16% English Learners

63% Hispanic

27% Black



Leading & Lagging Indicators

Walsh Elementary School

Chronic Absenteeism			Suspension Rate		
2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017YTD*	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017 YTD*
21.4%	12.9%	7.7%	16.8%	10.5%	4.7%
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
7.2%		16.4%	3.2%		10.6%
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
105	43.8%	76.0%	105	38.1%	62.3%

* Self- reported data through 3/28/17



Walsh Elementary School Reading Benchmark Assessment Results

Percent and Number of Students at Proficiency in Reading

Grade Level	Fall 2016 -2017	Winter 2016-2017
Kindergarten	not tested	24% (14)
1 st Grade	36% (20)	41% (20)
2 nd Grade	47% (28)	65% (40)
3 rd Grade	64% (36)	62% (41)
4 th Grade	77% (50)	73% (46)
5 th Grade	71% (44)	67% (41)



Walsh Elementary School Mathematics Benchmark Assessment Results

Percent and Number of Students at Proficiency in Mathematics

Grade Level	Fall 2016 -2017	Winter 2016-2017
Kindergarten	0% (0)	41% (22)
1 st Grade	11% (6)	48% (23)
2 nd Grade	0% (0)	22% (13)
3 rd Grade	0% (0)	19% (11)
4 th Grade	0% (0)	34% (20)
5 th Grade	0% (0)	30% (17)





Next Generation Accountability Report: 2015-16

Choose a District

Choose a School

Waterbury School District	Walsh School_1512211
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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	53.2	75	35.4	50	70.9%	67.7
1b.	ELA Performance Index – High Needs Students	53.1	75	35.4	50	70.8%	56.7
1c.	Math Performance Index – All Students	44.9	75	30.0	50	59.9%	61.4
1d.	Math Performance Index – High Needs Students	44.8	75	29.9	50	59.7%	49.9
1e.	Science Performance Index – All Students	33.9	75	22.6	50	45.3%	57.5
1f.	Science Performance Index – High Needs Students	34.0	75	22.7	50	45.4%	47.0
2a.	ELA Avg. Percentage of Growth Target Achieved – All Students	76.0%	100	76.0	100	76.0%	63.8%
2b.	ELA Avg. Percentage of Growth Target Achieved – High Needs Students	77.0%	100	77.0	100	77.0%	58.3%
2c.	Math Avg. Percentage of Growth Target Achieved – All Students	62.3%	100	62.3	100	62.3%	65.0%
2d.	Math Avg. Percentage of Growth Target Achieved – High Needs Students	62.4%	100	62.4	100	62.4%	57.4%
4a.	Chronic Absenteeism – All Students	12.9%	<=5%	34.2	50	68.4%	9.6%
4b.	Chronic Absenteeism – High Needs Students	12.1%	<=5%	35.7	50	71.4%	15.6%
5	Preparation for CCR – % taking courses	N/A	75%				67.6%
6	Preparation for CCR – % passing exams	N/A	75%				40.7%
7	On-track to High School Graduation	N/A	94%				85.1%
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)	84.6% 72.7%	75%	24.2	50	48.5%	89.2% 50.5%
12	Arts Access	N/A	60%				47.5%
	Accountability Index			547.9	850	64.5%	

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	N/A	53.1	N/A	16.6	
Math Performance Index Gap	N/A	44.8	N/A	19.1	
Science Performance Index Gap	N/A	34.0	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	100.0%
Science – High Needs Students	100.0%

Benefits of Network Participation for Walsh Elementary School:

- The percentage of students considered chronically absent decreased significantly from **21.4%** in 2014-2015 to **12.9%** in 2015-2016, and is at **7.7%** as of YTD March 2017.
- The suspension rate decreased from **16.8%** in 2014-15 to **10.5%** in 2015-2016. As of March 2017, the YTD number is **4.7%**.
- Student achievement gains, reflecting proficiency (Level 3+) on the Smarter Balanced Assessment, have increased on both ELA and Mathematics by **+9.4 points** and **+7.7 points**, respectively.
- Full school-wide implementation of the transformative Project Child instructional model has fueled student improvement, more effective teaching and instructional differentiation, coaching and classroom management.



Walsh Elementary School's Next Steps for 2017-18:

- Strengthening student Mathematics performance through support and intervention strategies (small group differentiated instruction, iReady math program practice, interventionist groups, data team monitoring, and professional development).
- Leveraging trained teachers and internal coaching capacity to sustain the impact of the Project Child instructional model.
- Increasing Science proficiency through additional class time supporting inquiry-based activities, and science-related specials and after-school activities.
- Further reducing chronic absenteeism with an emphasis on targeting issues that impact specific student group populations and families.
- Continue the long-term school climate improvement trend and incident reduction through monitoring, intervention, and prevention strategies.



Turnaround Office Next Steps for 2017-18:

- Monthly school visits to conduct classroom walkthroughs and provide feedback and to assist in the implementation of a positive school climate and restorative practices.
- NetStat professional development conference for Network Schools to share best practices.
- Provide guidance to school as it addresses its growth areas including math improvement and sustainability.
- Assistance with analysis of Smarter Balanced Assessment growth results and new accountability index in order to improve instructional practice.





COMMISSIONER'S NETWORK FAST FACTS

**WALSH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
GRADES PK-5**
COHORT II — ENTERED NETWORK FALL 2013
Waterbury Public Schools

SUCCESS

With a new principal and leadership team since joining the Network, Walsh Elementary School has led a substantial schoolwide change effort, including the rollout and implementation of the Project CHILD model, affecting the school's schedule, the formation of instructional team "clusters," teacher assignments, pedagogy, and planning time — all with fidelity and strong teacher support. Teachers are using district-adopted curricula aligned to Common Core State Standards and have significantly improved structured opportunities to differentiate instruction. Coaching, professional development, and tiered intervention support are showing strong student achievement gains. Teacher retention has soared and school-wide climate, environment, adult interactions, student conduct and discipline incidents have all improved dramatically since entering the Network.



Walsh School students proudly representing the SWAG program: Students Who Achieve Goals.

COMMISSIONER'S NETWORK FUNDING

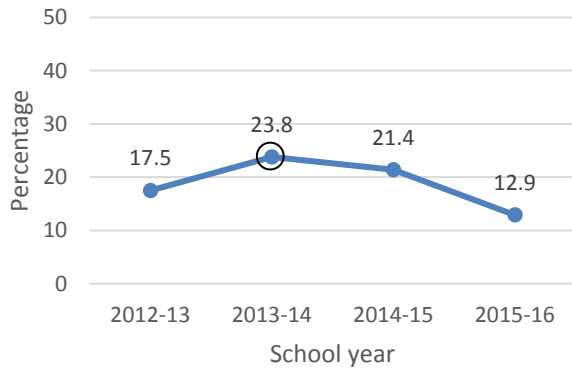
Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
\$470,960	\$785,246	\$624,720	\$350,000

PRIORITIES

Talent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve teacher effectiveness through professional development focusing on advanced elements of Project Child, as well as culture and climate strategies Efforts to hire and retain qualified building and daily substitutes.
Academics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Math interventionist will provide daily support in addition to the classroom teachers.
Climate/Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue efforts to reduce suspendable offenses using behavior staff position to facilitate support groups and preventative services. Improve social-emotional health in primary grades through primary mental health play therapy as a school-based early intervention program.
Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve teacher effectiveness through the purchase of supplemental instructional materials supporting classroom instruction. Extended teacher collaboration time to review data and lesson plans.

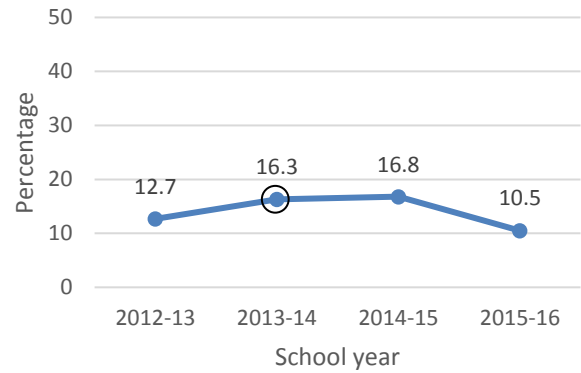
LEADING AND LAGGING INDICATORS OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Chronic Absenteeism



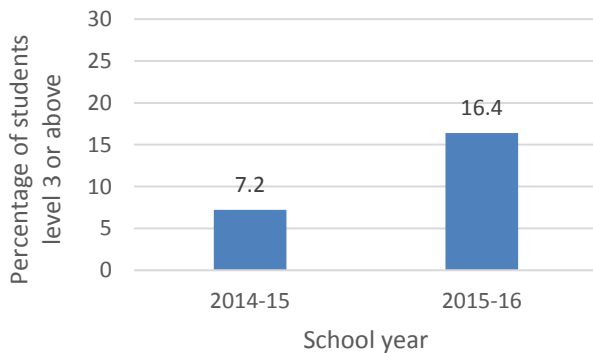
Chronic absenteeism decreased by 4.6 percentage points from the 2012-13 baseline year to 2015-16.

Suspension Rate



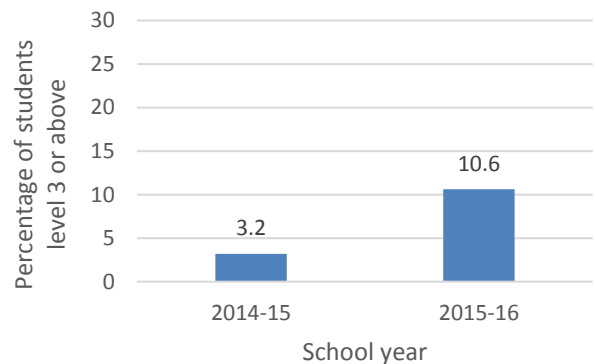
The suspension rate decreased by 2.2 percentage points from the 2012-13 baseline year to 2015-16.

**Smarter Balanced Assessment
ELA**

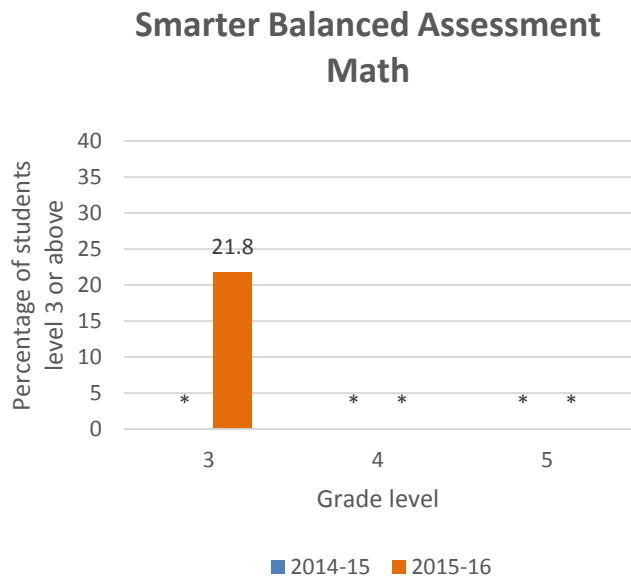
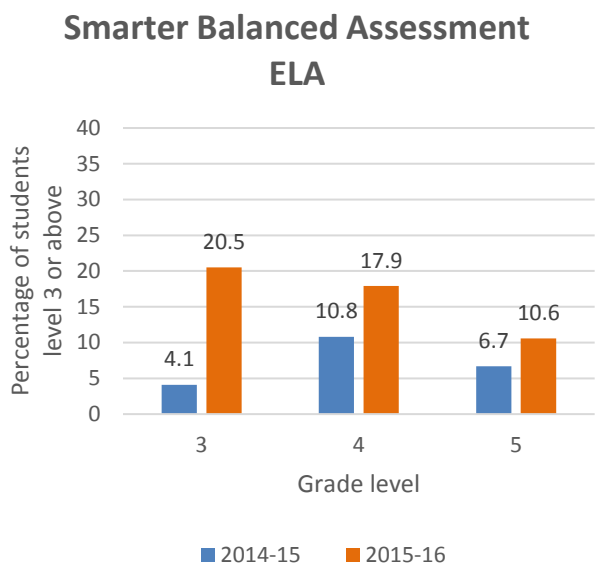


The percentage of students at level 3 or above in ELA increased by 9.2 percentage points.

**Smarter Balanced Assessment
Math**



The percentage of students at level 3 or above in math increased by 7.4 percentage points.



* Data suppressed to ensure student data privacy.

NEXT STEPS

- Improve overall math proficiency through the designated math coach and math interventionist.
- Provide additional supplemental reading support through the Wilson Reading tiered intervention program.
- Continue student-based culture and climate improvements through the practice of common expectations.