

# VI.B.

## CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION Hartford

### TO BE PROPOSED:

May 5, 2021

**RESOLVED**, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-223h of the Connecticut General Statutes, adopts and approves the Turnaround Plan for Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School of New London for the Commissioner's Network, subject to the conditions noted in the Acting Commissioner's May 5, 2021, Executive Summary to the State Board of Education, and directs the Acting Commissioner to take the necessary action, including, but not limited to, expending such funds as may be necessary to execute and implement the foregoing.

Approved by a vote of \_\_\_\_\_, this fifth day of May, Two Thousand Twenty-One.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Charlene M. Russell-Tucker, Secretary  
State Board of Education

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Hartford**

**TO:** State Board of Education

**FROM:** Charlene M. Russell-Tucker, Acting Commissioner of Education

**DATE:** May 5, 2021

**SUBJECT:** Approval of Commissioner’s Network Turnaround Plan for Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School, New London

*Executive Summary*

**Introduction**

Section 10-223h of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) establishes the Commissioner’s Network to provide new resources and flexibilities to improve student achievement in a subset of the state’s lowest-performing schools. The Network represents a commitment between local stakeholders and the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) to empower teachers and leaders to implement research-based strategies in schools selected by the Commissioner to participate in the Network for a period of three years with the potential for a 1 or 2 one-year extension beyond the initial 3 years. Network schools remain part of their local school districts; the districts and the CSDE secure school-level autonomy for the schools in exchange for heightened accountability.

Successful school turnaround requires flexible policy conditions and targeted investments in high-yield reform strategies. There is a demonstrated need for support, financial and otherwise, to fully implement the Turnaround Plan for Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School (BDJMS) located in New London, CT. This will require efforts at the state and local levels to secure conditions that are conducive to scalable and sustainable reform.

**Background**

On April 3, 2019, the CSDE received an *Expression of Interest Form* from the New London Public Schools (NLPS) volunteering BDJMS for participation in the Network. On June 5, 2019, the Commissioner initially selected BDJMS for possible participation in the Network based on the following factors: (a) the district’s expression of interest; and (b) the academic and developmental needs of the school’s students and the capacity of the district to address those needs. The school was approved for one year of planning to develop a turnaround plan. Following initial selection, BDJMS and the New London Education Association appointed members to serve on the school’s Turnaround Committee, and the CSDE conducted an Operations and Instructional Audit on November 4, 2019. The Turnaround Committee developed the Turnaround Plan for BDJMS in accordance with C.G.S. § 10-223h (d).

## **Turnaround Plan for Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School**

BDJMS, identified as a Turnaround School based on the Accountability Index under the Next Generation Accountability System, serves 348 students in Grades 6 through 8. Approximately 85 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Approximately 18.9 percent of the students are identified as needing special education services; 45.9 percent are English learners (ELs); 71.6 percent of the students are Hispanic; and 15.2 percent are Black.

The goal of the BDJMS Turnaround Plan will be to build upon the work that has been done during the Commissioner's Network planning year to strengthen the instructional leadership structures and practices. Talent prioritizes the creation and implementation of a comprehensive support system for teachers, focused on academics and social emotional practices in order to recruit and retain effective teachers supported with the implementation of school-wide systems. In academics, the turnaround plan is built around the identification and implementation of effective teaching strategies, culturally relevant and responsive standards-based curriculum, and strengthening Tier 1 supports and programming for English learners. Improving the culture and climate of BDJMS will include revising and implementing a comprehensive plan to address chronic absenteeism, developing and implementing a common set of behavior expectations and interventions, and professional learning to build the capacity of staff on culturally responsive teaching practices and trauma-informed teaching. Lastly, BDJMS will develop plans and structures that support opportunities to ensure collaborative planning and professional learning time.

The following strategic components in the domains of Talent, Academics, Culture and Climate, and Operations speak to the transformative potential of the BDJMS Turnaround Plan. Specifically, the school, in collaboration with the NLPS, will:

### ***Talent:***

- Implement an effective plan for recruiting new staff members specific to the vacancies within the building and the diverse needs of the student population;
- Establish a continuum of opportunities for professional growth and support in school-wide expectations, relationship building practices, and effective instructional strategies;
- Provide a variety of relevant and engaging cycles of culturally responsive professional development for all staff, relevant to their position, need, and practice;
- Create a coaching plan and cycles to ensure effective implementation and to inform about subsequent supports.

### ***Academics:***

- Complete and implement a standards-based curriculum for math and ELA that includes the identification of resources and strategies that are culturally relevant and responsive;
- Formalize and implement a comprehensive literacy and numeracy plan to address the needs of students across all tiers of instruction;
- Revise and implement professional development and instructional coaching focused on the adopted math and ELA curricula; and

- Establish and implement a comprehensive, culturally relevant and responsive plan to strengthen Tier 1 support and a continuum of responsive supports for English Learners and students with disabilities.

***Culture and Climate:***

- Develop and implement a comprehensive tiered plan to address root causes for chronic absenteeism;
- Establish and promote culturally relevant and responsive systems that improve relationships between all stakeholders to develop a positive school culture;
- Provide staff with professional development focused on culturally responsive teaching practices, trauma informed teaching, and other strategies to support students’ social-emotional well-being; and
- Plan and implement proactive strategies to promote positive family and community connections to support school and community goals and strengthen positive relationships.

***Operations:***

- Provide additional professional development and collaboration opportunities to support teachers with the implementation of instruction and interactive learning activities that promote engagement and reflect the updated curriculum; and
- Develop and implement a plan that ensures collaborative planning time and regularly scheduled professional development for staff.

The CSDE shall make a final determination regarding the allocation of funds, following the Turnaround Plan’s approval by the State Board of Education. The Turnaround Office will collaborate with district leadership and the Turnaround Committee to prioritize expenditures identified through the planning process.

Through this budgeting process, BDJMS will work to evaluate and repurpose existing funding streams (e.g., local, state, federal, and grants) to support Network reform efforts and foster long-term sustainability. Funding for BDJMS is contingent upon the availability of funds and will be based on the transformative potential of the Turnaround Plan, as well as the size of the school.

BDJMS will benefit from increased flexibility and additional resources in exchange for heightened accountability. Over the course of the school’s participation in the Network, the Commissioner and/or CSDE Turnaround Office will review: (a) school progress relative to implementation of the Turnaround Plan and annual plan amendments; and (b) school performance relative to identified goals and leading and lagging performance metrics. BDJMS will participate in periodic monitoring sessions, including school and classroom walkthroughs, progress monitoring, NetStat sessions, and annual school audits. In addition, the CSDE will provide ongoing support and technical assistance to support BDJMS through site visits and targeted support based on the Turnaround Plan.

## **Recommendation with Conditions**

I recommend that the Board approve the Turnaround Plan for BDJMS, which would be subject to the successful completion of the following items:

1. By September 30, 2021, BDJMS shall commit to specific transformation expectations outlined here in the areas of talent, academics, culture and climate, and operations as part of participation in the Commissioner's Network.
2. The Superintendent, on behalf of the BDJMS Turnaround Committee, shall submit plan amendments to the CSDE Turnaround Office on an annual basis in the spring, following school audits, detailing proposed strategies, budget requests, and implementation timelines for the following school year. The Commissioner or her designee may reconvene the Turnaround Committee to consider annual plan amendments, as appropriate and necessary. If the Turnaround Committee does not enact plan amendments or if the amendments are unlikely to result in sufficient progress or adequately address implementation concerns, the Commissioner may take appropriate actions to ensure sufficient progress at BDJMS, including, but not limited to, developing a revised Turnaround Plan and/or exercising any and all authorities prescribed in C.G.S. Section 10-223h.
3. BDJMS shall comply with all fiscal and programmatic reviews, provide any information requested by the CSDE in a timely manner, and report progress against goals and metrics in the format and frequency established by the CSDE.

## **Materials**

Please see enclosed:

1. BDJMS Audit Report resulting from the Operations and Instructional Audit conducted on November 4, 2019.
2. Turnaround Plan developed and agreed to by the Turnaround Committee.

Prepared by: Carole Dibble  
Teacher Leader in Residence, Turnaround Office

Reviewed by: Lisa Lamenzo  
Division Director, Turnaround Office

Approved by: Irene E. Parisi  
Chief Academic Officer

# The Commissioner's Network Turnaround Plan Application | Cohort X

Form Number: ED 708  
Section 10-223h of the Connecticut General Statutes

Charlene M. Russell-Tucker  
Acting Commissioner of Education  
Connecticut State Department of Education  
450 Columbus Boulevard | Hartford, CT 06103  
[www.sde.ct.gov](http://www.sde.ct.gov)



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### AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

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Levy Gillespie

Equal Employment Opportunity Director/Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator (ADA)

Connecticut State Department of Education | 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 505 | Hartford, CT 06103-1841 |

860-807-2071 | [Levy.gillespie@ct.gov](mailto:Levy.gillespie@ct.gov)

## PART I: COMMISSIONER'S NETWORK OVERVIEW

### A. Commissioner's Network Overview

The Commissioner's Network (the Network) is a commitment between local stakeholders and the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) to dramatically improve student achievement in up to 25 low-performing schools. The Network offers new resources and empowers teachers and school leaders to implement research-based strategies in schools selected by the Commissioner. Network schools remain part of their local school districts, but the districts and the CSDE secure school-level flexibility and autonomy for the schools in exchange for heightened accountability. Schools participate in the Network for a period of three to five years.

Pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) § 10-223h(a), the Commissioner may select a school that has been classified as a category four or five school, as described in C.G.S. § 10-223e, to participate in the Network. The Commissioner gives preference for selection to schools: (1) that volunteer to participate in the Network, provided the local board of education and the representatives of the exclusive bargaining unit for certified employees mutually agree to participate in the Network; (2) in which an existing collective bargaining agreement between the local board of education and the representatives of the exclusive bargaining unit for certified employees will have expired for the school year in which a Turnaround Plan will be implemented; or (3) that are located in school districts that (A) have experience in school turnaround reform, or (B) previously received a school improvement grant pursuant to Section 1003(g) of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 6301, et seq.

#### C.G.S. § 10-223h

- authorizes the Commissioner to establish, within available appropriations, a Commissioner's Network of schools to improve student academic achievement in low-performing schools;
- authorizes the Commissioner to select not more than 25 schools in any single school year that have been classified as a category four school or a category five school pursuant to Section 10-223e to participate in the Network; and
- provides that the Commissioner may select not more than five schools in any single school year from a single school district to participate in the Network.

After the Commissioner initially selects a school to participate in the Commissioner's Network, the local board of education shall establish a Turnaround Committee pursuant to C.G.S. § 10-223h(b). Following the establishment of the Turnaround Committee, the CSDE shall conduct, in consultation with the local board of education, the School Governance Council, and the Turnaround Committee, an operations and instructional audit of the school in accordance with C.G.S. § 10-223h(c). Once the audit is performed, the Turnaround Committee shall develop a Turnaround Plan for the school by completing this application. As stated in C.G.S. § 10-223h(d), if the Turnaround Committee does not develop a Turnaround Plan, or if the Commissioner determines that a Turnaround Plan developed by the Turnaround Committee is deficient, the Commissioner may develop a Turnaround Plan for the school. If the Commissioner deems it necessary, the Commissioner may appoint a district improvement officer for a school to implement the provisions of a turnaround plan developed by the Commissioner.



## B. Turnaround Plan and Framework

The Turnaround Committee, in consultation with the School Governance Council, shall develop the Turnaround Plan in accordance with C.G.S. § 10-223h(d) and the guidelines issued by the Commissioner. Accordingly, the Turnaround Plan must:

- provide a rigorous needs analysis informed by the operations and instructional audit;
- identify an evidence-based turnaround model, aligned to school needs and growth areas;
- provide robust strategies to secure, support, develop, evaluate, and retain top talent;
- summarize the school's academic model, including curricula, assessments, and data-driven instruction;
- outline a comprehensive approach to build a positive school culture and climate; and
- develop operational structures to effectively utilize time and resources.

Pursuant to C.G.S. § 10-223h(d), the Turnaround Plan may include proposals changing the hours and schedules of teachers and administrators at the school, the length and schedule of the school day, the length and calendar of the school year, the amount of time teachers shall be present in the school beyond the regular school day, and the hiring or reassignment of teachers or administrators at the school. If provisions of the Turnaround Plan alter the collective bargaining agreements applicable to the administrators and teachers employed by the local board of education, the local board of education and the exclusive bargaining unit for the affected certified employees shall negotiate concerning such provisions in accordance with C.G.S. § 10-153s. See C.G.S. § 10-223h(g).

The Board of Education must approve the Turnaround Plan before the school may implement it. Once the Turnaround Plan is approved, Network school leaders will work with the CSDE Turnaround Office, and other partners, to operationalize the Turnaround Plan by planning and designing tools, systems, and/or policies including, but not limited to:

- school bell schedule;
- school calendar;
- annual assessment calendar;
- staff evaluation schedule;
- professional learning calendar;
- Scientific Research-Based Interventions processes and protocols;
- school organizational chart;
- curricular materials (e.g., lesson plan template, unit plans, pacing guides);
- school budget;
- school climate; and
- calendar of family and community engagement opportunities.

## PART II: TURNAROUND PLAN APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

### A. Instructions

Review and follow all directions carefully when completing this application. Complete all of the required sections. The application will be deemed incomplete and/or deficient if required sections are not submitted. The specific timeline for this application will be determined by the CSDE. District leadership must participate in, at minimum, two benchmark meetings with the Turnaround Office to provide updates on elements of the draft Turnaround Plan as it evolves and receive formative feedback. Be prepared to share draft Turnaround Plan components prior to these meetings.

### B. Timeline Summary

Consistent with C.G.S. § 10-223h, the Commissioner's Network process is outlined below. As noted, the extension and expansion of the Commissioner's Network requires new legislative authorization; therefore, initial planning activities for a tenth prospective cohort of Network schools are underway, pending legislative authorization.

1. Commissioner initially selects the school for the Network.
2. Local board of education forms the Turnaround Committee.
3. CSDE conducts the operations and instructional audit of the school.
4. Turnaround Committee, in consultation with the school governance council, develops the Turnaround Plan and budget proposal.
5. Turnaround Committee reaches consensus or the Commissioner may develop a plan.
6. SBE votes to approve or reject the Turnaround Plan.
7. Local board of education negotiates Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with collective bargaining units for certified staff, if necessary, to establish the working conditions for the school during its turnaround period.
8. Certified staff identified and/or selected to work at the school ratify MOUs on working conditions, if necessary.
9. CSDE awards resources to the school depending on available funds.
10. Network school begins implementation of the Turnaround Plan with support from the CSDE.

### C. Freedom of Information Act

All of the information contained in a proposal submitted in response to this application is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), C.G.S. Section 1-200 et seq. The FOIA declares that, except as provided by federal law or state statute, records maintained or kept on file by any public agency (as defined in statute) are public records and every person has a right to inspect such records and receive a copy of such records.

### D. Questions

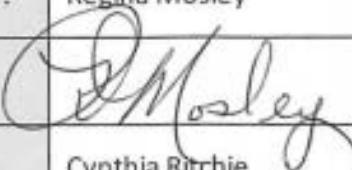

All questions regarding the Commissioner's Network should be directed to:

Lisa Lamenzo  
Turnaround Office Division Director  
Connecticut State Department of Education



## PART III: COMMISSIONER'S NETWORK TURNAROUND PLAN

### Section 1: Cover Page

Name of School District:	New London Public Schools		
Name of School:	Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School	Grade Levels:	6-8
Name of School Principal:	Chris Vamvakides	# of Years Serving as Principal at this School	7 months
		# of Years in Total as Administrator	7 years
Turnaround Committee Chairperson: <sup>1</sup>	Dr. Jennifer Hills-Papetti		
Phone Number of Chairperson:	860-834-7680		
E-mail of Chairperson:	Hills-PapettiJ@newlondon.org		
Address of Chairperson:	Street Address:	134 Williams Street	
	City:	New London	Zip Code: 06320
Name of School Board Chairperson:	Regina Mosley		
Signature of School Board Chairperson: <sup>2</sup>			Date: 2/26/21
Name of Superintendent:	Cynthia Ritchie		
Signature of Superintendent:			Date: 2/26/21

<sup>1</sup> Pursuant to C.G.S. § 10-223h(b)(1), the superintendent, or his or her designee, shall serve as the chairperson of the Turnaround Committee.

<sup>2</sup> By signing this cover page, the chairperson of the local board of education affirms that the board has established the Turnaround Committee in accordance with C.G.S. § 10-223h(b), and that the superintendent has informed the board of the content of the Turnaround Plan.

## Section 2: Setting the Direction

An organization needs to know where it is and where it wants to be in order to improve. Effective organizations have a clear direction that informs the work of all employees. An organization’s direction is used as a filter for all work. As noted in *Turnaround Leadership Domain* (Center on School Turnaround, 2017), turnaround leaders set the direction and expectations, and articulate the commitment to school turnaround. The leadership team also engages all employees and stakeholders in the process of sharing and gathering feedback and making needed revisions to finalize and communicate the direction to others. Each person needs to own the direction and understand how his or her role supports the mission. Setting a direction is important for any organization and it is particularly critical for those seeking to make rapid improvement—as is the case for the lowest-performing schools. To improve rapidly, the school needs to be willing to identify and address the root causes of its successes and failures to transform its systems and practices.

**Instructions:** Using the space provided, identify the district’s and school’s vision and theory of action. (Please note for this section there is a limit of 200 words per response box.)

A **vision statement** serves as a common direction of growth for your organization and its stakeholders. This statement describes the organization’s clear and inspirational long-term desired change resulting from its work.

**Theory of Action** uses the “If we do X, then we can achieve Y” construct for transformative outcomes. For example, if the state education agency (SEA), local education agency (LEA) or school focuses on implementing effective instructional practice, then the organizational goal of improved student performance is supported. Thinking through a theory of action allows organizations to more clearly see the chain of changes that will have to happen for the intervention to be successful. This can help in the planning stage to be sure the solutions that are chosen truly align with the impact that would like to be seen.

### District Vision Statement (limit 200 words)

**Vision:** New London Public School’s vision is to be *United in Excellence*.

**Mission:** To educate and graduate students who specialize in one of three themed magnet pathways: International Education, STEM and Visual and Performing Arts, who are well-versed in the academic knowledge and practical experiences necessary to succeed beyond high school; who are critical thinkers and innovators; who are courageous and self-reliant; and who challenge the status quo while enriching their community, country and global society.

### District Theory of Action (limit 200 words)

1. If we design and implement rigorous, research-based instruction and interventions aligned with a viable standards-based curriculum and aligned assessments, then our students will achieve at higher levels.
2. If we are intentional and tireless in our pursuit of supporting students’ and adults’ social-emotional development, where diversity is celebrated as a strength and collaboration, leadership and relationships are valued as essential to all we do, then we will create a culture and climate of excellence.
3. If we strengthen and align district operations and systems with the goal of increasing fidelity, coherence, efficiency, and effectiveness, then we will improve outcomes for students.
4. If we work to develop and strengthen the talent of a diverse workforce, and recognize positive efforts, then we will grow our collective capacity to better meet the needs of our students and families.

### School Vision (limit 200 words)

As we strive to be *United in Excellence*, teachers, support staff, community members, and school leaders at Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School are committed to embracing diversity and ensuring all students are prepared for success in high school and beyond as they engage in rigorous curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

### School Theory of Action (limit 200 words)

Bennie Dover Jackson Multi-Magnet Middle School Campus currently hosts three magnet pathways: International Education, STEM, and Visual and Performing Arts. Even though our campus houses three educational pathways, from this point forward, when referring to Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School (BDJMS), we are referring only to the students in the International Education pathway. All data included in this proposal is also reflective of the International Education pathway.

**Talent:** If our school creates and implements a comprehensive support system for teachers focused on academics and social-emotional practices, then we will be able to recruit and retain effective teachers who feel supported with the implementation of school-wide initiatives.

**Academics:** If our school identifies and implements effective teaching strategies, implements a rigorous standards-based curriculum in Math, English Language Arts (ELA), and Science, and assesses students' understanding of the standards in a variety of ways, then all students will be prepared for high school and beyond.

**Culture and Climate:** If our school focuses on improving attendance, building positive relationships with all stakeholders, and implementing positive behavior management systems with fidelity, then we will increase student engagement and achievement while decreasing discipline data and chronic absenteeism.

**Operations:** If our school creates a professional learning community that focuses on providing teachers with high-quality professional development, with an emphasis on research-based teaching strategies and a cycle of continuous improvement and collaboration, then we will see an increase in effective teaching practices, use of instructional time, and student outcomes.

### Section 3: Leadership

One of the clear keys to successful turnaround is strong leadership at all levels (Herman et al., 2008). The objectives for both school and district leaders are to articulate a clear and compelling vision, create attainable short-term goals, define high performance expectations, hold faculty and staff accountable for those expectations, and continually celebrate wins (Leithwood, 2012). Research points to the importance of having a strong leader who can change culture and influence staff efficacy (Meyers & Hitt, 2017) and who demonstrates an intense focus and direction on academic outcomes (Picucci, Brownson, Kahlert, & Sobel, 2002). In addition, the district needs to embrace the turnaround effort as a district-led initiative. One study finds that the “district instructional leadership builds capacity by coordinating and aligning work of others through communication, planning, and collaboration” (Rorrer, Skrla, & Scheurich, 2008, p. 318). Throughout the turnaround process, the district must coordinate the work by setting high performance expectations, sharing those expectations in a transparent way, continually checking progress on those expectations, and — with the school — co-developing further interventions, as needed, based upon the school’s progress (Leithwood, 2012). These types of leadership focuses can contribute to a productive, supportive and energizing school culture that enables adults in schools and district offices to collaboratively work toward improved outcomes for students (Kruse & Louis, 2009).

**Instructions:** In the boxes below, address the following:

Describe the process to hire and retain an exceptional school principal with a track record of success, preferably in school turnaround and/or an urban school environment.

At the end of the 2019-2020 school year, New London Public Schools (NLPS) began its search for a new Principal for Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School. The focus of the search was to find a leader who could continue to improve the school’s positive climate and culture, as well as overall student achievement including a focus on chronic absenteeism and academic achievement.

The process began by surveying students, staff, and families to determine what they were most looking for in a leader for Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School. While that data was being collected, the district posted the opening, advertised, implemented a search process, and then conducted interviews. After the interview process, a performance task was also given to candidates and Chris Vamvakides was selected as the Principal of Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School in August 2020.

Mr. Vamvakides is a New London native and a proud product of New London Public Schools. Mr. Vamvakides has dedicated his career to working with the youth of New London and providing them with the best possible education. As a New London native, Mr. Vamvakides has experienced New London Public Schools as a student, a social studies teacher, an athletic director, an assistant director, and now a principal. He expanded his leadership perspective through his work as Assistant Principal at Griswold Middle School. Returning to New London as the Assistant Director of Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School he was the lead on the School Construction Committee, Attendance Team and instrumental in beginning a consistent SRBI process in the school. He continues this leadership as the Principal. Mr. Vamvakides was also involved in the initial stages of the Commissioners’ Network planning that took place last year. His current leadership is enhanced by these previous experiences that he continues to foster. It is this experience, true dedication to the students and community of New London, and a proven track record as a strong leader that made Mr. Vamvakides a perfect fit for the principal position at Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School.

Some of the accomplishments of Mr. Chris Vamvakides, include:

As Principal of Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School:

- Creation of Reading Through History course to ensure all students are receiving the necessary Reading and Math interventions
- Implementing practices and procedures to enhance a positive school climate and culture, including but not limited to: streamed staff basketball events, weekly shoutouts to staff, support of a weekly student produced news broadcast, and recognition of student successes in multiple ways
- Leading the Bennie Dover Jackson Multi-Magnet Middle School Campus construction project which will see a world-class facility support the work of the Commissioner's Network
- Establishment of an Attendance Committee and creation of protocols and procedures to decrease chronic absenteeism
- Hiring of an SRBI Instructional Coach to formalize and lead the SRBI process
- Conducting monthly check-ins with new staff members to offer guidance and provide supports where needed
- Sending out Sunday evening Weekly Notes to staff to clearly communicate weekly expectations
- Hosting monthly Virtual Family Chats to engage two-way communication with families, hear their experiences of hybrid and distance learning, and solicit feedback for improvement

As Assistant Director of Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School:

- Administrator for the Sixth Grade Academy
- Lead the Social Studies department and evaluated its teachers
- Facilitate Social Studies curriculum work
- Building lead on School Construction Committee
- Participated on the Commissioner's Network Committee
- Organized culturally relevant events such as Black History Month event

As Assistant Principal of Griswold Middle School:

- Chair of Attendance Committee which saw a decrease in chronic absenteeism
- Implemented schoolwide restorative practices as an alternative approach to discipline
- Member of the district's Safety & Wellness Committee
- Assisted with the implementation of NWEA MAP throughout the district
- Evaluated 20+ teachers

As Athletic Director of New London High School:

- Coordinated and hosted recruitment events for magnet programming
- Maintained budget for athletics
- Evaluated Physical Education and Health teachers
- Coordinated media relations

Working alongside Mr. Vamvakides is one Assistant Director with a strong STEM academic background and a newly hired Assistant Principal with an expansive background in school psychology, SEL, Special Education, and trauma-informed practices. The administrative team utilizes their unique skillset to collaborate on district and schoolwide initiatives to support all stakeholders. This team of talented and diverse leaders will authentically connect with students, staff, and families and will guide Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School through the Commissioner's Network process.



Explain how administrators will be evaluated on an annual basis to inform leadership staffing decisions.

Each administrator participates in the evaluation process as a cycle of continuous improvement. This process begins with goal setting as the foundation to implement a goal-driven plan. The goal-setting process is followed by several observations with feedback.

The cycle includes a mid-year formative review, followed by continued implementation of the plan. The latter part of the process offers administrators a chance to self-assess and reflect on progress to date, which informs the summative evaluation. Evidence from the summative evaluation and self-assessment become important sources of information for the administrator's subsequent goal setting, as the cycle continues into the following year. Four components are comprised in the evaluation and weighted accordingly to arrive at a summative score, which includes the following:

- Student Outcomes: 45%
- Leadership Practice: 40%
- Stakeholder Feedback: 10%
- Teacher Effectiveness: 5%

Describe the district's role in supporting and monitoring school administration in regard to implementation and monitoring of the improvement plan and budget, if approved.

The district is grounded in its comprehensive District Improvement Plan and accompanying School Improvement Plans. Goals are developed after a review of multiple data collections, surrounding both students and adults. Each administrator is required to set professional Student Learning Objectives and professional practice goals for growth and achievement in the fall. Their efforts and results are supported and monitored throughout the year by the superintendent and department leaders from central office. Each administrator has a monthly one-to-one meeting with their supervisor to review data, goals, budgets, and outcomes. In addition, each administrator receives three formal observations with quality feedback on their observed performance. This feedback is aligned to the Connecticut Core of Leading Standards which promotes high level indicators of success for instructional leadership, culture and climate, operations, systems, communications, and relationships. The results of these leadership practice indicators are synthesized by the superintendent, who then works to customize professional development offerings for administrators throughout New London Public Schools.

Besides individualized feedback and coaching, the entire administrative team participates in Collaboration Meetings as well as monthly Administrative Council meetings. During Collaboration Meetings, administrators work together to address technical and operational leadership needs and strategies. In Administrative Council meetings, they participate in high-quality professional development to further build their skillset as leaders working in a turnaround district. Additionally, the superintendent works to model transformative and shared leadership by publishing a weekly newsletter for the full Administrative Council each Sunday. This newsletter is well-balanced with content from all district departments. It also has a variety of instructional and operational expectations and research-based resources to help guide all to be *United in Excellence*. Administrators are asked to utilize this resource to build capacity in their schools by executing relevant school-based strategies, thus continually modeling and leading high expectations for both adults and students in their own buildings.

All actions above allow for regular, two-way communication, which helps support, monitor, and further build the administrative team's capacity in leading with excellence.

Describe stakeholder (family, community, student, other) engagement processes and structures (planning and development, implementation, and revising of plan to meet current needs).



The following stakeholders, engagement processes, and structures were used to ensure that our Commissioner's Network plan will meet current and future needs.

Stakeholders for our proposal include students, parents, community members, staff members from Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School, and central office staff.

**Engagement Processes and Structure:**

- Feedback from student, parent, and staff surveys was utilized to drive the creation of the action plan.
- Parent Advisory team meetings, staff feedback meetings focused on Commissioner's Network, as well as Student Council meetings informed stakeholders of our Commissioner's Network involvement and invited participation in development of the action plan.
- Feedback from campus administrators was gathered through collaborative meetings to edit and revise the action plan.
- Students, community members, faculty, and building administrative leaders participated in focus groups to determine areas of need that would be addressed in the action plan.
- Input was provided by central office staff including, but not limited to, the Directors of both Special Education and Bilingual Education, ESOL, and World Languages.
- Action plan revisions were made by sharing a document of the plan with Commissioner's Network committee members.

**Action Plan Monitoring and Revision:**

- In the implementation and revision of the action plan, the stakeholder's input will be solicited through focus groups and surveys as part of the ongoing monitoring process to revise the action plan as appropriate.
- Information collected from staff data monitoring sessions will be used to guide next steps and adjust instruction or intervention support as appropriate.

## Section 4: Data and Needs Analysis

### PERFORMANCE TARGETS

**Instructions:** Network school progress will be compared to the leading and lagging indicators identified in the chart below. Under the “Baseline and Historic Data” columns, please enter school data for each of the past three years. The indicators with an asterisk must be in alignment to Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Milestone targets when determining performance targets.

Performance Indicators	Baseline/Historic Data				Performance Targets		
	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21 YTD	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Student enrollment	347	277	266	337	348	347	350
Accountability Index	54.2	46.9	N/A	N/A	62.3	64.8	67.3
English Language Arts (ELA) School Performance Index (SPI)*	51.6	47.5	N/A	N/A	58.2	60.1	61.9
ELA Smarter Balanced Growth Model*	55.5	42.1	N/A	N/A	60.6	65.0	69.4
Math School Performance Index (SPI)*	44.8	40.7	N/A	N/A	54.4	56.7	59.0
Math Smarter Balanced Growth Model*	53.8	40.1	N/A	N/A	58.2	62.8	67.5
Average daily attendance rate	93.4	92.2	93.1	94.3	94.5	96.5	98.5
Chronic absenteeism rate*	22.4	28.7	24.1	61.2	10.6	10.0	9.3
Teacher attendance rate	84.1	94.2	95.0	90.0	93.0	95.0	99.0
Suspension rate	23.3	14.5	18.9	1.0	9.0	7.0	5.0
In-school suspensions (count)	106	29	52	0	20	15	10
Out-of-school suspensions (count)	58	44	51	6	12	8	4
Expulsions (count)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grade 3 ELA Smarter Balanced Assessment-“Meets or Exceeds Achievement Level”	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Grade 4 ELA Smarter Balanced Assessment-“Meets or Exceeds Achievement Level”	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Grade 5 ELA Smarter Balanced Assessment-“Meets or Exceeds Achievement Level”	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Performance Indicators	Baseline/Historic Data				Performance Targets		
	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21 YTD	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Grade 6 ELA Smarter Balanced Assessment-“Meets or Exceeds Achievement Level”	22.4	11.5	N/A	N/A	20	25	35
Grade 7 ELA Smarter Balanced Assessment-“Meets or Exceeds Achievement Level”	21.6	23.4	N/A	N/A	25	30	40
Grade 8 ELA Smarter Balanced Assessment-“Meets or Exceeds Achievement Level”	23.8	19.8	N/A	N/A	30	35	45
Grade 3 Math Smarter Balanced Assessment- “Meets or Exceeds Achievement Level”	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Grade 4 Math Smarter Balanced Assessment- “Meets or Exceeds Achievement Level”	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Grade 5 Math Smarter Balanced Assessment- “Meets or Exceeds Achievement Level”	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Grade 6 Math Smarter Balanced Assessment- “Meets or Exceeds Achievement Level”	12.2	Suppressed	N/A	N/A	20	25	35
Grade 7 Math Smarter Balanced Assessment- “Meets or Exceeds Achievement Level”	13.5	19.4	N/A	N/A	20	25	35
Grade 8 Math Smarter Balanced Assessment- “Meets or Exceeds Achievement Level”	15.6	10.0	N/A	N/A	25	30	40
Grade 5 NGSS Science Assessment- “Meets or Exceeds Achievement Level”	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Grade 8 NGSS Science - “Meets or Exceeds Achievement Level”	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Grade 11 NGSS Science - “Meets or Exceeds Achievement Level”	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Grade 11 ELA SAT- “Meets or Exceeds Achievement Standard”	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Grade 11 Math SAT- “Meets or Exceeds Achievement Standard”	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Number of Students enrolled in dual enrollment or AP courses	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Performance Indicators	Baseline/Historic Data				Performance Targets		
	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21 YTD	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
4-year Cohort Graduation Rate (HS only)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
6-year Cohort Graduation Rate-High Needs Students (HS only)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

\* Indicators with an asterisk must be in alignment to ESSA Milestone targets

### Root Cause Analysis

Using the school data, along with the school audit findings reported by the Turnaround Office as a foundation, the turnaround committee will conduct a root cause analysis. Root cause is defined as “the deepest underlying cause or causes of positive or negative symptoms within any process that, if dissolved, would result in elimination or substantial reduction of the symptom” (Preuss, 2003, p. 3). A root cause analysis addresses the problem (weak demonstration of an effective professional practice), rather than the symptom (low student achievement), eliminates wasted effort, conserves resources, and informs strategy selection (Preuss, 2003). There are several resources available to conduct a root cause analysis. Two of the most common methods are the “5 Whys” model or the Fishbone Diagram. Identifying the root cause will help determine which practices are most appropriate to address weaknesses. *Root Cause Analysis: A School Leader’s Guide to Using Data to Dissolve Problems* (Preuss, 2013), provides additional examples specific to schools. **The root cause findings should serve as the basis for school improvement plan development.**

## Section 5: TURNAROUND MODEL

**Instructions:** Please select one of the following turnaround models described in C.G.S. § 10-223h(d). Using the space provided, describe the core components of the model that pertain to talent, academics, culture and climate, and operations.

New London Public Schools is committed to dramatically improving student achievement, by supporting Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School's efforts to become members of the Commissioners' Network. New London strategically and thoughtfully embraces the Commissioners' Network as a catalyst for school-level transformation and systems-level reform. The committee has selected model (E) which is a model developed by the turnaround committee that utilizes strategies, methods and best practices that have been proven to be effective in improving student academic performance, including, but not limited to, strategies, methods and best practices used at public schools, inter-district magnet schools and charter schools or collected by the Commissioner.

**Talent:** Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School will dedicate time and resources to recruit, hire, and retain teachers, leaders, and staff who possess the qualifications and mindset to succeed in a school turnaround environment with a diverse population. School leaders will focus on professional development, teacher evaluation, and retention of top talent by developing a comprehensive system of supports based on individual teacher needs and the needs of our diverse student population. Core talent strategies will include:

- Develop culturally responsive hiring practices to establish a robust procedure for the recruitment of highly qualified staff of color and staff from culturally diverse backgrounds.
- Develop a robust program for retaining highly qualified staff including multiple supports for continuous professional growth, such as embedded coaching, new teacher mentoring, and differentiated professional growth cycles.
- Provide a variety of relevant and engaging cycles of culturally responsive professional development for all staff (relevant to their position, need, and practice.) Create a coaching cycle which ensures consistent implementation and revision of professional development that includes a schedule for schoolwide monitoring.

**Academics:** This plan focuses on developing teacher and leader instructional capacity paying attention to effective instruction. Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School will concentrate on the following academic strategies:

- Complete and implement a culturally relevant and responsive standards-based curriculum for math and ELA that includes the identification of curriculum implementation resources.
- Develop a continuous cycle of curriculum review with an extensive review every three years following the initial implementation of the curriculum.
- Establish and implement a plan with fidelity to strengthen Tier I supports and programming for English Language Learners and students with disabilities.
- Create professional development opportunities to train staff in the implementation of culturally relevant and responsive teaching practices and differentiation strategies.

**Culture and Climate:** Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School will develop and implement a consistent, effective, and cohesive positive relationship building process and actively promote family and community engagement in the school. Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School will be focusing on the following strategies:

- Continue to revise and implement a comprehensive plan to address multiple reasons for chronic absences.
- Develop and train staff on a common set of consistently implemented expectations and procedures for intervening when inappropriate behaviors occur.
- Provide staff with multiple opportunities to engage with professional development focused on culturally responsive teaching practices and trauma-informed teaching.

- Establish and promote culturally relevant and responsive systems that improve relationships between all stakeholders to develop a positive school culture and build community connections.

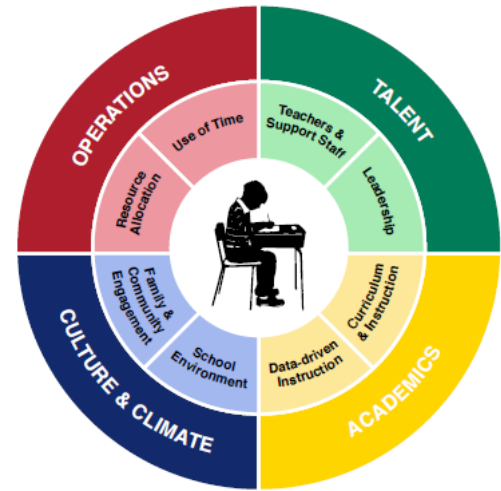
**Operations:** District and school operation systems must focus on supporting effective instruction. Core operations strategies include:

- Provide additional collaboration opportunities and professional development to support teachers with the implementation of effective instructional strategies and curriculum resources that promote engagement.
- Develop a plan to ensure that teachers have collaborative planning time that yields direct results on advancing student learning and is not contingent on adequate substitute coverage.

## Section 6: Turnaround Framework for School Improvement

The Commissioner’s Network Plan is based upon the framework centered around four key overarching and research-based leverage points for school improvement: Talent, Academics, Culture and Climate, and Operations (TACO). Each of these domains play an integral role in the realization of school’s goals to increase student outcomes.

- **Talent:** Systems and strategies to recruit, hire, develop, evaluate, and retain excellent school leaders, teachers, and support staff.
- **Academics:** Rigorous, aligned, and engaging academic program that allows all students to achieve at high levels, including aligned curricula, instruction, and assessments.
- **Culture and Climate:** Positive learning environment that supports high-quality teaching and learning, and engages families and the community as partners in the educational process.
- **Operations:** Systems and processes that promote organizational efficiency and effectiveness, including through the use of time and financial resources.



### Plan Development

#### ➤ Prioritize

As a result of the needs assessment and root cause analysis, the Turnaround Committee should engage in a prioritization process to identify key priority areas for each TACO domain. Although more can be identified, going deeper in improving fewer areas is often more effective. In the table below, list 1-3 priority areas for each domain based on the needs assessment.

<p><b>Talent</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a robust procedure for the recruitment and retention of highly qualified staff who reflect the diversity of our student population.</li> <li>• Continue to provide a variety of relevant and engaging cycles of culturally responsive professional development for all staff.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Academics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete and implement a standards-aligned curriculum for Math and ELA and strengthen tiered supports.</li> <li>• Implement a plan to strengthen Tier I supports for English Language Learners and students with disabilities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Culture and Climate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to address chronic absenteeism through the implementation of a comprehensive attendance plan.</li> <li>• Develop a school-wide process to enhance positive relationships to actively promote engagement with all stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Operations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen professional development to address student engagement, effective lesson planning, and interactive learning.</li> <li>• Implement a plan that supports effective collaboration reflective of teacher and student needs.</li> </ul>

## ➤ Plan

Now that the priority areas have been identified in each of the TACO domains, a rigorous, yet attainable plan is created based on the needs assessment and root cause analysis. Each of the four domains will include two parts:

- **Part One** - A series of domain specific questions which provide an overview of high-level thinking regarding future actions.
- **Part Two** - An action plan which includes the following components:
  - **Goal:** A goal should be developed for each of the four domains including indicators, data source, baseline, and targets spanning three years. A goal performance measure is a means by which progress toward a goal is gauged.
  - **Root Cause:** Statements describing the deepest underlying cause, or causes, of performance challenges that, if dissolved, would result in elimination or substantial reduction of the performance challenge.
  - **Strategies:** A strategy should address the identified root cause. Strategies should take two or more years to implement, often much longer (Layland & Redding, 2016). If a strategy can be accomplished in one year, then it is too narrow and is most likely a useful milestone within a broader strategy. **Strategies are powerful, high leverage work that builds capacity and changes practice, behavior, and belief so students are more successful.** One bold strategy can have more impact than a litany of poorly implemented strategies.
  - **Timeline:** The strategies (effective practices) to address root causes should be outlined over the course of three years.
  - **Indicators of success:** Indicators of success help to monitor how well the strategies are working to address the root cause, i.e. If we do what we said we were going to do, how do we know it made a difference?
  - **Owner:** The person in charge of making sure it is implemented.



## Domain 1: Talent

### Part One

**Instructions:** The Talent domain focuses on systems and strategies to recruit, hire, develop, evaluate, and retain excellent school leaders, teachers and educator support specialists. In the boxes below, address the following:

Explain how the review of school data, school audit findings, and the completion of the root cause analysis will inform staffing decisions.

In preparation for this application, data from the 2018-2019 school year was used as a basis for a needs assessment, the collection of stakeholder feedback, and a root cause analysis during the 2019-2020 school year.

This process yielded the following: In the review of school data and school audit findings, we learned the following:

- The three-year teacher retention rate is 56%.
- Teachers emphasized traumatic events of the last several years and non-competitive pay as factors impacting the low teacher retention.
- Teacher survey data revealed professional development received during the year improved their professional practice only 42% of the time.
- ELA and Math performance has trended downward: ELA 50.7% in 16-17 to 47.5% in 18-19 and 45.3% in 16-17 to 44.7% in 18-19 in Math

Data indicated that the three-year retention rate for teachers is 56%. This rate of retention poses significant challenges for consistent training and implementation of coherent systems for staff. It also indicates that there is a challenge in hiring highly qualified teachers for a variety of reasons including, but not limited to: people perceiving positions at New London Public Schools as transitional while seeking employment in other districts, inconsistent hiring protocols, and lack of support for new and veteran staff. Data also indicates that 92.2% of New London Public Schools's student population are students of color, however only 28% of our teaching staff is of color. This data further indicates a need to increase the number of teachers of color in NLPS.

The audit found further areas in need of improvement whereas the following was evidenced:

- Teacher effectiveness was highly variable based on the audit findings where 50% of respondents said "instructional quality and academic rigor are consistently high at this school" yet in observations of 24 classrooms this was not found consistently.
- Only 42% of teachers positively responded to the statement that "the professional development that I received this year improved my instructional practice and allowed me to better meet the needs of my students."
- The lack of professional development and other support systems for new teachers were also cited during teacher focus groups.
- Leadership shared that the confines of the teacher contract has limited opportunities for staff to collaborate and receive professional learning after school hours.
- Teacher focus groups shared that some of the attrition is due to "the traumatic events" of the 2018-2019 school year and the non-competitive pay scale for teachers in the region. They also shared that most teachers have left due to not feeling supported by the previous administration.

Our root cause analysis determined that there is an absence of effective systems in place, as well as a lack of coherent support for staff. Classroom management is challenging for teachers because of inconsistent training with limited support of effective instructional practices. This causes an increase in teacher turnover and decreases the focus on rigor within the classroom.

As a result of the analysis and data above, we started and will continue to focus on the following initiatives:

- Using annual retention rates as a metric of success for monitoring our staff recruitment and retention
- Continuing to build a safe, orderly, and welcoming environment through the implementation of school-wide practices
- Expanding our current professional development plan to increase learning opportunities and diversifying the content to be responsive to the needs of teachers and students
- Continuing to refine what rigorous, standards-based instruction looks like for all students by completing units of study for ELA and math, expanding and training staff on available resources, and monitoring implementation through instructional rounds

Explain how the district and school will cultivate a professional learning environment to attract, support, develop, and retain high-quality teachers?

The district will design a professional learning plan focused on attracting, supporting, developing, and retaining high-quality teachers. This plan will include the strategies below.

- Develop protocols and practices that lead to the hiring of high-quality teachers.
- Establish an induction program to support new teachers that is sustained through teachers' first three years.
- Develop a coherent professional development plan in alignment with the needs of the school.
- Develop a process for ongoing data collection and feedback through instructional rounds to support the individual needs of teachers to inform professional learning.
- Monitor the impact of professional learning by analyzing data from instructional rounds regarding learning in practice and seeking feedback from staff.

Explain how teachers will be evaluated to inform professional learning offerings and staffing decisions?

Teachers will be evaluated to inform professional learning offerings and staffing decisions through:

- The use of instructional rounds to collect data on building needs and implementation of school initiatives to plan for professional development
- The use of observations and feedback to support teachers through coaching to improve instruction and implement building initiatives
- The use of surveys to collect feedback and data from staff regarding staff and student needs
- The creation of focus groups to address professional learning needs based on survey data
- The continued implementation of teacher leadership meetings to cultivate a collaborative environment to address building needs and goals focused on classroom instruction, student engagement, and rigorous learning activities
- The continued use of school-based committees to support district and school initiatives

Describe ongoing supports and coaching opportunities for staff and school leadership.

The following will be provided as ongoing supports and coaching opportunities for staff and school leadership:

- Stakeholders will develop a system of support for teachers in response to data and on-going observations through instructional rounds, analysis of data and consistent feedback.
- Instructional rounds will be used by the leadership team to modify and enhance the coaching model and determine the level of support individual teachers will receive.
- The administrative team and instructional coaches will identify and define the various layers of support available to meet the needs of all teachers.
- The administrative team and instructional coaches will engage in professional learning that focuses on effective instructional practices.

**Part Two**

**Instructions:** Using the table below, identify the Talent three-year goal including indicators of success, data sources, and three annual targets.

**Three-Year Talent Goal:**

Indicator	Data Source	Baseline Year: 2019-2020	Target Year 1: 2021-2022	Target Year 2: 2022-2023	Target Year 3: 2023-2024
Percentage of teacher retention	CT-EDS	56%	60%	65%	75%
Percentage of teachers who state that they feel supported	Climate Survey NLPS	64%	70%	75%	80%

**Action Steps:**

**Instructions:** Using the table below, describe key action steps which will be implemented across three years in order to achieve the three-year Talent goal.

<b>Talent Priority:</b> 1.3 Recruitment and Retention Strategies					
<b>Root Cause for Recruitment:</b> The district lacks culturally relevant and responsive systems to recruit highly qualified educators.					
<b>Root Cause for Retention:</b> Retention rates are low because of variance in academic and behavioral expectations, which has led to teachers feeling unsupported.					
<b>Person(s) Responsible:</b> Principal, Executive Director of Talent and Human Resources, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, Intervention and Professional Development					
Strategies to address root cause	Timeline			Indicators of Success	Resources
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3		
Support the district’s goal to recruit highly qualified educators from culturally diverse backgrounds.	The BDJMS administrative representatives will continue to participate in and use strategies from the district’s newly formed Committee for Excellence in Staff Diversity.	Continue to utilize the strategies and information gained from the committee to actively recruit staff members of color and culturally diverse backgrounds through job fairs, community partnerships, and online advertisements	Revise and continue to implement the strategies and information gained from the committee to actively recruit staff members of color and culturally diverse backgrounds through job fairs, community partnerships, and online advertisements.	Staff recruitment data  Feedback from new hires regarding the recruitment process and job advertisements	Time for administrators to participate in the work of the Committee for Excellence in Staff Diversity
	Develop and utilize the Profile of a BDJ Teacher for hiring and recruitment.	Analyze the impact of using the Profile of a BDJ Teacher for hiring and recruitment, celebrate successes, and define next steps.	Continue to analyze impact of using the Profile of a BDJ Teacher for hiring and recruitment, celebrate successes, and define next steps with revisions as needed.	Teacher hiring and retention data  Feedback from exit interviews/surveys and letters of resignation Reduction in behavior-related referrals	
	Continue to post anticipated vacancies early in the hiring season	Analyze data on number of hires based on anticipated postings	Finalize optimal dates for postings to garner greatest results	Increase in positive feedback from staff about	

<p>Establish multiple opportunities for professional growth and support in schoolwide expectations, relationship building practices, and effective instructional strategies.</p>	<p>Continue work with administrators, instructional coaches, and teachers in protocols to support schoolwide expectations related to culturally responsive teaching and the implementation of effective instructional practices.</p>	<p>Refine protocols, monitor implementation of those protocols, and continue professional development related to the implementation of effective instructional practices.</p>	<p>Review progress and revise protocols as needed. Individualize professional learning and supports.</p>	<p>feeling supported</p> <hr/> <p>Increased use of effective instructional practices based on data from instructional rounds and teacher evaluation standards</p>	<p>Hire consultants and or pay current staff to provide training on trauma-informed practices, de-escalation strategies, culturally responsive teaching, and other effective instructional practices</p> <hr/> <p>Allocate time for all staff to participate in regular professional development sessions</p> <hr/> <p>Provide stipends for a core group of 10-month employees to receive training over the summer</p>
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<b>Talent Priority:</b> 1.4 Professional Development					
<b>Root Cause:</b> The lack of a comprehensive and cohesive professional development plan has led to inconsistent implementation of effective and culturally relevant and responsive instructional practices.					
<b>Person(s) Responsible:</b> Principal and Director of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, Intervention and Professional Development					
<b>Strategies to address root cause</b>	<b>Timeline</b>			<b>Indicators of Success</b>	<b>Resources</b>
	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>		
Provide a variety of relevant and engaging cycles of culturally responsive professional development for all staff, (relevant to their position, need, and practice.)	Continue implementation of a common understanding of effective instruction and identify/define the components of effective instructional practice.	Review and refine the definition of components of instructional practice.	Ensure the definition and components of effective instructional practice are visible in classrooms	Completion of NLPS' components of effective instruction	Plan time for defining and reviewing components of effective instruction.  Stipend for 10-month staff for focused work outside of contractual hours in the defining, reviewing, and/or refining of effective instruction components
	Develop and guarantee time for weekly professional development focused on consistent implementation of effective instructional practices.	Continue professional development focused on consistent implementation of effective instructional practices with an emphasis on teacher clarity, formative assessment, effective feedback, and student engagement/active learning.	Continue professional development focused on consistent implementation of effective instructional practices with an emphasis on teacher clarity, formative assessment, effective feedback, and student engagement/active learning.	Survey results about identifying and understanding the components of effective instructional practice.  Data from instructional rounds and formal observations	
Create a coaching cycle which ensures consistent implementation and revision of professional development that includes a schedule for school-wide monitoring.	Create and implement a professional learning and coaching plan focused on supporting teachers in the implementation of effective instruction. Train administrators and coaches in the identified coaching model/practices.	Fully implement coaching model within core content areas and modify the model as needed.	Refine and modify coaching plan model as needed and expand coaching to electives.	Completed coherent professional learning and coaching plan for implementation of effective instruction  Data from instructional rounds	Support for administrators and instructional coaches as they implement components of effective instructional practices Time to train staff  <i>Instructional Rounds in Education</i> (Elmore, 2009)

## Domain 2: Academics

### Part One

**Instructions:** The Academics domain focuses on how the school will redesign and/or strengthen curriculum, instruction, and assessment to increase student achievement. In the boxes below, address the following:

Describe the school's academic program and instructional philosophy, including the process to align the curricula and academic program to the rigor of the Connecticut Core Standards.

The school's academic program consists of a traditional core curriculum of English Language Arts, math, science, and social studies, which supports state requirements and complies with meeting service requirements for special populations such as English Language Learners and students with disabilities. In addition to the core, students have an opportunity to take electives such as the following:

- Visual and Performing Arts
- Leadership and Enrichment
- Technical Education
- Physical Education and Health

The instructional philosophy of New London Public Schools is that teaching requires more than simply demonstrating a certain set of technical skills. It requires command of subject matter and pedagogical skills, combined with caring deeply about students and their successes. Effective teaching also requires:

- A deep commitment to student achievement and the belief that all students should be challenged to achieve,
- The deliberate pursuit and implementation of culturally relevant and responsive instructional strategies and content,
- A willingness to work in collaboration with colleagues and families to meet the diverse learning needs of all students, and
- A commitment to an analysis of one's teaching and continuous professional development.

The best teachers model a passion for learning and ignite the curiosity of their students. Teachers' help students develop a sense of who they want to be in the world and find their own passions and directions for future learning.

The process to align the curriculum and academic programming to the rigor of the Connecticut Core Standards is based on resources such as *Assessment and Student Success in a Differentiated Classroom* (Tomlinson and Moon, 2013), *Excellence Through Equity* (Blankstein, Noguera, and Kelly, 2015), *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain* (Hammond, 2014), *The Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard* (NYU Steinhardt: The Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools, 2019), and the Rigorous Curriculum Design process. These resources are the foundation for the ongoing curriculum revision process outlined below.

- Refinement of the learning progressions and instructional sequence
- Review and use of the priority standards and supporting standards
- Unwrapping of the priority standards
- Writing unit learning intentions connected to the priority standards
- Utilizing pre- and post-assessments to guide instruction
- Constructing scoring guides
- Developing quick progress checks that coincide with the learning progressions
- Creating an assessment calendar that aligns with units of learning
- Implementing differentiation strategies for all learners

Although the school has a clear instructional philosophy, audit findings along with achievement data reveal the following:

- The audit team found insufficient evidence of instructional rigor and differentiation such as student-centered instruction, opportunities for students to engage in academic discourse, small group instruction, and higher-order questioning.
- Smarter Balanced proficiency levels are significantly below the state and district averages for both ELA and Math.
- Teachers do not have a common understanding of authentic engagement.
- Only 30 percent of the teachers surveyed agreed with the statement “students are engaged in their classes.” Most classes demonstrated low student engagement, an absence of rigorous activities, and a lack of higher order thinking strategies. Teaching focused primarily on whole group instruction and there were limited opportunities for small group collaboration and student discourse. Students reported that most lessons are structured for independent or “quiet” work.
- Instruction aligned to standards was lacking as evidenced by classroom walkthroughs.

The above data supports our root cause analysis that Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School does not have a coherent, fully developed curriculum in place for all core subject areas; therefore, creating the significant variance exhibited in instructional practices from classroom to classroom. Without a curriculum in place teachers lack the core resources that allow them to be targeted, consistent, and intentional in the way that instruction and assessment are implemented and monitored for impact on student learning.

The lack of a curriculum in core content areas has hindered the teachers’ ability to implement instruction aligned to standards at the Tier I level. Lack of differentiation at the Tier I level is also negatively impacting our high needs students, English Language Learners, and students with disabilities. Having a clear picture of what students are to know and do will in turn allow for greater differentiation once there is clarity around the learning targets.

As a result, Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School determined our action plan will:

- Implement a culturally relevant and responsive standards-based curriculum for math and ELA.
- Develop a continuous cycle of curriculum review with an extensive review every three years following the initial implementation of the curriculum.
- Implement a plan with fidelity to strengthen supports for special populations.
- Provide professional development opportunities to train staff in the implementation of culturally relevant and responsive teaching practices and differentiation strategies.
- Provide instructional coaching to support the growth and development of teacher instruction based on needs revealed through instructional rounds and professional development feedback.

Describe how educators will use data to inform lesson plans, differentiate instruction, and provide remedial support to meet the academic and developmental needs of all students.

**To inform the development of lessons and strategies:**

All teachers will use relevant data such as formative assessments, exit slips, progress checks, end of unit assessments, and district assessments to inform lesson development within the curriculum. Teachers will administer these formative assessments regularly throughout each unit to differentiate instruction and adjust pacing as necessary. Lessons will include learning intentions, the aligned standard, relevant resources and learning activities, key vocabulary, activation of prior knowledge, strategies for differentiation, questioning strategies, opportunities for discourse and collaboration, and evidence of engagement and learning throughout the lesson.

**In order to meet the diverse needs of learners in all tiers:**

Grade level and subject-based data teams will be established to analyze multiple measures including district assessments, teacher-created formative assessments, CORE diagnostics, informal reading inventories, LAS Links, and supplemental program data. This information will be used to develop differentiated instruction in Tier I, to



monitor progress, and to determine student eligibility for tiered support. Teachers will also plan for differentiation using relevant strategies including but not limited to the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocols and strategies outlined in the curriculum. Staff will be supported in this process through professional development and embedded coaching.

**In order to implement targeted tiered supports:**

Staff will triangulate data to determine areas of focus within Tier II and Tier III academic support classes. This data will be utilized to design flexible groups that address students' needs in reading and mathematics. Additionally, Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School has established an SRBI team to address student referrals. This team utilizes the district's SRBI manual and procedures to provide multi-tiered systems of support for students.

Describe ongoing professional learning opportunities to build staff capacity around the collection, analysis and use of data to drive and differentiate instruction.

Data collection is central to driving analysis and differentiation within the academic program. A component of the core curriculum will be the administration of common assessments based on CCSS and NGSS. The outcomes of assessments will be analyzed among data teams and used by teachers to differentiate accordingly.

Professional learning will be responsive to student data as well as teacher needs. Our instructional coaching model will be revised to meet district goals and individualize professional learning based on teacher feedback. This includes a focus on curriculum implementation, culturally relevant and responsive teaching strategies, and other needs revealed through the ongoing collection of data from surveys and instructional rounds.

The professional development calendar will be expanded to provide additional professional learning opportunities and opportunities for collaboration. Currently, there are professional development days built into the New London Public Schools calendar and there is a desire to allocate more time for professional learning by utilizing the following structures:

- Early dismissal days for professional development
- Embedded coaching and individualized professional learning
- Additional after-school collaboration time
- Self-directed learning using approved resources from a district catalog

## Part Two

**Instructions:** Using the table below, the Academic three-year goal will include School Performance Index and Smarter Balanced Growth Model (as applicable) indicators for ELA and Math. The baseline and targets should reflect the ESSA Milestone Targets.

### Three-Year English Language Arts Goal:

Indicator	Data Source	Baseline Year: 2019-2020	Target Year 1: 2021-2022	Target Year 2: 2022-2023	Target Year 3: 2023-2024
ELA School Performance Index	EdSight.CT.gov (SPI)	56.3	58.2	60.1	61.9
ELA Smarter Balanced Growth Model	EdSight.CT.gov (Growth)	56.3	60.6	65	69.4

### Three-Year Math Goal:

Indicator	Data Source	Baseline Year: 2019-2020	Target Year 1: 2021-2022	Target Year 2: 2022-2023	Target Year 3: 2023-2024
Math School Performance Index	EdSight.CT.gov (SPI)	52	54.4	56.7	59
Math Smarter Balanced Growth Model	EdSight.CT.gov (Growth)	53.6	58.2	62.8	67.5

**Action Steps:**

**Instructions:** Using the table below, describe key action steps which will be implemented across three years in order to achieve the three-year Academic goals.

<b>Academic Priority:</b> 2.4 Curriculum and Instruction					
<b>Root Cause:</b> The absence of a coherent, fully developed, culturally relevant and responsive curriculum has led to a lack of fidelity in the implementation of curriculum at the middle school level.					
<b>Person(s) Responsible:</b> Director of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, Intervention and Professional Development, BDJMS administrators					
Strategies to address Root Cause	Timeline			Indicators of Success	Resources
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3		
Complete and implement a standards-based curriculum for math and ELA that includes the identification of implementation resources and strategies that are culturally relevant and responsive.	Complete and implement units of study for math and ELA that include culturally relevant and responsive content and strategies, differentiation tools, and implementation resources	Develop and execute a cycle of curriculum review to revise and improve the implementation of math and ELA curriculum using the aligned resources.	Execute an extensive review of curriculum to modify and improve the implementation of math and ELA curriculum using aligned resources.	<p>Completed and Board of Education approved math and ELA curriculum for grades 6-8</p> <hr/> <p>Curriculum implementation checklist and revision cycle completed every year</p> <hr/> <p>Results of the Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard (NYU Steinhardt: The Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools, 2019)</p> <hr/> <p>Inventory of approved instructional resources in support of a</p>	<p>Contract consultants in the areas of math and ELA curriculum implementation and effective and rigorous instructional practices</p> <hr/> <p>Culturally Responsive Curriculum Scorecard (2019)</p> <hr/> <p><i>Excellence Through Equity</i> (Blankstein, Noguera, and Kelly, 2015)</p>

				math and ELA curriculum	
	Complete and administer common assessments to determine focus areas for instruction. Analyze common assessments to determine effectiveness.	Refine common assessments and data analysis practices as needed to improve effectiveness.	Refine common assessments and data analysis practices as needed to improve effectiveness.	Common formative assessments for math and ELA <hr/> Common formative assessment tracking tool and implementation calendar	<i>Assessment and Student Success in a Differentiated Classroom</i> (Tomlinson and Moon, 2013) <hr/> Time to revise and analyze common formative assessments
Revise and implement professional development and instructional coaching focused on the adopted math and ELA curricula, culturally relevant and responsive practices, and the implementation of instructional resources.	Train and provide on-going coaching to administrators, instructional coaches, and teachers in the implementation of all developed math and ELA curricula and the effective use of its aligned instructional resources.	Refine and continue to train and coach administrators, instructional coaches, and teachers in the implementation of math and ELA curricula and the appropriate use of its aligned instructional resources.	Individualize training and coaching to administrators, instructional coaches, and teachers in the implementation of math and ELA curricula and the effective use of its aligned instructional resources.	Increased achievement in formative and summative assessments (math and ELA IABs, common formative assessments) and standardized tests (state and district assessments)	Funds for hiring consultants for professional development/ coaching and time for staff to receive differentiated professional development
	Develop and pilot a tool and system for instructional rounds focused on curricula implementation, supervision, and support.	Implement instructional rounds using the mechanisms from year 1 focused on supervision and support of curricula implementation and the use of aligned resources.	Review, adapt, and implement instructional round practices focused on supervision and support for curriculum implementation and the use of aligned resources.	Improvement on teacher evaluation measures (TeVal) for instructional practice <hr/> Climate survey data and professional development feedback <hr/> Growth data in areas of focus from	Stipend for teacher training focused on curriculum and resource implementation and the impact of implementation on learning <hr/> Professional learning calendar for teachers, instructional coaches, and administrators <hr/> Sub coverage expenses for

				<p>instructional rounds</p> <hr/> <p>Variety and frequency of professional development opportunities included in the professional development calendar</p>	<p>teachers attending PD and coaching sessions</p> <hr/> <p>Instructional coaching handbook containing feedback tools and guidance on instructional rounds to track coaching sessions and teacher growth</p> <hr/> <p><i>Instructional Rounds in Education: A Network Approach to Improving Teaching and Learning</i> (City, Elmore, Fiarman, and Teitel, 2009)</p>
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<p><b>Reading and Math:</b> Formalize and implement a comprehensive literacy and numeracy plan to address the needs of students with limited literacy and numeracy skills across all tiers of instruction.</p>	<p>Continue to refine and formalize the SRBI process by creating a detailed differentiation handbook, using data driven entry and exit criteria from Tier II and Tier III reading and math classes, tracking data from literacy and numeracy progress monitoring assessments, using the data to inform instruction, and using data as the basis for the procurement of resources.</p>	<p>Assess the effectiveness of the SRBI process by refining the differentiation handbook, refining entry and exit criteria for Tier II and Tier III classes, updating progress monitoring tools, continuing to implement data-driven instruction using appropriate resources, and supporting staff with the implementation of those resources.</p>	<p>Continue to collaborate to refine the SRBI process, the differentiation handbook, criteria for entry and exit to tiered classes, tracking tools, and implementation of resources.</p>	<p>Documented criteria and protocols for entry and exit from tiered interventions.</p> <hr/> <p>Records from data team sessions</p> <hr/> <p>Use of the tracking tools by intervention staff and participation in data teams. Evidence of resources being used effectively during instructional rounds</p> <hr/> <p>Data from professional development feedback forms</p> <hr/> <p>Refine and individualize professional learning opportunities</p>	<p>Assessment Tools: fluency, comprehension, writing, Lexile and quantile measures, foundational mathematics skills</p> <hr/> <p>Time for staff to meet, collaborate, and analyze student progress during data teams and professional development</p> <hr/> <p>Funds to purchase identified resources, including a variety of high interest and culturally diverse texts with a range of Lexile and Quantile levels that can be used in the classroom so every reader can engage with rigorous text</p> <hr/> <p>Time for staff to meet, collaborate, and analyze student progress during data teams and professional development</p>
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	<p>Continue to provide targeted instruction to students identified through the SRBI process to decrease gaps in students' literacy and numeracy skills</p>	<p>Provide Tier II / Tier III teachers and coaches with professional development on selected intervention programs and monitor the ways in which the new personnel are used to assess effectiveness.</p>	<p>Continue professional development on selected intervention programs to refine practices and continue to monitor the effectiveness of interventions. Develop a plan to sustain the successful implementation of Tiered math and reading groups beyond year three.</p>	<p>Decrease in the number of students in need of interventions</p> <p>Schedule tiered interventions based on SRBI needs</p> <p>Documentation of the established plan to sustain beyond year three</p>	<p>Teacher hourly stipends if professional development must occur outside of school hours</p> <hr/> <p>Time for instructional coaches, administrators, and a core group of staff to inventory resources and develop the differentiation handbook</p> <hr/> <p>Funds to hire and train new staff, including two additional intervention teachers (one for math and one for reading)</p>
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<b>Academic Priority:</b> 2.5 Support for Special Populations					
<b>Root Cause:</b> A comprehensive plan does not exist to support English Learners and students with disabilities at all levels.					
<b>Person(s) Responsible:</b> BDJMS administrators, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, Intervention and Professional Development, Supervisor of Special Education, Director of Bilingual Education, ESOL, and World Languages, and Supervisor of Bilingual Education, ESOL, and World Languages					
Strategies to address Root Cause	Timeline			Indicators of Success	Resources
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3		
Establish and implement a comprehensive, culturally relevant and responsive plan to strengthen Tier I support for English Learners and students with disabilities.	Use student data disaggregated by subgroup and teacher recommendations to identify programmatic needs in the development of a master schedule effective for all students with a focus on special populations.	Review the programs and scheduling needs for special populations and create an inclusive master schedule for the upcoming school year.	Refine the process for developing the master schedule and adjust course offerings based on the instructional and programmatic needs of special populations.	Examples of changes in the master schedule based on student data	Time to plan for scheduling during the school year based on data analysis
	Create and implement a detailed, culturally relevant and responsive differentiation handbook and plan professional development cycles for supporting special populations in Tier I using the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) and other resources.	Continue to implement cycles of professional development to support special populations and gather data on implementation using instructional rounds	Individualize professional learning opportunities related to differentiation for special populations. Update the differentiation handbook as needed.		



				development forms	Funds to purchase resources and texts that are multi-lingual and reflective of our student population
Develop and implement a continuum of culturally responsive supports for English Learners and students with disabilities.	Develop and implement written procedures for transitioning students with support to least restrictive environments. These procedures will include the use of brief profiles that highlight students' academic and social-emotional strengths and needs, as well as relevant background information related to their culture.	Review and revise the procedures for transitioning students to least restrictive environments using feedback from staff and relevant data.	Continue to review and revise the procedures as needed.	Increased achievement in both academic and language development in formative and summative assessments (math and ELA IABs & SBAC, and LAS Links.	Stipend for teachers and administrators for focused curriculum writing and formalizing procedures outside of contractual hours
	Review current programming and inventory resources for special populations to determine areas of need for professional development, scheduling, and resources.	Utilize the disaggregated data collected in year one regarding programming and resources to update the master schedule and professional development cycles to meet the needs of our special populations in all tiers.	Continue to collect and analyze data to adapt to the current needs of special populations related to programming, scheduling, and resources in all tiers.	Improved participation and attendance data for special populations. Reduction in failure rates for special populations	
	Train staff and provide	Continue training for staff in the	Individualize training for staff	Achievement progress data for English Learners and students with disabilities based on CSDE growth model metrics	Hire consultants to provide training in the areas of data driven instruction and learning using formative assessments.  Funds to hire one EL coach and one Special Education Instructional Coach

	<p>additional supports for new procedures to build capacity for working with English Learners and students with disabilities.</p>	<p>continuum of supports for English Learners and students with disabilities.</p>	<p>in the continuum of supports for English Learners and students with disabilities.</p>		
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### Domain 3: Culture and Climate

#### Part One

**Instructions:** The Culture and Climate domain targets creating a safe, nurturing, and supportive environment for all students and staff, and engages families and the community as partners in the educational process. In the boxes below, address the following:

Describe the school's behavior management system and strategies to shape positive school culture.

Currently there is an absence of a comprehensive plan to enhance positive relationships to actively promote engagement with all stakeholders. The lack of systems to shape a positive school culture leads to increased discipline data and hinders the development of positive relationships within the school. This is evidenced below using audit data from the 2019-2020 school year:

- Responses to the survey statement that “the school environment is conducive to high-quality teaching and learning” were mixed, with 38% agreeing, 36% disagreeing, and 26% neutral.
- Even though there was evidence of effective strategies such as the posting of learning objectives and structured lesson formats that set the purpose for learning, hallway behaviors were chaotic which led to delayed and disrupted instruction.
- School administration reported that “culture and climate is our number one concern” and shared that “a need to create a safe and orderly environment is of the utmost importance.”
- The percentage of students chronically absent has dramatically risen over the past three years, increasing from 13.1% in 2016-17 to 28.7% in 2018-19, which is significantly above the state and district.
- Forty-five percent (N=22) of teachers disagreed with the survey statement that “the school implements an effective school wide behavior management system.” Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School’s suspension rate in 2017-18 was 23.3%, well above the state average of 6.8% and 11.1 percentage points higher than the rate in the previous school year.
- Teachers described the behavior management system as “inconsistent...it changes and looks different with each new school leader.” While teachers shared that professional development is provided on need areas such as trauma-informed instruction, they report that follow-up supports are lacking.
- In response to the statement “Interactions between students and staff are positive and respectful,” only 35% (N=17) of survey participants agreed. Auditors also observed that many interactions between staff and students were transactional and geared towards correcting behaviors.

The above data supports our root cause analysis that there is not a proactive, comprehensive plan to improve student attendance by enhancing positive relationships and implementing strategies to increase student engagement. Additionally, there is a need for the implementation of consistent, restorative procedures to intervene when inappropriate behaviors occur as well as a defined procedure for addressing behaviors.

Review of the culture and climate audit revealed the need to establish a positive culture within the school by implementing proactive approaches to student engagement that represent the shared beliefs of the school wide community. This will positively impact student attendance and student-staff interactions.

As a result, the following will occur:

The building administration and the Commissioner’s Network team will partner with stakeholders to develop a common set of school-wide expectations to establish a safe, nurturing, and supportive environment. All stakeholders will contribute to the implementation of these expectations and work to build positive relationships within the school community.

To shape a positive school culture that leads to a decrease in absenteeism and discipline data, we will focus on the following strategies:

- Revise, communicate, and train staff in the consistent implementation of school-wide expectations.
- Establish systems that support the implementation of restorative practices such as restorative circles and restorative intervention procedures.
- Strengthen the current advisory program and alter the master schedule to provide intentional opportunities to build positive relationships and focus on social-emotional learning.
- Continue professional development around culturally competent and responsive teaching, social-emotional learning, and trauma-informed practices. Develop and implement a comprehensive tiered plan to address multiple reasons for chronic absenteeism.

Explain how the school will promote strong family and community connections to support school goals.

At Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School, we believe that strong family and community partnerships are essential to make and sustain progress toward school's goals. The following actions will be implemented to promote strong partnerships with families and the community.

**Communication and Engagement Actions:**

- Partner with New London High School and the district communication team to promote back to school events prior to the start of each school year to share and discuss the school's goals and anchor the school as an active participant in the community.
- Continue to host culturally relevant events that welcome community interactions such as job fairs, virtual family chats, and family engagement nights.
- Continue to incorporate community partners with after-school clubs, advisory sessions, and academic presentations.
- Continue to cultivate relationships with culturally relevant community partners to provide wrap-around services, expose families and staff to available supports, and improve community relationships.
- Engage community partners in providing advice and resources in support of talent, academics, culture and climate, and social-emotional learning goals.
- Identify family and community members who will serve as liaisons and advocates in support of school goals.
- Continue working with the Mystic Aquarium and Mystic Seaport to provide STEM opportunities for our students.
- Enhance collaboration with Connecticut College to offer afterschool mentoring programs for our students.
- Continue our partnership with Child and Family Agency to provide School Based Health Center services to our students.
- Reestablish our partnership with the Black Engineers through Electric Boat to provide mentoring opportunities for our students.
- Establish partnership with New London Adult Education to provide various workshops for our families in English and Spanish.

Describe the school's attendance intervention system.

Our campus's attendance intervention systems work as follows:

**Tier I:**

- BDJMS staff are implementing Tier I attendance strategies such as personalized outreach to determine reasons for absences and possible supports, recognizing students for consistent and improved attendance, and making referrals to SRBI as appropriate.
- Individual student data is reviewed weekly by the Bennie Dover Attendance Team and grade-level teams.
- Staff utilize an attendance flow chart that outlines the attendance intervention process.
- Teachers can refer students to the attendance team using a common referral form.

**Tier II:**

- The Bennie Dover Attendance Team meets weekly to identify students who are at Tier II level for attendance intervention based on attendance data.
- Attendance Team members intervene using a variety of strategies such as weekly “lunch bunches,” working with students to self-advocate when variables (e.g., illness, family illness, transportation, sibling responsibilities, trauma, etc.) are impacting their attendance.
- Students’ families are notified of their attendance status so that staff can partner with them to implement attendance interventions.
- Tiered interventions are tracked to assess impact and adjusted using shared documents and students are formally referred to the SRBI team as appropriate.

**Tier III:**

- When Tier II interventions are not successful, the Bennie Dover Attendance Team carries out more intensive strategies to engage students and families to address challenges impacting attendance.
- Home visits and phone calls are implemented with increased frequency.
- The Bennie Dover Attendance Team involves outside agencies as appropriate to support improvement in student attendance.

Describe how the school will address students’ social and emotional well-being.

Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School is focusing on addressing students’ social and emotional well-being by implementing the following strategies and professional development.

- Staff will implement school-wide expectations with consistency, work to build positive relationships, and support the social and emotional well-being of students.
- The master schedule will include a dedicated weekly advisory period in which students engage in lessons and conversations that support social-emotional learning.
- School counselors will support social-emotional learning through regular lessons where they push into classrooms.
- Teachers will continue to receive professional development in trauma informed practices, culturally relevant and responsive practices, and social-emotional practices.
- Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School will partner with New London High School through the development of a grade eight to nine transition program for all students. This will begin with eighth grade students visiting New London High School at the end of their eighth grade year and participating in question and answer sessions with current ninth graders. This will be followed up with a summer transition program that will occur prior to students beginning their ninth grade year.

**Part Two**

**Instructions:** Using the table below, identify the Culture and Climate three-year goal including indicators of success, data sources, and three annual targets.

**Three-Year School Culture and Climate Goal:**

Indicator	Data Source	Baseline Year: 2019-2020	Target Year 1: 2021-2022	Target Year 2: 2022-2023	Target Year 3: 2023-2024
Suspension Rate	EdSight.CT.gov	8.5	8.0	7.0	6.0
Chronic Absenteeism Rate	EdSight.CT.gov	11.2	10.6	10.0	9.3

**Action Steps:**

**Instructions:** Using the table below, describe key action steps which will be implemented across three years in order to achieve the three-year Culture and Climate goal.

<b>Culture and Climate Priority:</b> 3.2 Student Attendance					
<b>Root Cause:</b> There is a lack of a comprehensive attendance intervention plan which hinders our ability to address the multiple variables impacting student attendance.					
<b>Person(s) Responsible:</b> BDJMS administrators, wellness interventionists, members of the Student Support Team (school counselors, social workers, etc.), and all stakeholders (staff, students, and families)					
Strategies to address Root Cause	Timeline			Indicators of Success	Resources
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3		
Develop and implement a comprehensive tiered plan to address multiple reasons for chronic absenteeism.	Create and implement a plan to address the most prevalent variables impacting chronic absenteeism (suspensions, mental and physical health, and extended vacations) in collaboration with the district and BDJMS attendance teams.	Evaluate the implementation of the tiered plan and use relevant data to modify and refine the plan.	Continue to evaluate and refine the implementation of the tiered plan in collaboration with the district and BDJMS attendance teams.	Decrease in chronic absenteeism	Partner with agencies and consultants who have expertise in implementing strategies to reduce chronic absenteeism in urban districts.
	Support teachers in the implementation of Tier I monitoring tools and strategies to improve attendance and prevent chronic absenteeism (phone calls, student recognition, SRBI strategies, etc.).	Continue to support teachers in the implementation of Tier I monitoring tools and strategies. Analyze student data and revise procedures as needed.	Individualize supports for teachers focused on the implementation of Tier I strategies.	Feedback from student surveys related to attendance	
	Hire a student attendance interventionist to	Continue to fund the attendance interventionist	Continue to fund the attendance interventionist	Documented work of the attendance interventionist and the BDJMS Attendance Team (meeting minutes, implementation of new procedures, data from attendance monitoring tools, etc.)	Funds to hire an attendance interventionist

	connect with families of chronically absent students and work to address obstacles surrounding attendance. The attendance interventionist will also contribute to proactive attendance measures and participate as an active member of the attendance team.	position. Evaluate and refine their role to meet the needs of the school community.	position. Evaluate and refine their role to meet the needs of the school community. Develop a sustainability plan to continue funding this position.		
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**Culture and Climate Priority:** 3.3 Student Behavior

**Root Cause:** There is not a proactive, comprehensive plan to enhance positive relationships and interactions within the school community or consistent, restorative procedures to intervene when inappropriate behaviors occur.

**Person(s) Responsible:** BDJMS administrators, wellness interventionists, members of the Student Support Team (school counselors, social workers, etc.), teachers, and students

Strategies to address Root Cause	Timeline			Indicators of Success	Resources
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3		
Develop and train staff on a common set of consistently implemented expectations and procedures for intervening when inappropriate behaviors occur.	Establish and support staff in the implementation of a common set of consistent expectations and procedures for intervening when inappropriate behaviors occur. Interventions will be focused on restorative practices and positive problem-solving strategies aimed at changing behaviors rather than punitive measures.	Review and update the written expectations and continue to train staff in the implementation of those school-wide expectations. Assess the effectiveness of interventions using data and feedback to modify practices as needed.	Evaluate and revise the school-wide plan for implementing consistent expectations and intervening when inappropriate behaviors occur.	Written school-wide expectations and procedures related to behaviors and positive-relationship building practices  Reduction in the number of office discipline referrals, out-of-school suspensions, in-school suspensions, and major vs. minor incident	Funds to hire consultants with expertise in supporting urban school districts to implement school-wide expectations and training in cultural competency and restorative practices.  Scheduled and dedicated time for training staff in the implementation of the school-wide

					<p>expectations, procedures, and strategies from professional development.</p> <hr/> <p>Digital platform for behavior data collection and analysis</p>
	<p>Continue to provide support for the implementation of common expectations, facilitating restorative conversations, and engaging students in positive problem-solving strategies.</p>	<p>Evaluate and refine the strategies used by staff to provide support with the implementation of common expectations, facilitating restorative conversations, and engaging students in positive problem-solving strategies.</p>	<p>Continue to evaluate and refine the strategies used by staff to provide support with the implementation of common expectations, facilitating restorative conversations, and engaging students in positive problem-solving strategies.</p>		<p>Funds to hire three behavior interventionists to support the implementation of expectations, restorative conversations, and student engagement</p>
<p>Establish and promote culturally relevant and responsive systems that improve relationships between all stakeholders to develop a positive school culture.</p>	<p>Revise the master schedule to include dedicated time to implement a robust advisory program that includes opportunities for students and staff to build relationships, engage in social-emotional learning, and connect through culturally relevant discussions.</p>	<p>Analyze feedback from stakeholders, including staff and students to strengthen and refine the advisory program to meet the needs of the school community. Adjust the master schedule if needed.</p>	<p>Continue to analyze feedback from stakeholders, including staff and students to strengthen and refine the advisory program and make changes as needed</p>	<p>Results from culture and climate surveys</p> <hr/> <p>Revision of the master schedule to provide dedicated time for advisory based on exemplar models</p> <hr/> <p>Feedback from surveys on school advisory program</p>	<p>Time to collaborate with schools who have exemplary advisory programs and scheduling models to develop a master schedule that supports our goals</p> <hr/> <p>Platforms and resources to strengthen advisory programming, such as</p>



					resources from Second Step or the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence
Provide staff with professional development focused on culturally responsive teaching practices, trauma-informed teaching, and other strategies to support students' social-emotional well-being.	Develop a comprehensive professional development plan that includes cycles of learning for culturally relevant and responsive teaching practices, relationship-building strategies, and social-emotional learning which will support the advisory program and improve student-staff interactions.	Utilize instructional rounds and embedded coaching to support the implementation of the provided professional development. Adjust the professional development plan to support current needs.	Individualize coaching and professional development to support the advisory program and improve student-staff interactions.	Improvement on teacher evaluation measures (TeVal) for New London Public Schools Standard 5 (I.e., appropriate standards for behavior).  Feedback from professional development evaluation forms and documented opportunities for professional development  Data from instructional rounds	Positive Behaviors Intervention Systems  Resources from Sanford Inspire, the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, and other sources to promote social-emotional well-being and support the implementation of trauma-informed practices
Plan and implement proactive strategies to promote positive family and community connections to support school goals related to positive relationships and building a culturally relevant and responsive	Establish a Parent Action Committee comprised of staff and family members to implement culturally responsive events and communications to build relationships with all stakeholders (families, students,	Assess the impact of work with community partners and families through surveys and data collection. Expand opportunities to engage families through the Parent Action Committee by increasing the number of events, strategies, forms	Continue to assess the impact of work with community partners and families through surveys and data collection. Expand opportunities to engage families through the Parent Action Committee by increasing the number of events,	Family engagement events calendar and advertisements  Documented work with community partners  Family survey results	Funds to support family engagement events with community partners and stakeholders

<p>school community.</p>	<p>community partners, and staff). Some of this committee’s initiatives will include the continuation of regularly scheduled coffee hours with the principal, the implementation of welcoming walkthroughs, and the expansion of culturally relevant communications with families using a variety of media formats.</p>	<p>of communication, and or reciprocal collaboration opportunities.</p>	<p>strategies, forms of communication, and or reciprocal collaboration opportunities.</p>	<p>Communications using a variety of media formats (Podcasts, social media, etc.)</p> <hr/> <p>Minutes and action plans from the Parent Action Committee</p>	
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## Domain 4: Operations

### **Part One**

**Instructions:** The Operations domain focuses on systems and processes that promote organizational efficiency and effectiveness, including through the use of time and financial resources. In the boxes below, address the following:

Propose the length of the school day and year for students and describe how the proposed schedule will maximize instructional time on task for each major instructional/content area.

The proposed length of the school day is six hours and 35 minutes, and the school year consists of 180 days. In addition to the regular hours that are required of all students, there will be supplemental curricular offerings and programming in the summer. A revision of our master schedule and professional development plan are imperative to improve the use of effective instructional time and to meet our goals in all areas of the Commissioner’s Network plan. In order to implement a schedule that supplies time for advisory, in-depth learning activities, and quality interventions and enrichment opportunities, we will review exemplar scheduling models to determine a structure that will meet the needs of students and staff at Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School. The focus of our plan will be to maximize the use of staff time and the allotted instructional minutes.

Propose the length of the school day and year for staff, including additional time before and during the school year, for professional learning and/or common planning time.

The length of the school day for staff is seven hours and their school year consists of 185 days. Out of the 185 days, five days are reserved for professional development each year (before, during, or after the school year). There is a desire to add additional collaboration time into the school calendar, which is currently being examined and will need to be approved via collective bargaining. The current plan under consideration includes early dismissal days for students in order to guarantee staff collaboration time. With our current schedule, each classroom teacher has one class period available for professional duties and learning opportunities. This collaboration time can be affected by limited substitute coverage, so the addition of new hybrid substitute positions will be essential to use this time effectively. Revisions to our professional development plan will include time for self-directed learning, coaching, and time for professional development during the school day using hybrid substitutes, as necessary.

### **Part Two**

**Instructions:** Using the table below, identify the school Operations three-year goal including indicators of success, data sources, and three annual targets.

#### **Three-Year School Operations Goal:**

Indicator	Data Source	Baseline Year: 2019-2020	Target Year 1: 2021-2022	Target Year 2: 2022-2023	Target Year 3: 2023-2024
Accountability Index	EdSight.CT.gov	59.8	62.3	64.8	67.3

**Action Steps:**

**Instructions:** Using the table below, describe key action steps which will be implemented across three years in order to achieve the three-year culture goal.

<b>Operations Priority:</b> 4.2 Use of Instructional Time					
<b>Root Cause:</b> Inefficient use of instructional time is due to a lack of training, resources, and support to address student engagement, lesson pacing, and interactive learning.					
<b>Person(s) Responsible:</b> BDJMS administrators and instructional coaches					
<b>Strategies to address Root Cause</b>	<b>Timeline</b>			<b>Indicators of Success</b>	<b>Resources</b>
	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>		
Provide additional professional development and collaboration opportunities to support teachers with the implementation of instruction and interactive learning activities that promote engagement and reflect the updated curriculum.	Provide teachers with support through professional development and structured collaboration sessions to implement instructional strategies related to student engagement, lesson pacing, and interactive learning opportunities. Implementation will be monitored through instructional rounds and feedback from staff will be used to adapt professional learning as needed.	Use data from instructional rounds to evaluate professional learning needs and continue to provide support to increase engagement, improve lesson pacing, and incorporate frequent opportunities for interactive learning using the established curriculum. Teachers will continue to participate in structured collaboration sessions such as Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).	Individualize professional learning opportunities and supports to increase engagement, improve lesson pacing, and incorporate frequent opportunities for interactive learning using the established curriculum. Teachers will continue to participate in structured collaboration sessions.	Data from instructional rounds  Feedback from professional development forms  Evidence of structured collaboration sessions (agendas, meeting minutes, and data from Professional Learning Communities)	Funds to expand our professional library to support professional development and coaching sessions  Time for Professional Learning Communities and coaching sessions  Exemplar lesson plan templates
	Revise and use common lesson plan expectations and templates that include necessary components such as pacing	Refine common lesson plan templates and expectations to support student engagement, the implementation of interactive	Provide time for teachers to visit other classrooms and collaborate with colleagues to support student engagement,	Lesson plan templates and written expectations for planning  Feedback on lesson plans from instructional coaches, consultants,	Data collection tools for instructional rounds

	<p>suggestions, student learning objectives, real-world connections, opportunities for discourse and other important components from the teacher evaluation plan. Feedback on lesson pacing and engagement strategies will be provided for written lesson plans and classroom visits.</p>	<p>learning activities, and lesson pacing. Continue to provide teachers with feedback on lesson pacing and engagement.</p>	<p>improve lesson pacing, and increase interactive learning by reviewing exemplar models.</p>	<p>and administrators</p> <hr/> <p>Frequency of individualized coaching sessions and feedback for teachers from those sessions</p>	
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**Operations Priority: 4.3 Use of Staff Time**

**Root Cause:** Collaborative planning time and professional development opportunities are compromised as a result of teachers covering classes when staff are absent, which leads to ineffective use of the available time.

**Person(s) Responsible:** BDJMS administrators, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, Intervention and Professional Development, and instructional coaches

Strategies to address Root Cause	Timeline			Indicators of Success	Resources
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3		
Develop and implement a plan to ensure collaborative planning time and regularly scheduled professional development is not contingent upon substitute coverage or interrupted by non-instructional tasks.	Create and implement a collaboration and professional development calendar to use designated common planning periods effectively to address school goals and needs.	Evaluate and refine the calendar for designated common planning periods to use time effectively to address school goals and needs.	Continue to evaluate and refine the calendar for common planning periods to use time effectively to address school goals and needs.	All educators have tightly protected common planning and professional development time for at least two hours per week.	Time for administrators, instructional coaches, and leadership team members to formalize the PLC procedures
	Establish and Implement protocols and practices for effective collaboration and participation in professional	Continue to implement protocols and practices for effective collaboration and participation in professional	Refine the formalized protocols and procedures to ensure that collaborative time and professional		

	<p>development to ensure time is used effectively to focus on instructional strategies, student data, curricular work, and resources to improve instruction. Procedures will include the use of agendas, meeting norms, recording minutes, and other strategies during designated times for professional learning communities.</p>	<p>development. Use data from instructional rounds and teacher feedback to adjust the calendar and focus of professional learning as needed.</p>	<p>development remains effective.</p>	<p>on substitute coverage. Evidence from meeting minutes coverage lists that all teachers are active participants in collaborative opportunities.</p> <hr/> <p>Documentation from PLC agendas and meeting minutes that reveals a focus on instructional strategies, curricular work, and data teams to inform instruction.</p> <hr/> <p>Pre-scheduled calendar of professional development and common planning areas of focus that is responsive to building needs and goals</p> <hr/> <p>Feedback from staff surveys to evaluate the PLC procedures and effective use of staff time</p>	<p>Funds to hire and sustain six building-based (hybrid) substitute teachers to prevent the interruption of designated planning and learning times.</p> <hr/> <p>Teacher hourly funding for training and teacher collaboration outside of contracted hours.</p>
	<p>Administrators, instructional coaches, and members of the leadership team will document and launch research-based collaboration protocols for staff such as the PLC+ model.</p>	<p>Refine the protocols and continue to coach staff in the implementation of the documented collaboration model. Solicit feedback from staff regarding professional learning communities to determine the effectiveness and improve practices to determine needs for the following year.</p>	<p>Continue to use the established protocols and refine practices as needed.</p>		<p><i>PLC+: Better Decisions and Greater Impact by Design</i> (Fisher, Frey, Almarode, Flories, Nagel, 2020)</p>
	<p>Hire six building-based hybrid substitutes teachers, two per grade level, to ensure teacher</p>	<p>Continue to fund the six hybrid substitutes positions and or continue to implement the</p>	<p>Continue to fund the six hybrid substitutes positions and or continue to implement the</p>		

	<p>collaboration time is not eroded by a lack of substitute coverage that requires teachers to cover for others who are absent. Alternatively, BDJ will implement a weekly early release day schedule to ensure guaranteed collaboration time.</p>	<p>weekly early release schedule. Provide ongoing training, feedback, and support as necessary for substitutes.</p>	<p>weekly early release schedule. Develop a sustainability plan to maintain funding building substitutes.</p>	<p>Data from instructional rounds that supplies evidence of professional learning in practice</p> <hr/> <p>Documentation from early release professional development and collaboration sessions</p>	
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## Section 7: Sustainability Plan

**Instructions:** In the box below, describe the sustainability plan which addresses the following:

- How will the school build its capacity in order to sustain progress made using Commissioner’s Network funds during Commissioner’s Network participation years?
- How will the district support and monitor plans and activities subsequent to the end of Commissioner’s Network participation?

The entire Commissioner’s Network plan is built on the making the plan sustainable. We have put supports in place to grow teacher capacity and strengthen tier 1 practices throughout the three years of the plan.

### **Sustainability during Participation Years:**

The school will build its capacity to sustain the progress made using Commissioner’s Network funding during the Network participation years by putting consistent systems in place and building upon them year-after-year. The professional development provided to staff will be focused, differentiated, and ongoing, allowing staff to continually develop their skills and build their capacity at the level they are currently performing.

A focus on aggregated data review and action-step development will be developed to continually monitor the professional development received by staff. Cycles of professional development and ongoing coaching will ensure professional development is relevant to the needs of teachers and initiatives will meet the needs of the school. Teachers will feel supported in the implementation of resources and strategies gained from professional development opportunities.

Each focus area will have a detailed plan developed that includes action steps, follow through and evidence of accomplishment. These plans will be consistently monitored and adjusted as they are implemented. These plans will be monitored by multiple people within the school and district. Student learning will continuously be monitored by staff and support systems will be put in place for students in need. At the school level, coaches, content leads and administrators will monitor implementation of initiatives and teacher learning. Director of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, Intervention and Professional Development and the Superintendent of New London Public Schools will also monitor implementation from the district level to ensure full implementation and progression is occurring.

By building teacher capacity through ongoing professional development and having a tightly sequenced and implemented plan we will build a sustainable system of behavioral and academic supports that continuously benefit our students through the years with the support of the Commissioner’s Network funds and beyond

### **Sustainability after Participation Years:**

New London Public Schools is committed to sustaining systems of ongoing improvements, promoting excellence in all areas. All staff are expected to model this growth mindset and participate in regular opportunities for data analysis, reflection, goal setting, implementation, revision, and review of results. This cycle of continuous improvement is a part of the culture throughout New London Public Schools.

The district is grounded in a District Improvement Plan outlining not only high-level areas of focus, but also specific actionable goals to ensure progress is being monitored and made in each area. A multi-tiered system outlining regular times for district wide collections and analysis of data, aligned to the goals in the District Improvement Plan, is in place. In addition to organized times for data review, a detailed professional development plan is in place for members of administrative council as well as for teachers and support staff to come together to learn and build their capacity. Furthermore, the district has a multi-pronged approach to engaging families/caregivers in supporting their child’s educational journey. NLPS’ Parent University has been redesigned to be three-pronged offering participants opportunities to participate in formal educational workshops on topics of their choice, in



various volunteer service projects and in a variety of district-wide, whole family and community partner social events.

At this time, the Superintendent is also drafting an outline for a new initiative entitled NLPS Teacher-Leader Academy. This plan, too, is grounded in the goal of building internal capacities of our staff, who directly work with our students and families. Teacher-Leader Academy aims to invite 20-25 teachers to work the entire month of August to pre-prepare deeply for welcoming students. NLPS' Teacher-Leader Academy will require a year-long commitment from participants. Throughout the year these teacher-leaders will be taught leadership skills through book studies and collaboration activities with other leaders. Each will be paired with an in-district leader as well as a professional mentor from a community partner agency, who will provide ongoing support and check-ins during the school year. These teacher-leaders will commit to staying with the district for at least two years in hopes to reduce staff turnover, while building deep capacity in a cohort of staff.

In summary, this Commissioner's Network plan has placed a focus on training staff and sustaining this training by building teacher capacity. There is a focus on data-driven decision making, building a positive school culture and thus providing all staff and students with the knowledge, emotional support and structures they need to be successful.

## Section 8: Budget Proposal

### 8.1 BUDGET PROPOSAL

After the SBE approves the Turnaround Plan, the school is eligible to receive a Network grant in accordance with C.G.S. § 10-223h(a). The district and school will work with the Turnaround Office to develop a proposed Commissioner's Network budget aligned to the SBE approved plan. Please note that personnel funded through the Commissioner's Network grant, will need to use the following formula for all salaries and benefits:

- Year 1:** 75 percent paid through Commissioner's Network funding/25 percent paid through other funding
- Year 2:** 50 percent paid through Commissioner's Network funding/50 percent paid through other funding
- Year 3:** 25 percent paid through Commissioner's Network funding/75 percent paid through other funding
- Year 4:** 0 percent paid through Commissioner's Network funding/100 percent paid through other funding

## Section 9: Modifications

During the term of the school’s participation in the Commissioner’s Network, the Commissioner shall review the progress of each school. The Commissioner or designee may, on the basis of such review, convene the Turnaround Committee to, as part of its monitoring responsibility, address a lack of sufficient progress or other implementation issues at the school. The Turnaround Committee may consider and enact changes to the Turnaround Plan by consensus. If the Turnaround Committee does not enact changes or the changes are unlikely to result in sufficient progress or adequately address implementation concerns, the Commissioner may take appropriate actions to ensure sufficient progress at the school, including, but not limited to, finding the Turnaround Plan deficient and developing a revised Turnaround Plan.

### PART IV: APPENDIX SECTION

#### Appendix A: Turnaround Committee Signatures Page

**Please Note:** Applicants should not sign this section of the application until the Turnaround Committee reaches consensus on the Turnaround Plan and is ready to submit a final copy of such plan to the CSDE.

We, the undersigned members of the Turnaround Committee, on the basis of a consensus agreement, submit this Turnaround Plan to the Commissioner for final selection of the school into the Commissioner’s Network.

 _____ Signature of Superintendent, Non-Voting Chair	 _____ Date
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 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of Superintendent (typed)

 _____ Signature of Board of Education-appointed Parent	 _____ Date
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 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of Board of Education-appointed Parent (typed)

 _____ Signature of Board of Education-appointed Administrator	 _____ Date
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 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of Board of Education-appointed Administrator (typed)

Laura Jacques  
Signature of Union-appointed Teacher

3/2/2021  
Date

Laura Jacques  
Name of Union-appointed Teacher (typed)

Rocio Tinoco  
Signature of Union-appointed Teacher

3/2/2021  
Date

Rocio Tinoco  
Name of Union-appointed Teacher (typed)

Jennifer Muggeo  
Signature of Union-appointed Parent

3/24/2021  
Date

Jennifer Muggeo  
Name of Union-appointed Parent (typed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Commissioner of Education

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Commissioner of Education (typed)

**Turnaround Committee Participation**

In the table below, please input the names and titles of the additional stakeholders not referenced above that were involved in the development of this turnaround application:

Name	Title
Chris Vamvakides	Principal, Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School
Janet Farquhar	Assistant Director, Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School
Jennifer Hills-Papetti	Director of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment and Professional Development
Eileen Schindler	Instructional Coach
Lauren Wiseman	Instructional Coach
Suzanne Brunelle	Instructional Coach
Tariko Satterfield	School-Based Wellness Interventionist
Maribel Olivero	Director of Bilingual Education, ESOL and World Languages
Rocio Tinoco	Bilingual Teacher
Laura Jacques	Seventh Grade English Language Arts Teacher
Jennifer Muggeo	Parent Representative
Christopher Campbell	SRBI Instructional Coach

## Appendix B: Budget Information

As noted in Section 8.1, please code all expenditures in accordance with the state’s Uniform Charts of Accounts as summarized below.

CODE:	OBJECT:
100	<b>PERSONNEL SERVICES – SALARIES.</b> Amounts paid to both permanent and temporary grantee employees including personnel substituting for those in permanent positions. This includes gross salary for personnel services rendered while on the payroll of the grantees.
200	<b>PERSONNEL SERVICES – EMPLOYEE BENEFITS.</b> Amounts paid by the grantee on behalf of employees; these amounts are not included in the gross salary, but are in addition to that amount. Such payments are fringe benefit payments and, while not paid directly to employees, nevertheless are parts of the cost of personnel services.
300	<b>PURCHASED PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL SERVICES.</b> Services, which by their nature can be performed only by persons or firms with specialized skills and knowledge. While a product may or may not result from the transaction, the primary reason for the purchase is the service provided. Included are the services of architects, engineers, auditors, dentists, medical doctors, lawyers, consultants, teachers, accountants, technical assistance support organizations, school management partners, etc.
400	<b>PURCHASED PROPERTY SERVICES.</b> Services purchased to operate, repair, maintain, and rent property owned or used by the grantee. Persons other than grantee employees perform these services. While a product may or may not result from the transaction, the primary reason for the purchase is the service provided.
500	<b>OTHER PURCHASED SERVICES.</b> Amounts paid for services rendered by organizations or personnel not on the payroll of the grantee (separate from Professional and Technical Services or Property Services). While a product may or may not result from the transaction, the primary reason for the purchase is the service provided.
600	<b>SUPPLIES.</b> Amounts paid for items that are consumed, worn out, or deteriorated through use; or items that lose their identity through fabrication or incorporation into different or more complex units or substances.
700	<b>PROPERTY.</b> Expenditures for acquiring fixed assets, including land or existing buildings, improvements of grounds, initial equipment, additional equipment, and replacement of equipment. In accordance with the Connecticut State Comptroller’s definition equipment, included in this category are all items of equipment (machinery, tools, furniture, vehicles, apparatus, etc.) with a value of over \$5,000 and the useful life of more than one year and data processing equipment that has unit price under \$5,000 and a useful life of not less than five years.
800	<b>OTHER OBJECTS.</b> (Miscellaneous Expenditures) Expenditures for goods or services not properly classified in one of the above objects. Included in the category could be expenditures for dues and fees, judgments against a grantee that are not covered by liability insurance, and interest payments on bonds and notes.

## Appendix C: Statement of Assurances

### CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION STANDARD STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES | GRANT PROGRAMS

**PROJECT TITLE:** Commissioner's Network

**THE APPLICANT:** \_\_\_\_\_ **HEREBY ASSURES THAT:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(insert Agency/School/CBO Name)

- A. The applicant has the necessary legal authority to apply for and receive the proposed grant;
- B. The filing of this application has been authorized by the applicant's governing body, and the undersigned official has been duly authorized to file this application for and on behalf of said applicant, and otherwise to act as the authorized representative of the applicant in connection with this application;
- C. The activities and services for which assistance is sought under this grant will be administered by or under the supervision and control of the applicant;
- D. The project will be operated in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws and in compliance with regulations and other policies and administrative directives of the State Board of Education and the Connecticut State Department of Education;
- E. Grant funds shall not be used to supplant funds normally budgeted by the agency;
- F. Fiscal control and accounting procedures will be used to ensure proper disbursement of all funds awarded;
- G. The applicant will submit a final project report (within 60 days of the project completion) and such other reports, as specified, to the Connecticut State Department of Education, including information relating to the project records and access thereto as the Connecticut State Department of Education may find necessary;
- H. The Connecticut State Department of Education reserves the exclusive right to use and grant the right to use and/or publish any part or parts of any summary, abstract, reports, publications, records and materials resulting from this project and this grant;
- I. If the project achieves the specified objectives, every reasonable effort will be made to continue the project and/or implement the results after the termination of state/federal funding;
- J. The applicant will protect and save harmless the State Board of Education from financial loss and expense, including legal fees and costs, if any, arising out of any breach of the duties, in whole or part, described in the application for the grant;
- K. At the conclusion of each grant period, the applicant will provide for an independent audit report acceptable to the grantor in accordance with Sections 7-394a and 7-396a of the Connecticut General

Statutes, and the applicant shall return to the Connecticut State Department of Education any moneys not expended in accordance with the approved program/operation budget as determined by the audit;

**L. REQUIRED LANGUAGE (NON-DISCRIMINATION)**

References in this section to “contract” shall mean this grant agreement and to “contractor” shall mean the Grantee.

(a) For purposes of this Section, the following terms are defined as follows:

- i. “Commission” means the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities;
- ii. “Contract” and “contract” include any extension or modification of the Contract or contract;
- iii. “Contractor” and “contractor” include any successors or assigns of the Contractor or contractor;
- iv. “Gender identity or expression” means a person’s gender-related identity, appearance or behavior, whether or not that gender-related identity, appearance or behavior is different from that traditionally associated with the person’s physiology or assigned sex at birth, which gender-related identity can be shown by providing evidence including, but not limited to, medical history, care or treatment of the gender-related identity, consistent and uniform assertion of the gender-related identity or any other evidence that the gender-related identity is sincerely held, part of a person’s core identity or not being asserted for an improper purpose.
- v. “good faith” means that degree of diligence which a reasonable person would exercise in the performance of legal duties and obligations;
- vi. “good faith efforts” shall include, but not be limited to, those reasonable initial efforts necessary to comply with statutory or regulatory requirements and additional or substituted efforts when it is determined that such initial efforts will not be sufficient to comply with such requirements;
- vii. “marital status” means being single, married as recognized by the State of Connecticut, widowed, separated or divorced;
- viii. “mental disability” means one or more mental disorders, as defined in the most recent edition of the American Psychiatric Association’s “Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders”, or a record of or regarding a person as having one or more such disorders;
- ix. “minority business enterprise” means any small contractor or supplier of materials fifty-one percent or more of the capital stock, if any, or assets of which is owned by a person or persons: (1) who are active in the daily affairs of the enterprise, (2) who have the power to direct the management and policies of the enterprise, and (3) who are members of a minority, as such term is defined in subsection (a) of C.G.S. § 32-9n; and
- x. “public works contract” means any agreement between any individual, firm or corporation and the State or any political subdivision of the State other than a municipality for construction, rehabilitation, conversion, extension, demolition or repair of a public building, highway or other changes or improvements in real property, or which is financed in whole or in part by the State, including, but not limited to, matching expenditures, grants, loans, insurance or guarantees.

For purposes of this Section, the terms “Contract” and “contract” do not include a contract where each contractor is (1) a political subdivision of the state, including, but not limited to, a municipality, unless the contract is a municipal public works contract or quasi-public agency project contract, (2) any other state, including but not limited to any federally recognized Indian tribal governments, as defined in C.G.S. § 1-267, (3) the federal government, (4) a foreign

- government, or (5) an agency of a subdivision, state or government described in the immediately preceding enumerated items (1), (2), (3), or (4).
- (b) (1) The Contractor agrees and warrants that in the performance of the Contract such Contractor will not discriminate or permit discrimination against any person or group of persons on the grounds of race, color, religious creed, age, marital status, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity or expression, intellectual disability, mental disability or physical disability, including, but not limited to, blindness, unless it is shown by such Contractor that such disability prevents performance of the work involved, in any manner prohibited by the laws of the United States or of the State of Connecticut; and the Contractor further agrees to take affirmative action to insure that applicants with job-related qualifications are employed and that employees are treated when employed without regard to their race, color, religious creed, age, marital status, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity or expression, intellectual disability, mental disability or physical disability, including, but not limited to, blindness, unless it is shown by the Contractor that such disability prevents performance of the work involved; (2) the Contractor agrees, in all solicitations or advertisements for employees placed by or on behalf of the Contractor, to state that it is an “affirmative action-equal opportunity employer” in accordance with regulations adopted by the Commission; (3) the Contractor agrees to provide each labor union or representative of workers with which the Contractor has a collective bargaining Agreement or other contract or understanding and each vendor with which the Contractor has a contract or understanding, a notice to be provided by the Commission, advising the labor union or workers’ representative of the Contractor’s commitments under this section and to post copies of the notice in conspicuous places available to employees and applicants for employment; (4) the Contractor agrees to comply with each provision of this Section and C.G.S. §§ 46a-68e and 46a-68f and with each regulation or relevant order issued by said Commission pursuant to C.G.S. §§ 46a-56, 46a-68e, 46a-68f and 46a-86; and (5) the Contractor agrees to provide the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities with such information requested by the Commission, and permit access to pertinent books, records and accounts, concerning the employment practices and procedures of the Contractor as relate to the provisions of this Section and C.G.S. § 46a-56. If the contract is a public works contract, municipal public works contract or contract for a quasi-public agency project, the Contractor agrees and warrants that he or she will make good faith efforts to employ minority business enterprises as subcontractors and suppliers of materials on such public works or quasi-public agency projects.
- (c) Determination of the Contractor’s good faith efforts shall include, but shall not be limited to, the following factors: The Contractor’s employment and subcontracting policies, patterns and practices; affirmative advertising, recruitment and training; technical assistance activities and such other reasonable activities or efforts as the Commission may prescribe that are designed to ensure the participation of minority business enterprises in public works projects.
- (d) The Contractor shall develop and maintain adequate documentation, in a manner prescribed by the Commission, of its good faith efforts.



- (e) The Contractor shall include the provisions of subsection (b) of this Section in every subcontract or purchase order entered into in order to fulfill any obligation of a contract with the State and in every subcontract entered into in order to fulfill any obligation of a municipal public works contract for a quasi-public agency project, and such provisions shall be binding on a subcontractor, vendor or manufacturer unless exempted by regulations or orders of the Commission. The Contractor shall take such action with respect to any such subcontract or purchase order as the Commission may direct as a means of enforcing such provisions including sanctions for noncompliance in accordance with C.G.S. § 46a-56, as amended; provided if such Contractor becomes involved in, or is threatened with, litigation with a subcontractor or vendor as a result of such direction by the Commission regarding a State contract, the Contractor may request the State of Connecticut to enter into any such litigation or negotiation prior thereto to protect the interests of the State and the State may so enter.
- (f) The Contractor agrees to comply with the regulations referred to in this Section as they exist on the date of this Contract and as they may be adopted or amended from time to time during the term of this Contract and any amendments thereto.
- (g) (1) The Contractor agrees and warrants that in the performance of the Contract such Contractor will not discriminate or permit discrimination against any person or group of persons on the grounds of sexual orientation, in any manner prohibited by the laws of the United States or the State of Connecticut, and that employees are treated when employed without regard to their sexual orientation; (2) the Contractor agrees to provide each labor union or representative of workers with which such Contractor has a collective bargaining Agreement or other contract or understanding and each vendor with which such Contractor has a contract or understanding, a notice to be provided by the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities advising the labor union or workers' representative of the Contractor's commitments under this section, and to post copies of the notice in conspicuous places available to employees and applicants for employment; (3) the Contractor agrees to comply with each provision of this section and with each regulation or relevant order issued by said Commission pursuant to C.G.S. § 46a-56; and (4) the Contractor agrees to provide the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities with such information requested by the Commission, and permit access to pertinent books, records and accounts, concerning the employment practices and procedures of the Contractor which relate to the provisions of this Section and C.G.S. § 46a-56.
- (h) The Contractor shall include the provisions of the foregoing paragraph in every subcontract or purchase order entered into in order to fulfill any obligation of a contract with the State and such provisions shall be binding on a subcontractor, vendor or manufacturer unless exempted by regulations or orders of the Commission. The Contractor shall take such action with respect to any such subcontract or purchase order as the Commission may direct as a means of enforcing such provisions including sanctions for noncompliance in accordance with C.G.S. § 46a-56 as amended; provided, if such Contractor becomes involved in, or is threatened with, litigation with a subcontractor or vendor as a result of such direction by the Commission regarding a State

contract, the Contractor may request the State of Connecticut to enter into any such litigation or negotiation prior thereto to protect the interests of the State and the State may so enter.

- M.** The grant award is subject to approval of the Connecticut State Department of Education and availability of state or federal funds.
- N.** The applicant agrees and warrants that Sections 4-190 to 4-197, inclusive, of the Connecticut General Statutes concerning the Personal Data Act and Sections 10-4-8 to 10-4-10, inclusive, of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies promulgated there under are hereby incorporated by reference.

I, the undersigned authorized official, hereby certify that these assurances shall be fully implemented.

Superintendent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: *(typed)* \_\_\_\_\_

Title: *(typed)* \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## PART V: REFERENCES

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# Commissioner's Network Operations and Instructional Audit Report

Bennie Dover Jackson Middle  
School  
New London Public Schools  
November 4, 2019



Dr. Miguel A. Cardona  
Commissioner of Education  
Connecticut State Department of Education  
450 Columbus Boulevard | Hartford, CT 06103  
[www.sde.ct.gov](http://www.sde.ct.gov)



Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School  
November 4, 2019 | 1

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## Part I: Introduction

On May 23, 2019, the Commissioner initially selected Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School to participate in the Commissioner's Network, pending legislative authority to extend and expand the Commissioner's Network to include a ninth cohort of schools. Pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) § 10-223h(b), the New London Board of Education established the Turnaround Committee. On November 4, 2019, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) conducted, in consultation with the board of education, the Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School Governance Council, and the Turnaround Committee, an operations and instructional audit of the school in accordance with C.G.S. § 10-223h(c). The purpose of this report is to present the findings of the audit.

The audit team would like to express its sincere appreciation to the Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School community for its hospitality on the day of the school visit. We appreciate the openness and transparency demonstrated by members of the school community. There is a willingness and desire on the part of the staff, parents, students, and community partners to improve the school.

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### Commissioner's Network Overview

The Commissioner's Network is a commitment between local stakeholders and the CSDE to dramatically improve student achievement in up to 25 schools. The Network offers new resources and authorities to empower teachers and school leaders to implement research-based strategies in schools selected by the Commissioner. Network schools remain part of their local school districts, but the districts and the CSDE secure school-level flexibility and autonomy for the schools in exchange for heightened accountability. Schools are accepted into the Network for a minimum of three years. Subsection (h) of C.G.S. 10-223h establishes that the Connecticut 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. At present, 8 Cohort (IV, V, VI, VII, VIII) schools are participating in the Commissioner's Network.

Network schools make targeted investments in the following areas:

- **Talent:** Employ systems and strategies to recruit, hire, develop, evaluate, and retain excellent school leaders, teachers, and support staff.
- **Academics:** Design and implement a rigorous, aligned, and engaging academic program that allows all students to achieve at high levels.
- **Culture and Climate:** Foster a positive learning environment that supports high-quality teaching and learning, and engages families and the community as partners in the educational process.
- **Operations:** Create systems and processes that promote organizational efficiency and effectiveness, including through the use of time and financial resources.

As part of the operations and instructional audit, auditors identify school strengths and weaknesses in the areas of talent, academics, culture and climate, and operations. Audits are conducted by impartial and experienced educators who produce unbiased and objective reports supporting school planning and transformation efforts.

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## **Operations and Instructional Audit Overview**

Pursuant to C.G.S. § 10-223h(c), the operations and instructional audit shall determine the extent to which the school:

- (1) Has established a strong family and community connection to the school.
- (2) Has a positive school environment, as evidenced by a culture of high expectations and a safe and orderly workplace, and has addressed other nonacademic factors that impact student achievement, such as students' social, emotional, arts, cultural, recreational and health needs.
- (3) Has effective leadership, as evidenced by the school principal's performance appraisals, track record in improving student achievement, ability to lead turnaround efforts, and managerial skills and authority in the areas of scheduling, staff management, curriculum implementation and budgeting.
- (4) Has effective teachers and support staff, as evidenced by performance evaluations, policies to retain staff determined to be effective and who have the ability to be successful in the turnaround effort, policies to prevent ineffective teachers from transferring to the schools, and job-embedded, ongoing professional development informed by the teacher evaluation and support programs that are tied to teacher and student needs.
- (5) Uses time effectively, as evidenced by the redesign of the school day, week, or year to include additional time for student learning and teacher collaboration.
- (6) Has a curriculum and instructional program that is based on student needs, is research-based, rigorous and aligned with state academic content standards, and serves all children, including students at every achievement level.
- (7) Uses data to inform decision-making and for continuous improvement, including by providing time for collaboration on the use of data.

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## **Audit Process and Methodology**

The operations and instructional audit involves three phases of data collection and review:

- (1) The CSDE obtains and auditors review school artifacts, data, and documentation to gain a better understanding of the school's history and context. The CSDE collaborates with school and district leaders to administer a teacher survey.
- (2) The auditors conduct a school site visit to observe school systems and classrooms, and meet with members of the school community. During the on-site visit, auditors conduct interviews and focus groups with a representative set of school and community stakeholders, including school and district administrators, staff, students, family members, community partners, and members of the School Governance Council and Turnaround Committee.

- (3) The auditors synthesize and use all available data to generate the operations and instructional audit report, identifying strengths and growth areas around talent, academics, culture and climate, and operations.

Please note that while this Audit Report identifies areas for improvement, it does not prescribe interventions or offer recommendations. The Turnaround Committee is responsible for developing a Turnaround Plan that addresses the deficiencies identified in the audit.



## Part II: School Information

Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School serves 296 Grade 6 through Grade 8 students in New London. Approximately 15 percent of the students are Black and 72 percent of the students are Hispanic. Nineteen percent of the students are identified as needing special education services, and 46 percent are English learners. Eighty-five percent of the students in the school are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Student achievement at Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School is well below state averages in all grade levels and subject areas tested. The current principal is in his first year as director of Bennie Dover Jackson Multi-Magnet Middle School having previously served as principal of C.B. Jennings Dual Language and International Elementary Magnet School in New London from 2017-18 and then as an assistant superintendent for secondary schools redesign in Massachusetts.

### School Data Profile

The following chart provides a summary of Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School current and historic data, including information about student enrollment and demographics, personnel, school climate, school performance, and student academic achievement. All data below is self-reported except where indicated with \*\*.

Enrollment Data (2019-20):			
Grades:	6-8	5-Yr Enrollment Trend:	-337***
Student Enrollment:	265	Mobility Rate:	6.4 %
Personnel Data (2019-20):			
# of Administrators:	2	% of Teachers "Below Standard":	0
# of Teachers:	33	% of Teachers "Developing":	0
# of Support Staff:	10	% of Teachers "Proficient":	100
# of Psychologists:	1.5	% of Teachers "Exemplary":	0
# of Social Workers:	2	3-yr Teacher Retention Rate:	56%
School Day Per Year (2019-20):			
Total # of Student Days Per Year:	180	Instructional Minutes/Day:	374
Total # of Teacher Days Per Year:	185	Extended Day Program:	Yes
Student Demographic Breakdown (2019-20):			
% Black:	15.2	% Male:	51.4
% Hispanic:	71.6	% Female:	48.6
% White:	7.8	% EL:	45.9
% Other:	5.4	% Students with disabilities:	18.9
% F/R Meals:	85		
School Climate Data:			
	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
Student Attendance Rate:	94.8	95.1	93.4
	2018-2019		
	92.2		

Chronic Absenteeism Rate**:	13.1	13.1	22.4	28.7
Suspension Rate**:	18.2	12.2	23.3	NA
Teacher Attendance Rate:	92.3	91.1	90.3	89.8
<b>School Performance Index**:</b>	<b>2015-2016</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>	<b>2018-2019</b>
SPI:	53.6	52.2	54.2	NA
<b>Smarter Balanced Assessment Level 3 and 4 Data**:</b>	<b>2015-2016</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>	<b>2018-2019</b>
Grade 3 – Reading				
Grade 4 – Reading				
Grade 5 – Reading				
Grade 6 – Reading	19.9%	21.1%	22.4%	11.5%
Grade 7 – Reading	21.0%	20.0%	21.6%	23.4%
Grade 8 – Reading	25.7%	19.4%	23.8%	19.8%
Grade 3 – Math				
Grade 4 – Math				
Grade 5 – Math				
Grade 6 – Math	13.4%	12.3%	12.2%	*
Grade 7 – Math	12.8%	10.8%	13.5%	19.4%
Grade 8 – Math	10.9%	*	15.6%	10.0%

\* Data suppressed to ensure confidentiality.

NA = Data is not yet available.

\*\*\* Please note that the 5 Year Enrollment Trend is impacted by the creation of the multi-magnet campus at the middle school level. Student enrollment was distributed across the multiple pathways and their associated school codes.

## Part III: Audit Findings

Part III of the Audit Report provides a summative analysis of audit findings in the areas of talent, academics, culture and climate, and operations.

Talent				
Indicator:	1	2	3	4
1.1. Instructional practice		✓		
1.2. Evaluation and professional culture		✓		
1.3. Recruitment and retention strategies	✓			
1.4. Professional development		✓		
1.5. Leadership effectiveness		✓		
1.6. Instructional leadership		✓		

### Summary of Growth Areas:

#### **Instructional Practice**

The Next Generation Accountability indicator for ELA Performance has trended downward over time as the rate decreased from 50.7 in 2016-17 to 47.5 in 2018-19. The Math Performance Index decreased 4.6 percentage points from 45.3 in 2016-17 to the current index score of 40.7. Fifty percent (N=24) of survey respondents agree that “instructional quality and academic rigor are consistently high at this school.” The audit team observed 19 randomly selected classrooms across grade levels and content areas. Auditors saw primarily teacher-led lessons with low levels of rigor demonstrated through surface-level questioning that does not engage students in higher order thinking, limited student discourse and small group instruction, a lack of differentiation, and low student engagement in the observed classrooms. Though learning objectives were posted in most classrooms, at times instruction did not match. District leadership expressed that teachers need “additional support and practice” in effective teaching practices. School leadership described instructional practice as “developing,” noting that there has been inconsistency due to lack of curriculum framework, a change in leadership structure, and low teacher retention.

#### **Evaluation and Professional Culture**

Teacher focus groups report that the professional culture at Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School is “overwhelming...last year we experienced some pretty traumatic events that shook up our staff” and relay that currently the amount of responsibilities and new initiatives is daunting. School leadership shared that the staff “still needs some healing” from the events of the prior school year. Leadership notes that the culture is “improving, but it will take some time for systems put in place to be fully effective and we need staff to buy in to the new culture we are establishing. It’s a work in progress, but we’re confident we will get there.”

On the teacher survey, 70% (N=35) of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that “administrators provide regular, helpful, and actionable feedback to staff.” Teacher focus groups shared that the evaluation process was inconsistent in previous years in which not everyone was evaluated and timelines were not followed.

Leadership also reports that the lack of teacher evaluations last year led to a default “proficient” rating for many teachers. There is an “evaluation reset” in place in which content area supervisors will now do the evaluations, although school leadership shared concerns about “not having his finger on the pulse of where folks are and need support.” Although teachers report that the process is better this year, a desire remains for feedback that is more specific and provides information on how to improve, rather than being a “checklist evaluation.”

### **Recruitment and Retention Strategies**

Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School has a 3-year teacher retention rate of 56%. Teacher focus groups identified the attrition due to “the traumatic events of the past year” and a non-competitive pay scale in comparison to the region. School and district leadership shared that it has been difficult to attract quality talent due to the difficult circumstances, but it is a top priority. Teachers shared that the lack of substitutes also impacts teacher recruitment and retention as classes have inconsistent instruction and “classroom coverage adds to the stress of the day...who wants to sign on for that?” Due to the difficulty of filling positions, new hires often start after the beginning of the school year which impacts on-board training and orientation. Teachers also revealed that teachers “left because they didn’t feel supported by the last administration. Trust is not built overnight, but we can see they are trying.” School leadership reports they have responded to concerns by creating teaching, learning and leadership teams and are working on creating a more stable and supportive environment.

### **Professional Development**

Teacher survey results demonstrate that 42% (N=21) of teachers positively responded to the statement that “the professional development I received this year has improved my professional practice and allowed me to better meet the needs of my students.” Teachers conveyed a sense of concern regarding their professional learning, sharing that the focus is on curriculum development but feel “the vision is not cohesive.” Teachers report the focus on curriculum development is at the expense of professional learning on instructional strategies, rigor and differentiation. The principal reports that professional learning is centralized at the district level, but he is requesting more school-level autonomy. Teacher focus groups expressed a need for ongoing support to help teachers implement the various models, i.e. workshop, as the high turnover rates result in new teachers on staff that did not receive the appropriate training that was provided in previous years.

### **Leadership Effectiveness**

The Next Generation Accountability Index has shown limited growth, increasing 0.6 percentage points over three years to a current index score of 54.2. On a teacher survey administered prior to the audit site visit, 84% (N=41) of teachers strongly agreed/agreed on the survey that “school leadership effectively communicates a clear mission, vision and set of school wide priorities,” yet teacher and parent focus group participants struggled to define the specific strategic priorities of the school. Teachers and leadership focus group identified the motto “United in Excellence” as the driving force of the school and agreed there is a strong sense of urgency to support school improvement efforts. School leadership stated that “we’re focused on student achievement for all and bringing everyone – teachers, parents, community members, central office – together.”

### **Instructional Leadership**

As part of a planned district restructuring in the past year in an effort to improve student performance, there is a new leadership team in place at Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School. Sixty-eight percent (N=34) of teachers agreed with the survey statement “there is a common vision of what effective instruction looks like at this school.” School leadership reports that time was spent in developing a vision of effective instruction and calibrating with the teacher evaluation process. Leadership shared that it’s beneficial to have the district content people as part of the instructional leadership team as there is calibration for grades 6-12 throughout

the district. Teachers and leadership both report that the vision for effective instruction includes clear lesson objectives, student discourse, opportunities for independent work in order to demonstrate mastery, and a lesson structure that includes lesson initiation and closure. Teacher focus group participants also shared that since the administration team is so new, this is a work in progress. Focus groups revealed that the leadership team is focusing on rebuilding the foundation of Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School and communicating the vision that students are safe and cared for. A school improvement plan has been developed for the school, but the principal shared that it will need to be refined as he learns more about the needs of the school, staff, students and families.

Academics				
Indicator:	1	2	3	4
2.1. Academic rigor		✓		
2.2. Student engagement		✓		
2.3. Differentiation and checking for understanding	✓			
2.4. Curriculum and instruction aligned to the Connecticut Core Standards	✓			
2.5. Supports for special populations		✓		
2.6. Assessment system and data culture		✓		

**Summary of Growth Areas:**

**Academic Rigor and Differentiation**

Responses to the teacher survey question “instructional quality and academic rigor are consistently high at this school” were mixed, with 50% agreeing, 21% neutral, and 29% disagreeing. Sixty-two percent (N=31) agreed that “teachers at this school engage students in higher-order thinking and push them toward content mastery.” School leadership reports that while there are “pockets” of academic rigor, there is room for improvement including developing standards-aligned curricula that is implemented with fidelity. Teachers shared that a lot of time is spent “trying to manage the classrooms” which they believe impacts their ability to differentiate. During classroom observations, the audit team found insufficient evidence of instructional rigor and differentiation such as student-centered instruction, opportunities for students to engage in academic discourse, small group instruction, and higher-order questioning. In only four of the 18 observed classrooms were students involved in collaborative learning and only two classes were observed providing small group instruction. In the majority of observed classrooms, higher-order Depth of Knowledge questioning was lacking and remained at the surface level. Student discourse to reveal reasoning and evidence was not prevalent as student voice was mostly limited to call-and-response to teacher questioning.

Smarter Balanced proficiency levels at Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School, as shown in the chart below, are significantly below the state and district averages for both ELA and Math.

Percent Proficiency (Levels 3+)				
2018-19 SBAC	State Average	District Average	Bennie Dover Jackson Middle	Difference between State and School Averages
ELA	55.7%	31.5%	18.5%	-37.2
Math	48.1%	23.0%	10.7%	-37.4

Average Percent of Growth Target Achieved				
2018-19 SBAC	State Average	District Average	Bennie Dover Jackson Middle	Difference between State and School Averages
ELA	59.9%	52.1%	42.1%	-17.8 pts.
Math	62.5%	49.3%	40.1%	-22.4 pts.

### Student Engagement

In response to the survey statement that “students are engaged in their classes,” results were mixed. While 30% agreed, 24% disagreed and 46% were neutral. Audit team observations noted that instruction was primarily whole group and opportunities for small group work or student discourse were limited. In classroom walkthroughs, auditors observed off-task behaviors such as students having off-topic conversations with their peers and students not engaged in the instruction. School leadership noted that in “classes that have teachers that are strong instructionally and rigor is evident, engagement is higher and referrals are lower.” It is reported that school leadership and the teaching staff are engaged in ongoing discussions regarding the difference between authentic engagement and compliance. Teacher focus group participants equated engagement with behavior and compliance, supporting the need to develop a common understanding of authentic engagement. Students report that group work occurs infrequently and many lessons are structured for independent, “quiet” work. Students shared that they would like teachers to “tap into our interests and connect our work to that...it would make learning more fun and I would remember more.”

### Curriculum and Instruction aligned to the Connecticut Core Standards

Only thirty-eight percent (N=19) of Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School staff reported on the teacher survey that “the school has curricula for all grade levels and content areas aligned to the current content standards.” Teachers, school leaders, and district leader focus groups all report that curriculum is an area of focus this year and the fall professional development day was devoted to curriculum development. School leadership noted that the lack of curricula and deep understanding of content standards has impacted instruction. Leadership reports that teachers are nominating their peers to assist as teacher leaders in order to leverage their knowledge for teacher professional learning. Teacher focus group members report while time has been dedicated to developing curriculum, it has yet to be adopted. Teacher focus groups revealed that while professional development sessions are devoted to curriculum design and writing, little time is spent on instructional strategies to support rigorous instruction. As referenced in the charts above, student achievement at Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School continues to significantly underperform the state averages. While teachers report that, when possible, they spend time collaboratively working to develop instructional materials and analyze student work, instruction that is aligned with the rigor of the standards is lacking as evidenced by classroom walkthroughs.

### Supports for Special Populations

Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School has 18.9% of students identified as receiving special education services with 5 special education teachers on staff with caseloads of approximately 28 students. Forty-four (N=22) of

survey respondents disagreed with the statement that “the school adequately meets the needs of its special education students and English Learners.” Teachers and school leadership shared that staffing of paraprofessionals has been difficult and report that they are currently understaffed which impacts service delivery to students with disabilities. District leadership shared concerns and efforts to redesign the staffing structure in order to hire high quality educators to provide service hours. Both teachers and leadership agree that additional supports and resources are needed to support students with disabilities in order to provide the intensive differentiation of instruction that is needed.

Approximately 46% of Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School’s population are identified as English Learners (EL). Teacher focus group participants would like to see an expansion of supports and resources for ELs. School administration shared that while there has been a traditional bilingual program in place, it has not always been implemented with fidelity. School leadership reports that Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) training, a research-based instructional model to address the academic needs of English learners, is needed for all staff members as “the current system is not providing the results we need.” Teacher focus groups shared that the “EL population and their families can sometimes be an afterthought. We say we want them to be a part of the community, but we isolate them through a lack of resources and a lack of consistency.”

### **Assessment System and Data Culture**

Fifty percent (N=25) of survey respondents agreed that “this school has a comprehensive assessment system to measure student progress, identify necessary interventions, and provide teachers with data to inform instruction.” As reported by school leadership, “teachers have more access to data now than ever before, but it needs improvement. It’s one thing to look at data, but it’s another to know what to look for and what to do with it.” School leadership believes that the content area supervisors will help steer teachers in the appropriate direction and “bring the data, and the work behind it, to life.” School leadership report a usage of Interim Assessment Blocks and document based questions as a main data source to help drive instruction. Sixty-four percent (N=32) of teachers surveyed support that “teachers at this school use student assessment data to check for understanding to differentiate instruction,” yet teacher focus group participants revealed that instruction is not data driven. Teachers also report “conflict and confusion with content supervisor versus principal expectations” in regards to the data culture.

School leadership reports that in regards to SRBI, Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School is still “early on in the process” and more time is needed to work with the staff to “understand the why of it before we really start.” Currently, every student receives ELA and Math Lab and the plan is to rework that strategy based upon data and provide interventions to those that need it and enrichment for those that are at mastery level. Teacher focus groups report that a vast majority of students need intervention, but they are not staffed and/or scheduled accordingly.

Culture and Climate				
Indicator:	1	2	3	4
3.1. School environment		✓		
3.2. Student attendance	✓			
3.3. Student behavior	✓			
3.4. Interpersonal interactions	✓			
3.5. Family and community engagement		✓		
3.6. Community partners and wraparound strategy			✓	

**Summary of Strengths:**

**Community Partners and Wraparound Strategy**

School leadership reports that several community partners are leveraged to provide wraparound supports for Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School. Administration reports partnerships with the NAACP and the U.S. Coast Guard help support diversity initiatives, and additional partnerships have been formed with Connecticut College, Mystic Seaport and Mystic Aquarium. School leadership acknowledges that “we have resources close by that we need to build partnerships with,” supporting the notion that expanding partnerships to provide additional supports would be beneficial.

**Summary of Growth Areas:**

**School Environment**

Responses to the survey statement that “the school environment is conducive to high-quality teaching and learning” were mixed, with 38% agreeing, 36% disagreeing, and 26% neutral. The school building itself is well-maintained and there are welcoming and engaging messages such as “Change Your Words, Change Your Mindset” on bulletin boards throughout the school. The vision statement of “United in Excellence” is posted outside all classrooms and is referenced by teachers and students in focus group discussions. Although there are pockets of warm and inviting classrooms with visual displays and bulletin boards, auditors noted that there is little student work or data displayed in classrooms. Even though there is evidence of effective strategies such as the posting of learning objectives and structured lesson formats beginning with “Do Now” activities to set purpose for learning, hallway behaviors were chaotic and led to delayed or interrupted instruction. Teachers and student focus groups report that a new structure of walking students to classes was implemented this year, but students shared the ineffectiveness as students lagged behind and were left unsupervised which auditors also witnessed. Stairwells in particular lack adult supervision and led to escalated noise levels and behaviors. School administration report that “culture and climate is our number one concern” and shared that “a need to create a safe and orderly environment is of the utmost importance.”

**Student Attendance**

The percentage of students chronically absent has dramatically risen over the past three years, increasing from 13.1% in 2016-17 to 28.7% in 2018-19, which is significantly above the state and district



rates. Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School has a weekly attendance team meeting in which the administration, district supervisor for culture, social workers, school counselors and nurse convene in order to review data and determine next steps. School administration discussions revealed that priority students are identified and plans are developed targeting individual student needs. As building leadership shared, “we have a relentless approach...in going above and beyond to develop relationships so the kids want to be here.” Administration reports that teachers made individual calls home when students are absent and document in PowerSchool so the data can be reviewed on an ongoing basis. A bulletin board near the main office is dedicated to attendance and a ceremony was recently held to celebrate and recognize students with two or less absences for the first quarter.

### **Student Behavior**

Forty-five percent (N=22) of teachers disagreed with the survey statement that “the school implements an effective school wide behavior management system.” Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School’s suspension rate in 2017-18 was 23.3%, well above the state average of 6.8% and 11.1 percentage points higher than the rate in the previous school year. Building leadership reports that there has been some adjustments for students as they “adapt to the new, high, and clear expectations. We’re holding them to standards that they weren’t accountable to before.” Student focus group participants echoed this sentiment, revealing “last year we could get away with anything, but now Dr. Ortiz holds us accountable for our behavior and for learning.” The students described student behaviors “as crazy last year” with challenging behaviors and report a change this year due to the “more structured” environment. Teachers describe the behavior management system as “inconsistent...it changes and looks different with each new school leader.” While teachers shared that professional development is provided on need areas such as trauma-informed instruction, they report that follow-up supports are lacking.

### **Interpersonal Interactions**

In response to the statement “Interactions between students and staff are positive and respectful,” 35% (N=17) of survey participants agreed. Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School staff report that “we’re still healing from the events of last year, and we need to start building relationships all over again because there is a level of distrust within the community.” While the auditors observed positive interactions between staff and students at the start of the school day as students were greeted as they entered the school, many interactions between staff and students were transactional and geared towards correcting behaviors. Student focus group participants revealed a strong relationship with the current principal, sharing that “he hears us, he listens to us and asks for our input and advice,” but shared that relationships with teachers aren’t strong. Although there was an advisory program in the past, leadership reports it has not been instituted yet this year as they examine the effectiveness and want to ensure the time is purposeful. Teachers report that student-adult relationships have “suffered due to the inconsistency” of the past few years and an “unstable environment with constant changes in leadership and priorities.”

### **Family and Community Engagement**

Teachers expressed that family engagement is relatively low. Teacher survey data supports this as only 22% (N=11) agreed with the statement “Families are engaged in the school.” Leadership shared that parental and family involvement has been a long-standing concern. While it is reported that opportunities ranging from orientation, back to school night, and conferences are offered, attendance could be improved. School administration revealed that “true engagement with families needs to be dug into and should be value-added into teaching and learning.” Though the school outreaches to families through School Messenger and social media pages are updated frequently to highlight current

happenings, students report that families aren't contacted frequently and apps to increase communication are used sporadically. District leadership reports that "re-engagement has taken root with the hiring of Dr. Ortiz" and shared that there have been frequent parent activities and meetings after the crisis of last year in order to develop more confidence in the school's direction. Teachers and student focus groups both shared that meaningful family engagement offerings should be expanded in order to develop stronger relationships.

Operations				
Indicator:	1	2	3	4
4.1. Adequate instructional time		✓		
4.2. Use of instructional time	✓			
4.3. Use of staff time		✓		
4.4. Routines and transitions		✓		

**Summary of Growth Areas:**

**Instructional Time**

Responses to the survey statement "the school schedule and calendar maximize instructional time" varied with 34% of respondents agreeing, while 28% disagree and 28% remaining neutral. Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School follows a six period day in which classes are approximately one hour in length. The audit team observed ineffective use of instructional time in many classrooms due to poor pacing, limited student engagement, and missed opportunities for interactive learning. Teacher and student focus groups report frequent interruptions for announcements that is disruptive to the learning process. Although the school schedule provides time for math and literacy labs, the ineffective use of data and intervention programming undermines intervention supports. Student performance indicates that students would benefit from focused intervention services to support math and literacy.

**Use of Staff Time**

Teachers express a need for collaboration time in order to develop instructional plans and materials and review data. Sixty-six percent (N=33) of teachers disagreed that "teachers have enough time to work with each other to develop instructional materials, review student data, and improve instruction." Though teachers have a daily common planning time, it is reported that oftentimes this collaboration does not occur due to lack of substitute coverage for absent teachers. Teachers report that vertical collaboration is limited, impacting vertical alignment of curriculum and instruction. Teacher focus groups report that the collaborative planning time is more effective for some departments depending upon the availability of the content area supervisor. The staff expresses a need to work collaboratively with colleagues to engage in co-planning and data analysis. This collaborative work will aid in the development of a clear, shared vision of what high-quality Tier 1 instruction looks like within the frameworks of the curricula that is being developed.

### **Routines and Transitions**

Respondents were split in regard to the teacher survey statement that “the school has clear routines and procedures in place that are consistently followed by students and staff to help create a smooth and orderly environment.” While 40% agreed, 38% were in disagreement. Auditors observed beginning of the school day and lunch transitions in which operations were efficient and systems and structures were in place to maintain a peaceful environment. Teachers and students report the hallways to be less orderly, and auditors observed class transitions to be disruptive and loud even though structures have been put in place in order for teachers to walk students to their next class. While auditors observed a strong adult presence in the hallways, stairwells lacked adult presence resulting in increased noise levels and disruptive behaviors. Improvements are needed for transitions so as not to impact instructional time and to improve the climate of the building.

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**APPENDIX A: OPERATIONS AND INSTRUCTIONAL AUDIT RUBRIC**

<b>TALENT</b>				
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>1-Below Standard</b>	<b>2-Developing</b>	<b>3-Proficient</b>	<b>4-Exemplary</b>
<b>1.1. Instructional Practice</b>	Teacher effectiveness is inconsistent and highly variable from classroom to classroom. There are significant concerns about instruction. Staffing decisions do not reflect teacher effectiveness and student needs.	Instructional quality is moderate; however, teacher effectiveness is variable from classroom to classroom. Staffing decisions do not always reflect teacher effectiveness and student needs.	Most classes are led by effective educators, and instructional quality is strong. There are some systems in place to promote and develop teacher effectiveness and make appropriate staffing decisions.	100% of classes are led by deeply passionate and highly effective educators. There are strong systems in place to promote staff efficacy and make staffing decisions driven exclusively by student needs.
<b>1.2. Evaluation and Professional Culture</b>	There are significant concerns about staff professionalism. Staff come to school unprepared, and there is little sense of personal responsibility. There is a culture of low expectations; individuals are not accountable for their work. Evaluations are infrequent, and few if any staff were formally evaluated 3 or more times in 2018-19. Instructional leaders do not provide regular feedback to staff.	There are some concerns about professionalism. Some staff come to school unprepared. Some teachers feel responsible for their work. Some teachers were formally evaluated at least 3 times in 2018-19, but most were not. Leaders communicate some expectations for and feedback on performance, but do not consistently follow-up to see whether or not the feedback is acted upon.	The school is a professional work environment. Most staff are prepared to start the school day on time with appropriate instructional materials ready to go. Most individuals feel responsible for their work. Most teachers were formally evaluated at least 3 times in 2018-19 in alignment with SEED expectations. Leaders provide feedback and hold individuals accountable for effort and results.	100% of staff are prepared to start the school day on time with appropriate instructional materials ready to go. The vast majority of staff feel deep personal responsibility to do their best work. All teachers were formally evaluated at least 3 times in 2018-19. Leaders conduct frequent informal evaluations and provide meaningful feedback. Individuals are held accountable for their performance.
<b>1.3. Recruitment and Retention Strategies</b>	The school and/or district lack systems to recruit and attract top talent. Retention of high-quality staff is a significant concern. The school lacks systems and strategies to retain top teachers and leaders.	The school and/or district have components of a plan for recruitment and retention of quality educators (e.g., mentoring, induction). The plan is not fully developed or consistently implemented.	The school and/or district have systems for strategic recruitment and retention. Efforts are made to match the most effective educators to the students with the greatest needs. Retention of high-quality teachers is high.	The school and/or district effectively implement a long-term plan for recruitment and retention. Efforts are made to match the most effective educators to the students with the greatest needs. Deliberate, successful efforts are made to retain top talent.
<b>1.4. Professional Development</b>	Professional Development (PD) opportunities are infrequent and/or of inconsistent quality and relevance. PD does not align to staff's development areas and/or students' needs. As a result, teachers struggle to implement PD strategies. There is no clear process to support or hold teachers accountable for the implementation of PD strategies.	PD opportunities are provided; however, they are not always tightly aligned with student and adult learning needs. The quality of PD opportunities is inconsistent. Sometimes, teachers report that PD improves their instructional practices. Teachers are not generally held accountable for implementing skills learned through PD.	The school offers targeted, job-embedded PD throughout the school year. PD is generally connected to student needs and staff growth areas identified through observations. Most teachers feel PD opportunities help them improve their classroom practices. Most teachers are able to translate and incorporate PD strategies into their daily instruction.	The school consistently offers rich and meaningful PD opportunities that are aligned to student needs and staff growth areas identified through observations. Teachers effectively translate PD strategies into their daily instruction. The school has a process for monitoring and supporting the implementation of PD strategies.

TALENT				
Indicator	1-Below Standard	2-Developing	3-Proficient	4-Exemplary
<b>1.5. Leadership Effectiveness</b>	Leadership fails to convey a school mission or strategic direction. The school team is stuck in a fire-fighting or reactive mode, lacks school goals, and/or suffers from initiative fatigue. The school community questions whether the school can/will improve.	The mission and strategic direction are not well communicated. A school improvement plan does not consistently guide daily activities and decision-making. The community generally understands the need for change, however actions are more often governed by the status quo.	Leadership focuses on school mission and strategic direction with staff, students, and families. The school is implementing a solid improvement plan and has a clear set of measurable goals. The plan may lack coherence and a strategy for sustainability. Leadership conveys urgency.	Leadership focuses on school mission and strategic direction with staff, students, and families. The school has a manageable set of goals and a clear set of strategies to achieve those goals. The plan is being implemented and monitored with fidelity. Leadership conveys deep urgency.
<b>1.6. Instructional Leadership</b>	Few staff can articulate a common understanding of what excellent instruction looks like. Instructional leaders do not demonstrate a commitment to developing consistent and high-quality instructional practice school-wide.	Some staff can articulate a common understanding of what effective instruction looks like. School norms and expectations are enforced with limited consistency. Instructional leaders demonstrate some commitment to improving instructional practice school-wide.	Most staff articulates a common understanding of what effective instruction looks like. School norms and expectations are consistently enforced. Instructional leaders consistently demonstrate a commitment to improving instructional practice school-wide.	All staff articulates a common understanding of what effective instruction looks like. Educators relentlessly pursue excellent pedagogy. Instructional leaders have communicated and enforced high expectations school-wide.

ACADEMICS				
Indicator	1-Below Standard	2-Developing	3-Proficient	4-Exemplary
<b>2.1. Academic Rigor*<sup>1</sup></b>	Most observed lessons are teacher led. Teachers rarely engage students in higher-order thinking. Most students demonstrate a surface-level understanding of concepts. Observed lessons are indicative of low expectations and little sense of urgency.	Some observed lessons are somewhat student-centered, challenging and engaging. Teachers engage students in some higher-order thinking. Many students demonstrate only a surface-level understanding of concepts. Teachers demonstrate moderate expectations and some urgency.	Observed lessons are appropriately accessible and challenging for most students. Teachers engage students in higher-order thinking, and students are pushed toward content mastery. Lessons begin to engage students as self-directed learners. Teachers communicate solid expectations.	All observed lessons are appropriately accessible and challenging. Teachers push students, promoting academic risk-taking. Students are developing the capacity to engage in complex content and pose higher-level questions to the teacher and peers. Teachers promote high expectations.
<b>2.2. Student Engagement*</b>	Few students are actively engaged and excited about their work. The majority of students are engaged in off-task behaviors and some are disruptive to their classmates. Few students are truly involved in the	Some students exhibit moderate engagement, but many are engaged in off-task behaviors. Some observed lessons appeal to multiple learning styles. Students are involved in the lessons, but participation is more	Most students are engaged and exhibit on-task behaviors. The observed lessons appeal to multiple learning styles. Students are involved in the lesson, but participation is, at times, more passive than active. A handful of	All students are visibly engaged, ready to learn, and on task. Students are clearly focused on learning in all classrooms. Students are actively engaged in the lessons and excited to participate in classroom dialogue and instruction. The lessons appeal to

<sup>1</sup> Ratings for the four sub-indicators marked with an asterisk (\*) are largely based on a composite or average score generated from all classroom observations.

ACADEMICS				
Indicator	1-Below Standard	2-Developing	3-Proficient	4-Exemplary
	lessons. Observed lessons primarily appeal to one learning style.	passive than active. Students are easily distracted from assigned tasks.	students are easily distracted from the task at hand.	and seem to support all learning styles.
<b>2.3. Differentiation and Checking for Understanding*</b>	Most teachers take a one-size-fits-all approach and struggle to differentiate their instruction to meet individual learning needs. There is no evidence around the use of data to inform instruction and minimal efforts to check for student understanding.	Some teachers are differentiating at least part of the observed lessons; however, the practice is not consistent or widespread. There is some evidence of the use of student data to adapt the learning process. Some teachers use strategies to monitor understanding.	Most teachers employ strategies to tier or differentiate instruction at various points in the lesson. Most teachers use data or checks for understanding to differentiate the learning process on the fly. Teachers take time to support students struggling to engage with the content.	Teachers consistently and seamlessly differentiate instruction. Teachers use data and formal/informal strategies to gauge understanding, and differentiate the learning process accordingly. Teaching feels individualized to meet students' unique needs.
<b>2.4. Curriculum and Instruction Aligned to the Connecticut Core Standards</b>	The school lacks a rigorous, standards-based curriculum that is aligned to the Connecticut Core Standards (CCS) and/or the curriculum is not being implemented with fidelity. As a result, pacing is inconsistent. The percentage of students at or above goal on state assessments is $\geq 10$ points below the state average.	The school has curricula for some grades and content areas, some of which are rigorous, standards-based. Curricula are implemented with some fidelity. Teachers struggle with consistent pacing. The percentage of students at or above goal on state assessments is 6-10 points below the state average.	Rigorous, standards-based curricula exist for almost all grade levels and content areas, and are being implemented consistently across classrooms. Teachers demonstrate consistent pacing. The percentage of students at or above goal on state assessments is within 5 percentage points of the state average.	Rigorous, standards-based curricula exist for all grade levels and content areas. Curricula are aligned with the CCS and are being implemented with a high degree of fidelity throughout the school. The percentage of students at or above goal on state assessments meets or exceeds the state average.
<b>2.5. Support for Special Populations</b>	The school is inadequately meeting the needs of its high-needs students. IEP goals are not regularly met. Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) is not fully considered when making placements. The school lacks appropriate interventions and supports for ELs. There are significant achievement gaps between subgroups and non-identified students as measured by state assessments, and no evidence of progress.	The school typically meets the needs of its high-needs students. Most special education students meet their IEP goals, but LRE is not always considered when making placement determinations. The school typically meets the needs of its ELs, and attempts to track progress and set content and language mastery goals. There are significant gaps between subgroups and non-identified students as measured by state assessments and marginal progress over time.	The school consistently meets the needs of its high-needs students. Special education students regularly meet their IEP goals and LRE is a critical factor in placement determinations. The school meets the needs, tracks progress, and sets content and language mastery goals for all ELs. There are small gaps between subgroups and non-identified students as measured by state assessments, and some signs of progress toward closing the gaps.	The school is successfully closing the achievement gap for its high-needs students. General and special education teachers work collaboratively to support students. The school tracks the effectiveness of language acquisition instructional strategies and adjusts programming accordingly. There is no achievement gap between subgroups and non-identified students as measured by state assessments.
<b>2.6. Assessment Systems and Data Culture</b>	The school lacks a comprehensive assessment system (including summative and benchmark assessments). Teachers rarely	The school has some consistent assessments; however, there are major gaps in certain grades and content areas. There are some	The school implements a clear system of benchmark assessments. Some teachers are developing familiarity with regularly using	Teachers consistently administer assessments throughout the year. Assessments are standards-based and provide real-time data. Teachers

ACADEMICS				
Indicator	1-Below Standard	2-Developing	3-Proficient	4-Exemplary
	collect, analyze, and/or discuss data. The school lacks or fails to implement SRBI protocols linking data to interventions.	efforts to collect and use data. SRBI systems and processes are somewhat present.	formative assessments to differentiate instruction. The school has emerging processes in place to use the data to inform interventions.	embed formative assessments in their daily lessons. The school has strong processes to collect, analyze, and use data to inform interventions.

CULTURE AND CLIMATE				
Indicator	1-Below Standard	2-Developing	3-Proficient	4-Exemplary
<b>3.1. School Environment</b>	The school fails to create a welcoming and stimulating learning environment. Communal spaces and classrooms may be unkempt, rundown, unsafe, or sterile. Many classrooms are neither warm nor inviting and lack intellectual stimulation. Little to no student work or data is displayed to help convey a sense of pride and high expectations.	The school struggles to provide a welcoming environment conducive to high-quality teaching and learning. Large sections of the school are not clean, bright, welcoming, or reflective of student work. Though the school has some data and student work displayed, efforts to brand the school and convey high expectations are very minimal. Sections of the school need significant attention.	The school generally provides a welcoming learning environment. Most of the facility is in good repair and conducive to teaching and learning. Most classrooms and common spaces are bright and clean, displaying data and student work; however, some sections lack visual stimulation. The school has made an effort to foster school identity through branding and consistent messaging in classrooms and communal spaces.	The school provides a welcoming and stimulating learning environment. Common spaces and classrooms are bright, clean, welcoming, and conducive to high-quality teaching and learning. Data and student work are visible and present throughout the school, inspiring students and teachers to do their best work. There is clear branding and consistent messaging throughout the school, promoting school identity and pride.
<b>3.2. Student Attendance</b>	The school has few, if any, strategies to increase attendance. Average daily attendance is $\leq 88\%$ and/or chronic absenteeism is $> 20\%$ .	The school has some strategies to increase attendance. Average daily attendance is $> 88\%$ and $\leq 93\%$ and/or chronic absenteeism is $> 15\%$ and $\leq 20\%$ .	The school has multiple, effective strategies to increase attendance. Average daily attendance is $> 93\%$ and $\leq 97\%$ and/or chronic absenteeism is $> 10\%$ and $\leq 15\%$ .	The school implements effective strategies to increase attendance and on-time arrival. Average daily attendance is $> 97\%$ and chronic absenteeism is $\leq 10\%$ .
<b>3.3. Student Behavior</b>	A school-wide behavior management plan may exist, but there is little evidence of implementation. Student misbehavior is a significant challenge and creates regular distractions. Disciplinary approaches appear to be inconsistent; students and staff do not have a common understanding of behavioral expectations. Discipline is mostly punitive. The rate of suspensions/expulsions as a proportion of student enrollment is	A school-wide behavior management plan is in place, and there are some signs of implementation. Student misbehavior is a challenge and creates frequent disruptions. There may be confusion among students and staff regarding behavioral expectations. Discipline is mostly punitive, and there is inconsistent reinforcement of desired behaviors. The rate of suspensions/expulsions as a proportion of student enrollment is between 15% and 20%.	A school-wide behavior management plan is in place and effectively implemented most of the time. Student behavior is under control. Misbehavior is infrequent with periodic distractions to instruction. Most students behave in a calm and respectful manner. Students and staff have a common understanding of the behavior policy. There is positive reinforcement of desired behaviors. The suspension/expulsion rate is between 10% and 14%.	A school-wide behavior management plan is consistently and effectively implemented. All students behave in a calm, orderly, and respectful manner throughout the school day. Classroom distractions are minimal, and immediately and appropriately addressed. Rewards and consequences are clear and appropriate, and are consistently applied across the school. The suspension/expulsion rate is $\leq 10\%$ .



CULTURE AND CLIMATE				
Indicator	1-Below Standard	2-Developing	3-Proficient	4-Exemplary
	greater than 20% (total # 2018-19 incidents/total enrollment).			
<b>3.4. Interpersonal Interactions</b>	There is a weak sense of community. The quality and types of student, adult, and student/adult interactions raise concerns. There are signs of divisiveness or hostility among students and with staff. There are minimal signs of connections between students and staff; interactions are largely transactional or triggered when students are off task.	There is a moderate sense of community. Students are somewhat respectful toward one another and adults. There are some concerns around climate and tone. There is some teasing and divisiveness; however, it does not define school culture. Communication between students and staff is somewhat positive. There are some connections between students and staff.	There is a good overall sense of community. Students are generally respectful toward one another and adults. Interactions are mostly positive. There is minimal teasing and divisiveness. Communication between students and staff is generally positive and respectful. There are signs of connections between students and staff. Most staff seem invested in their students.	There is a strong sense of community. Students are respectful and courteous of one another and adults. Student interactions are overwhelmingly positive and polite. The school is an inclusive and welcoming environment. Student/Adult interactions are positive and respectful, demonstrating strong relationships. Staff seems invested in the well-being and development of students.
<b>3.5. Family and Community Engagement</b>	The school offers infrequent opportunities to involve parents in the school community. Family involvement is minimal. Teachers rarely reach out to families regarding their child's academic progress.	The school offers several family events throughout the year. Roughly half of families participate in school activities. More than half of all teachers reach out to families regarding their child's academic progress.	The school offers periodic, meaningful opportunities for parents/families to engage in student's education. Most families participate in school activities. Most educators communicate regularly with families.	The school frequently engages parents/family as partners in student's education. Almost all families participate in school activities. Nearly all educators communicate with families on a regular basis.
<b>3.6. Community Partners and Wraparound Strategy</b>	The school offers inadequate supports to address students' nonacademic needs. There are limited wraparound services. The school makes little or no effort to engage community partners to expand services offered through the school.	The school offers some support to address students' nonacademic needs through wraparound services. Community and partner engagement is spotty and event-specific.	The school offers a range of wraparound services to address students' nonacademic needs. The school has several sustained community partnerships.	The school has a clear process for evaluating students' needs and connecting students to appropriate wraparound services. The school has sustained community partnerships to help address student needs.

OPERATIONS				
Indicator	1-Below Standard	2-Developing	3-Proficient	4-Exemplary
<b>4.1. Adequate Instructional Time</b>	There is not enough time in the school schedule to appropriately meet students' academic needs. There is a significant amount of wasted time in the school calendar and daily schedule. The schedule	Students would benefit from increased instructional and/or intervention time. The school calendar and daily schedule could be improved to increase time on task. The schedule includes > 5 and ≤ 5.5	The school has taken steps to increase instructional time on task through extended learning opportunities. The school calendar and daily schedule are well constructed. The schedule includes >	The school has multiple extended learning opportunities available to students. The school implements a thoughtful and strategic school calendar and daily schedule. The schedule includes > 6 hours of



OPERATIONS				
Indicator	1-Below Standard	2-Developing	3-Proficient	4-Exemplary
	includes ≤ 5 hours of instruction per day, and ≤ 60 minutes of ELA time. <sup>2</sup>	hours of instruction per day, and > 60 and ≤ 90 minutes of ELA time.	5.5 and ≤ 6 hours of instruction per day, and > 90 and ≤ 120 minutes of ELA time.	instruction per day, and > 120 minutes of ELA time.
<b>4.2. Use of Instructional Time*</b>	Staff and students use time ineffectively. Misused instructional time results from misbehavior, poor scheduling, and inefficient transitions. There are missed opportunities to maximize time on task. Observed teachers struggle with pacing and fail to use class time in a constructive manner.	Staff and student use of time is somewhat effective. Some students are off task and there are missed opportunities to maximize instructional time. Lesson schedules are moderately well planned, paced, and executed. Teachers could be more skilled and/or methodical in the use of class time.	Most staff and students use time well. A handful of students require redirection; however, the majority of students transition quickly to academic work when prompted by the teacher. There is minimal downtime. Lessons are well planned, paced, and executed. Teachers are adept at managing and using class time.	Staff and students maximize their use of time. There is no downtime. Transitions are smooth and efficient. Teachers meticulously use every moment of class time to prioritize instructional time on task. Students transition promptly to academic work with minimal cues and reminders from teachers.
<b>4.3. Use of Staff Time</b>	Educators lack adequate and/or recurring professional development and/or common planning time. Common planning time is currently disorganized and the time is not used effectively. As a result, staff members are unable to develop and/or share practices on a regular basis.	Most academic teams have common planning periods (less than 1 hour/week); however, the school has failed to secure vertical and horizontal planning. Collaborative planning time is used at a basic level (e.g., organization of resources or topics not directly related to classroom instruction).	All academic teams have common planning periods (1-2 hours/week) and they are seldom interrupted by non-instructional tasks. Staff members use this time to discuss instructional strategies, discuss student work, develop curricular resources, and use data to adjust instruction.	All educators have weekly common planning time for vertical and horizontal planning (more than 2 hours/week). Common planning periods are tightly protected and only interrupted by emergencies. The school has established tight protocols to ensure that common planning time is used effectively.
<b>4.4. Routines and Transitions</b>	The school is chaotic and disorderly. The safety of students and staff is a concern. The school lacks critical systems and routines. Movement of students is chaotic and noisy with little adult intervention. Adults are not present during transitions; therefore, this is very little direction.	The school is somewhat chaotic and/or disorderly, particularly in certain locations and during certain times of day. Some staff make an effort to maintain procedures and routines; however, staff presence is also an issue and redirection of misbehavior is lacking.	The school environment is calm and orderly in most locations and during most of the day. Rules and procedures are fairly clear, consistent, and evident. Routines seem somewhat apparent and institutionalized. Adults are present to reinforce norms.	The school environment is calm and orderly. Rules and procedures are clear, specific, consistent, and evident. Routines are largely unspoken and institutionalized. Adults are consistently present to reinforce norms.

<sup>2</sup> The total amount of ELA instructional time per day at the secondary level can include reading- and/or writing-intensive coursework.