Connecticut State Board of Education
Hartford

To Be Proposed:
June 5, 2024

Resolved, That, pursuant to Section 10-223h of the Connecticut General Statutes, the State Board of Education adopts and approves the Turnaround Plan for Canton Middle School in Canton, subject to the conditions noted in the Commissioner of Education's June 5, 2024, Executive Summary to the State Board of Education, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action, including, but not limited to, expending such funds as may be necessary to execute and implement the foregoing.

Approved by a vote of _____, this fifth day of June, Two Thousand Twenty-Four.

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

To: State Board of Education

From   Charlene M. Russell-Tucker, Commissioner of Education

Date: June 5, 2024

Subject: Approval of Commissioner's Network Turnaround Plan: Canton Middle School,
                   Canton

Executive Summary

Introduction

Pursuant to Section(§)10-223h of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.), the Commissioner's
Network provides new resources, increased flexibilities, and greater accountability to improve
student achievement in some of the state's lowest performing schools. The Commissioner's
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 of Education. Schools are accepted into the
Commissioner's Network for a minimum of three years. C.G.S. §10-223h establishes that the
State Board of Education (SBE) may allow schools to continue in the Commissioner's Network
for up to two additional years if necessary. Commissioner's 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 Canton Middle School (CMS) located in Canton,
Connecticut. This will require efforts at the state and local levels to secure conditions that are
conducive to scalable and sustainable reform.

Background

On April 13, 2023, the CSDE received an *Expression of Interest Form* from the Canton Public
Schools (CPS) volunteering CMS for participation in the Commissioner's Network. On May 25,
2023, the Commissioner of Education initially selected CMS for possible participation in the
Commissioner's 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 the initial selection, CMS and the Canton Board of Education
appointed members to serve on the school's Turnaround Committee, and the CSDE conducted an
Operations and Instructional Audit on October 4, 2023. The Turnaround Committee developed
the Turnaround Plan for CMS in accordance with C.G.S. §10-223h(d).

Commissioner's Network Turnaround Plan for Canton Middle School

CMS, identified as a Category 4 Focus School for High Needs English Language Arts (ELA) Growth based on the Next Generation Accountability System's Accountability Index, serves 240 students in Grades 7 through 8. Of those 240 students, approximately 17 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals; approximately 18 percent are identified as needing special education services; and zero percent are English Learners/Multilingual Learners (ELs/MLs). Approximately 6.5 percent of the students are Hispanic/Latino, 8.5 percent are Black, and 79.2 percent are White.

CMS aims to improve teaching and learning by utilizing strategies, methods, and best practices that have proven to be effective in improving student academic performance. High-quality professional learning; high-quality academic support systems, such as tutoring, intervention, differentiation and specialized instruction; and creating a safe, inclusive, and equitable learning environment are some of the high-leverage strategies that will be implemented. Participation in the Commissioner's Network will support the professional development of CMS teaching staff, expansion of the data-driven decision-making process, development of proactive and responsive attendance practices, and revision of the school schedule to increase opportunities for intervention and staff team collaboration.

The following strategic components in the domains of talent, academics, culture and climate, and operations address the transformative potential of the CMS Turnaround Plan. Specifically, the school, in collaboration with the CPS, will:

Talent:

- Create a professional learning plan that is aligned; sustained; reflective of both teacher and student needs; clearly articulated; values staff feedback; and directly impacts Tier I instruction.
- Improve specialized, supportive instruction through program review and scaling of best practices in specialized literacy supports across special and regular education.
- Refine the educator growth and evaluation model to support ongoing professional learning around instruction.

Academics:

- Develop shared language surrounding high-quality Tier I instruction aligned with the Vision of the Graduate.
- Identify and provide flexible, focused interventions in mathematics and reading supports.
- Utilize effective data team and coaching structures to ensure instruction is informed by data.

Culture and Climate:

- Reinvigorate positive school culture and climate practices with systematic, sustainable, and well-articulated practices.
- Develop a resilience-based advisory program to develop student coping skills, problem-solving skills, and a growth mindset to navigate challenges effectively.
- Develop proactive and responsive attendance practices, including partnering with families to promote student attendance.

Operations:

- Conduct a needs assessment to identify a schedule that provides increased flexibility for students to receive support and increased opportunities for staff collaboration.
- Assess classroom learning environment to ensure that technology and instructional resources meet the ambitious goals for improvement.

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

CMS will work to evaluate and repurpose existing funding streams (e.g., local, state, federal, and grants) to support the Commissioner's Network reform efforts and foster long-term sustainability. Funding for CMS is contingent upon the availability of funds, the transformative potential of the Turnaround Plan, and the size of the school.

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

Recommendation with Conditions

I recommend that the SBE approve the Commissioner's Network Turnaround Plan for CMS, which is subject to the successful completion of the following items:

1. By September 30, 2024, CPS 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 CMS's Turnaround Committee, shall submit plan amendments to the CSDE Turnaround Office on an annual basis no later than May, following school audits, detailing proposed strategies, budget requests, and implementation timelines for the following school year. The Commissioner of Education or designee may reconvene CMS's Turnaround Committee to consider annual plan amendments, as appropriate and necessary. If CMS's 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 of Education may take appropriate actions to ensure sufficient progress at CMS, including, but not limited to, developing a revised Turnaround Plan and/or exercising any and all authorities prescribed in C.G.S. §10-223h.

CMS 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. Canton Middle School Audit Report resulting from the Operations and Instructional Audit conducted on October 4, 2023.
2. Commissioner's Network Turnaround Plan developed and agreed to by the Canton Middle School's Turnaround Committee.

            Prepared by: Iris White, Education Consultant, Turnaround Office

            Reviewed by: Jennifer Webb, Bureau Chief, Turnaround Office

            Approved by: Irene E. Parisi, Chief Academic Officer

Commissioner's Network Operations and Instructional Audit

**Canton Middle School
Canton Public Schools
October 4, 2023**

Charlene M. Russell-Tucker
Commissioner of Education
Connecticut State Department of Education
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On May 25, 2023, the Commissioner initially selected Canton Middle School (CMS) to participate in the Commissioner's Network. Pursuant to C.G.S. § 10-223h(b), the Canton Board of Education established the Turnaround Committee. On October 4, 2023, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) conducted, in consultation with the board of education, the Canton 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 CMS 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.

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. To that end, the Commissioner's Network offers new resources and authorities to empower teachers and school leaders to implement research-based strategies in schools selected by the Commissioner. Commissioner's 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 Commissioner's 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, 15 Cohort (VIII, IX, X, XI, and XII) schools are participating in the Commissioner's Network.

The Commissioner's 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.

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 non-academic 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; and

(7) uses data to inform decision-making and for continuous improvement, including providing time for collaboration on the use of data.

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 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

CMS in Canton serves 247 students in Grades 7-8. Of those 247 students, approximately 8.5 percent are Black, 6.5 percent are Hispanic/Latino, 18 percent are identified as students with disabilities, and zero percent are English Learners/ Multilingual Learners (ELs/MLs). Approximately 17 percent of the students in the school are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. CMS is currently a Category 4 Focus School for the school's English Language Arts (ELA) Academic Growth-High Needs. The Accountability Index of 59.9 is below the state average of 69.7 and the district average of 75.3. The current Principal is in his fifth year at CMS and previously served as an Assistant Principal at CREC Academy of Aerospace and Engineering.

School Data Profile

The following chart provides a summary of CMS' current and historical data, including information about student enrollment and demographics, personnel, school climate, school performance, and student academic achievement.

Enrollment Data (Current Year):			
Grades:	7-8	5-Yr Enrollment Trend:	-8
Student Enrollment:	247	Mobility Rate:	2%
Personnel Data (Current Year):			
# of Administrators:	2	# of Psychologists:	1
# of Teachers:	25.51	# of Social Workers:	1
# of Support Staff:	12	3-yr Teacher Retention Rate:	86.3%
School Day Per Year (Current Year):			
Total # of Student Days Per Year:	183	Instructional Minutes/Day:	330
Total # of Teacher Days Per Year:	186	Extended Day Program?	Yes
Student Demographic Breakdown (Current Year):			
% Black:	8.5%	% Male:	48.6%
% Hispanic/Latino:	7.3%	% Female:	51.4%
% White:	79.4%	% ELs/MLs:	0%
% Other:	4.9%	% Special Education:	17.8%
% Eligible for F/R Meals:	16.6%		

School Climate Data:	2018-19	2021-22*	2022-23	2023-24 YTD
Student Attendance Rate:	94.4%	94.4%	94.4%	96.4%
% Students Chronically Absent:	6.0%	11.3%	9.6%	0%
Suspension/Expulsion Rate:	7.8%	4.1%	N/A*	N/A*
Avg FTE Days Absent:	5.9	8.9	8.9	2.06

Next Generation Accountability System	2018-19	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Next Generation Accountability Index	71.9		59.9	N/A

Smarter Balanced Assessment Level 3 and 4 Data:	2018-19	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Grade 7 – ELA	71.8%	62.3%	71%	
Grade 8 – ELA	75%	59%	60%	
Grade 7 – Math	71%	50%	55%	
Grade 8 – Math	66%	47%	50%	
Grade 8 - Science	71%	59%	61%	
On-Track to High School Graduation:	**2016-17**	**2017-18**	**2018-19**	**2021-22**
% of 9th graders earning at least five full-year credits in the year	96.9%	94%	98.3%	92.4%

*Data suppressed to protect student identity

Part III of the Audit Report provides a summative analysis of audit findings in the areas of talent, academics, culture and climate, and operations. Rating categories are determined by the preponderance of evidence as highlighted in the Turnaround Rubric.

Talent				
Indicator:	1	2	3	4
1.1. Turnaround Leadership		√		
1.2. Talent Management		√		
1.3. Professional Learning Systems		√		

Summary of Growth Areas:

Professional Learning Systems:

The teacher survey indicated that only 39 percent (n=11) of teachers *agree or strongly agree* with the statement: "The professional development I received has improved my practice." CMS' 2023-24 Professional Development Plan has two drivers: Learner Growth and Success. It also comprises four themes, which are common across the district: (1) Teaching and Reaching Each and Every Learner; (2) Data Usage to Support Teaching and Learning; (3) School Climate and Culture; and (4) Curriculum Development.

CMS has ten early release days per year. The teacher focus group reported: "The focus usually changes; sometimes it's determined by the district, and other times it's determined by the individual schools." The Principal reported that while topics are developed for the full school year, the goal is to "shift professional development topics as we learn more while trying not to overburden the staff."

The Principal acknowledged that while the school has a lot of data, "nothing was happening with it," so, they have "done a lot of professional development on formative data usage." The district administration confirmed that to better understand the needs of students, data analysis has been a focus of professional development.

The leadership team reported there are not a lot of opportunities for staff to attend external professional development or opportunities to collaborate with other educators in the district.

The Principal reported that he follows up on the implementation of strategies mostly through observation and being in classrooms. He stated: "I put a lot of trust in teachers to learn strategies and structures and implement as needed." He added: "This work that is happening right now is showing that we need to be a bit more formalized in order to address the gaps. We will have to make sure that we are very clear on how we are keeping people accountable."

The teacher focus group reported that after the professional development sessions: "We usually go back and, as a smaller department, discuss. It depends on what we're doing. Long-term continuity is not necessarily there. It's more short-term immediately following a training, but it then fades."

Turnaround Leadership:

This is the Principal's fifth year at CMS. He previously served as the Assistant Principal at CREC Academy of Aerospace and Engineering.

CMS has a Continuous Improvement Plan for School Year 2023-24, which is aligned to the Canton Board of Education Goals: (1) Student Growth and Achievement; (2) Partnerships and Community Engagement; (3) Financial Sustainability and Efficient Operations; (4) Learning Environment and Belonging; (5) Embracing Equity; and (6) Workforce Development.

CMS has teacher leaders for Grades 7 and 8 in all content areas and special education. Teacher leaders have organizational and communication responsibilities. As a team, they meet three days per week: One meeting is with their content area colleagues; the second meeting focuses on matters such as celebrations and events; and the third meeting is for the School Improvement Team (SIT) process, which includes data analysis, students of concern, and problems of practice. Once a week, the Principal meets with the team leaders for forty-five minutes.

When teachers were asked about the vision for the school, they pointed to the Vision of the Graduate. Teachers in the focus group shared: "There is the Vision of a Graduate, but it feels more for high school. At professional development for new staff, we looked at the Vision of the Graduate and the mission for the district. We had breakout groups to discuss. About 7-8 years ago, we revised our mission and vision for CMS. We have our own, but it's not talked about a lot." The student focus groups stated: "We see Mr. Moore a lot. He's very open to meeting with you and very involved with the school. He's always talking and checking in with us." The district-administered Spring 2023 Family/Guardian Survey indicated a 91 percent favorable rating for the statement: "The school leader strives to help parents/students understand and support the school's goals."

Although the results remain below the district and state averages, the Smarter Balanced Growth Data in ELA and mathematics show an increase in the Average Percentage of Target Achieved from 2021-22 to 2022-23.
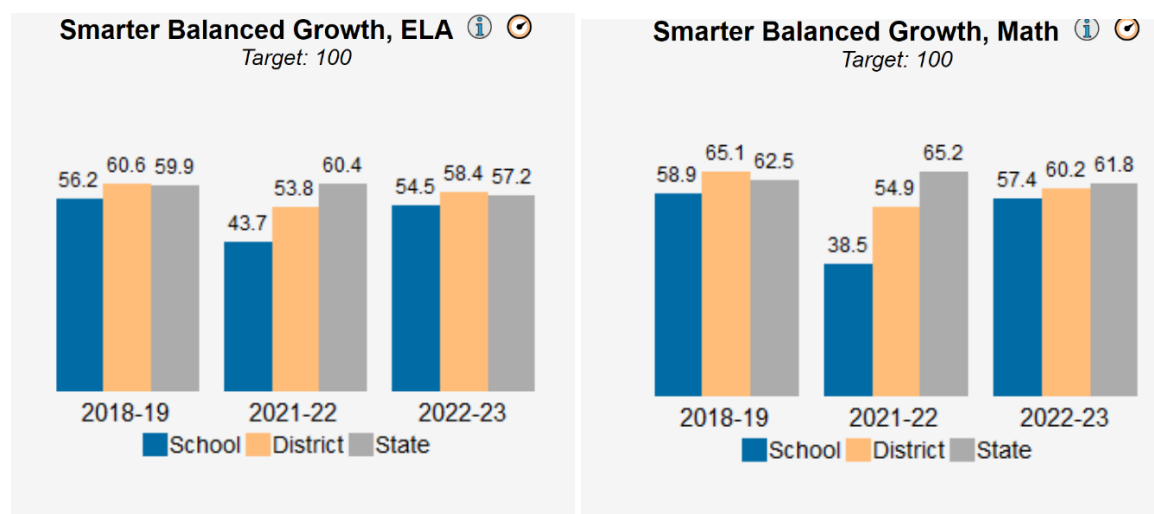
Talent Management:

CMS' 3-year teacher retention rate is 86.3 percent. The teacher survey indicated that 86 percent (n=24) *agree or strongly agree* with the statement: "I am professionally supported by the School Leadership Team." The leadership team reported that they "tend to keep teachers, and there is not much turnover." The district administration reported that Canton Public Schools (CPS) has experienced difficulty retaining non-certified staff because "salaries are not as competitive as surrounding districts."

New teachers receive three additional days of professional development, which the district oversees. New teachers also participate in the Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) Program. The Principal reported he would like to offer additional support stating: "I would like to do something along the lines of monthly check-ins, but I don't currently have the structure. I do interact with them frequently and have constant check-ins with them in the classroom."

The teacher focus group reported that informal observations from the Principal are more frequent this school year. They stated: "He's in there weekly;" "He pops in once a week;" "Department chairs do more of a formalized process;" and "not much feedback is provided." Teachers reported that they do not typically receive feedback after an informal observation from the Principal. They stated: "Some department chairs will leave a sticky note or will e-mail the Principal and include us in the e-mail." The CMS' world language department does not have a department chair; therefore, CMS Spanish teachers do not receive informal feedback.

The district administration reported CPS previously worked with ReVISION Learning. They conducted a strength analysis with the administrative team, provided feedback, and a district team presented at a Learning Forward conference. "It's something we need to circle back on as most of the people involved with this are no longer here," noted the district administration.

Academics				
Indicator:	1	2	3	4
2.1. Instructional Leadership		√		
2.2. Challenging Instruction		√		
2.3. Engaging Instruction		√		
2.4. Standards Aligned Curricula and Instruction			√	
2.5. Differentiation and Supports for Diverse Learners		√		
2.6. Assessment Practices and Data Use		√		

Summary of Strengths:

Standards Aligned Curricula and Instruction:

The teacher survey indicated that 82 percent (n=23) *agree or strongly agree* with the statement: "The school has curricula for all grade levels and content areas aligned to the current content standards."

Classroom observations (n=8) evidenced that 50 percent of classrooms had a lesson objective and classroom visuals, including anchor charts and posters related to the current theme. Moreover, standards-based curricula exist for all content areas and all grade levels. The district administration reported that the science department does the "best job on ensuring curriculum and instruction is consistent and aligned." CMS' unit templates require teachers to identify the content area standard and district Portrait of Graduate skill that reflects the learning that will take place in the unit.

The district administration reported that with the transition away from the readers and writers' workshop, CPS now needs to solidify its approach to literacy instruction. The district administration would like to focus on "disciplinary literacy in order to teach reading in every class." Additionally, the district administration reported that both science and social studies departments have done the best job of ensuring alignment with the standards.

The Principal reported his concerns regarding the curriculum utilized in the resource rooms, stating: "These rooms don't have a specific curriculum. It's not a well-developed and robust curriculum. I wonder if students with lower skills or learning disabilities are presented with the best curriculum to bring them to grade-level skills."

In the Commissioner's Network Planning Year Grant, funding has been allocated for staff to work with ELA Instructional Coaches and Regional Educational Service Center (RESC) Consultants to evaluate the current instruction and student readiness based on a review of curricula and universal and standardized assessments. Teachers will receive explicit professional development in Tier 1, 2, and 3 strategies.

Summary of Growth Areas:

Instructional Leadership:

The teacher survey results indicated that 64 percent (n=18) *agree or strongly agree* with the statement: "Administration provides regular and actionable feedback to staff." Although 64 percent (n=18) *agree or strongly agree* with the statement: "There is a common vision of what effective instruction looks like at this school," the teacher focus group reported that the administration does not have a common set of expectations or an instructional framework. Teachers participating in the focus group shared: "I don't feel there are a lot of standardized expectations. They are broader of what good instruction looks like for this age group." More specifically, they talked about putting up vocabulary words, but otherwise "it's pretty independent and nothing formal," and "learning targets are department-based, but there are not a lot of set expectations."

Challenging Instruction:

The teacher survey results indicated that only 60 percent (n=17) *agree or strongly agree* with the statement: "Instructional quality and academic rigor are consistently high at this school." Teachers participating in the focus group reported that they encourage students to have higher-order thinking by asking students to explain their thinking and to ensure that they are supporting their answers with evidence. Some examples of the questions the teachers ask the students include: "Why does the evidence support what you are trying to say?" and "How can you prove that?"

The parent survey results indicated that 60 percent (n=47) *agree or strongly agree* with the statement: "My child is appropriately challenged," and 59 percent (n=46) *agree or strongly agree*: "There are high expectations for my child." The student focus group reported that the instruction is "more challenging than last year and the teachers are always there if you can't do it."

The teacher survey results also indicated that 96 percent (n=27) *agree or strongly agree*: "I have high expectations for my students and believe they can achieve grade level work." The Principal reported that while he believes teachers have high expectations for all students, there is still work that needs to be done to address unconscious bias. He shared: "We've done a lot of work to make sure we are aware of our cultural lenses and the limits that this may have. If a student is outside of the typical mold, we sometimes bring that into our interactions and that needs to be addressed. I also wonder sometimes about our expectations for our special education students." The Principal reported that while he has access to lesson plans, they are reviewed by the department chairs.

Engaging Instruction:

The parent survey results indicated that 69 percent (n=54) *agree or strongly agree* with the statement: "My child is interested and engaged in their classes." District administration reported that providing students with engaging instruction is a priority. They stated: "We've talked for a long time that learning should be student centered and students are engaged. Students need ownership and connection to their learning. Students being engaged because they have ownership and purpose to their learning has been a topic for a while. They need to be the hardest workers in the room. How do we get the students to be the ones to grapple with their learning?"

The teacher focus group reported that discussions around how to engage students are happening more at the district level: "Our discussions at CMS have been more general." Another teacher from the teacher focus group shared: "We know if they're playing games on Chromebooks, they're not engaged. We meet a lot as departments and conversations like this happen at the department level, not at the school level."

Students reported that to make instruction more interesting, teachers will "put us in a group and give us a choice on how to get the work done. Sometimes we watch videos and do labs." The teacher focus group reported that they use different strategies to include student discourse, including conversation time, time to bounce ideas off each other, explain your answer, think-pair-shares, and bell ringers. During classroom observations (n=8), the audit team found that student engagement varied in classrooms, with some driven by the teacher. In 62 percent of classrooms, students were working in small groups.

Differentiation and Supports for Diverse Learners:

CMS is currently a Category 4 Focus School for students with disabilities under the Next Generation Accountability System. The percentage of students with disabilities at CMS is currently 17.8 percent. CMS currently does not have any ELs/MLs students.

The teacher focus group indicated that only 25 percent (n=7) *agree or strongly agree* with the statement: "School/district supports my ability to provide linguistic and academic supports to students."

The Smarter Balanced Assessment results show a significant gap between the performance of students with disabilities and the performance of all students in the school.

Percentage at Level 3 or 4

	2018-19	2022-23
Non-Special Education	81.9%	74.5%
Special Education	17.6%	17.9%

Average Percentage of Target Achieved- ELA

	2018-19	2022-23
Non-Special Education	66.2%	63.8%
Special Education	44.4%	53.5%

CMS has a six-step Student Intervention Team (SIT) Process in which a teacher can discuss a student they are concerned about. CMS has what they describe as a Tier 2 formal intervention called the tutoring lab. While CMS has a mathematics tutor, the reading tutor position has been vacant for the last two years. The teacher focus group reported: "The math tutor becomes a class for a student, and they have to drop a core class, which tends to be Spanish. It then becomes a double dose of the content for those students. It's a reteaching opportunity."

The teacher focus group reported that they use various strategies to differentiate learning for students, including differentiated text, building document-based question assignments so some documents are visuals, utilizing documents that are accessible to all students, and providing challenging texts for advanced students.

The teacher focus group reported they receive copies of Individualized Education Programs (IEP) and 504 Plans, which are reviewed by case managers on what is referred to as a Sharing Day. Special education teachers loop with their students, and the teacher focus group reported that the level of communication from special education is strong at CMS. In the Commissioner's Network Planning Year Grant, funding has been allocated for additional tutorial support after school in order to provide additional direct instruction in the areas of ELA and mathematics. Extended tutorial support is also expected to run for 90 minutes per week on a flexible six-week calendar.

Assessment Practices and Data Use:

The teacher survey results indicated that 75 percent (n=21) *agree or strongly agree* with the statement: "Teachers at this school use student assessment data and checks for understanding." CMS currently administers STAR Assessments and has begun to explore how to more effectively utilize the Interim Assessment Blocks. Classes include formative assessments built into units, as well as end-of-unit assessments.

The Principal reported that to strengthen teacher understanding of using data to inform instruction, CMS conducted professional development on understanding the data, and "we held them accountable for that by implementing a protocol for data team conversations," stated the Principal. The Principal attends the data meetings at least once a week. The teacher focus group reported data work can also be department-related and a part of the team-based SIT.

Culture and Climate				
Indicator:	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
3.1. Culture and Climate Leadership			√	
3.2. School Environment			√	
3.3. Student Attendance			√	
3.4. Social-Emotional Behavioral Well-Being		√		
3.5. Interpersonal Interactions			√	
3.6. Equitable Partnerships with Families		√		
3.7. Community Partners and Wraparound Strategy		√		

Summary of Strengths:

Culture and Climate Leadership:

The district-administered Spring 2023 Family/Guardian Survey indicated an 89 percent favorable rating for the statement: "The school leader actively promotes a safe and orderly environment." The Principal reported while the culture has always been positive and didn't need to be transformed: "As it relates to equity, we've done explicit overdue work on addressing the lens. Every move you make is how the building feels. It goes down to the way we treat everybody all the time. I try to be a key lead on how we talk and interact with students. We need to be equitable, inclusive, and hold all to high expectations."

District administration reported they have provided district-wide training to raise awareness, improve understanding, and evaluate where we are. The district administration stated: "CMS' awareness is probably stronger in this building than in the rest of the district. We haven't always kept up with it, but different groups raise awareness in different ways – through clubs, bulletin boards, and events. The New Teacher Orientation had a whole section dedicated to cultural responsiveness."

School Environment:

Teacher survey results indicated that 82 percent (n=23) *agree or strongly agree* with the statement: "School environment is conducive to high quality teaching and learning." CMS and Canton High School share the same facility with CMS situated on the third floor. In the *CMS Student Handbook*, it states that the school "strives to maintain an environment where Canton Middle School students enjoy a program that is distinct from that of the high school." All academic middle school classes and activities are held on the third floor. CMS students visit the high school floors for physical education, band, chorus, music technology, science of nutrition, family and consumer science, and drama. The school is clean and in good repair. Classrooms are also clean and organized. Pictures of students and faculty are displayed in the hallways along with student work.

Community Partnerships and Wraparound Strategy:

The parent survey results indicated that 72 percent (n=44) *agree or strongly agree* with the statement: "I feel the school supports students and families' health, wellness, and/or social-emotional needs." The teacher focus group reported that post-pandemic, CMS is looking to expand its community partners. The leadership team reported that a CMS social worker developed a resource book for families to access local services and that the "District Director for Student and Family Engagement has also been a great resource for much-needed services." CMS has a wellness day to bring the community in and CMS has community service days. Various community partners are also brought in for career days. The Principal reported Farmington Valley Health District has been a big support, providing social-emotional teaching resources and presenting on building students' resiliency.

Interpersonal Relations:

The teacher survey results indicated that 86 percent (n=24) *agree or strongly agree* with the statement: "Interactions between students and staff are positive and respectful."
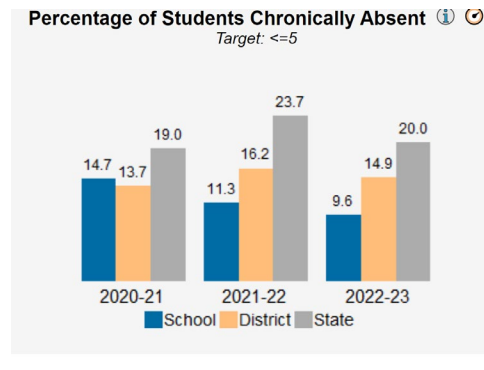
In terms of the student focus groups, there was a difference in response between the 7th-grade group and the 8th-grade group. While the 8th-grade group reported, "The teachers care about us 100 percent and there is always a teacher we can talk to," the 7th-grade group expressed, "Some teachers do care, and it depends on the teacher and their personality." The parent survey results indicated that 84 percent (n=51*) agree or strongly agree* with the statement: "My child feels connected to the school."

CPS participates in the Open Choice Program, and CMS currently has seventeen students participating in the program. The district administration reported that the vast majority of these students join early in their education career and are making the same transition to middle school as the other students. District leadership reported: "This particular school hasn't had many challenges with students not feeling integrated. Transportation challenges are an issue with some students on the bus at 5:58 in the morning and not getting home until after 6:00 at night."

<u>Summary of Growth Areas:</u>

Student Attendance:

The percentage of students chronically absent has steadily decreased since the pandemic from a high of 14.7 percent in 2020-21 to 9.6 percent in 2022-23.
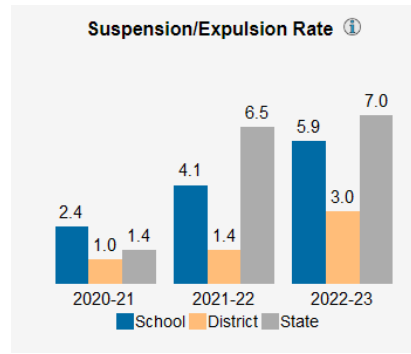
Percentage of Students Chronically Absent ⓘ ⊘
Target: <=5

Year	School	District	State
2020-21	14.7	13.7	19.0
2021-22	11.3	16.2	23.7
2022-23	9.6	14.9	20.0

■ School ■ District ■ State

The teacher survey indicated that only 54 percent *agree or strongly agree* with the statement: "Attendance data is communicated to staff." Teachers in the teacher focus group reported that more needs to be done to support increasing student attendance: "We do have a Students of Concern Committee and we talk about students that are consistently absent. I wouldn't say we have a clear-cut protocol. I haven't seen any incentives for it either."

Parent survey results indicated that only 70 percent (n=43) *agree* with the statement: "Attendance is a priority." The Principal reported that prior to the pandemic, CMS had a culture and systems in place to support attendance. The Principal stated: "We weren't explicit in the past because it was good enough. COVID changed the culture and we have not yet recovered."

The district administration reported that in response a student and family engagement director (Director) was hired, and the Director is leading the district through consistent messaging and establishing the cut points in which interventions are implemented. The district administration shared: "We've adjusted our practices to be more proactive. We have inconsistencies throughout the district with coding, but the director is working to address things. We do home visits, when necessary, and check in with families. It's all about connecting with families to see what they need."

Social-Emotional Well-Being:

For the school years 2021-22 and 2022-23, the school's suspension rate increased from 4.1 percent to 5.9 percent and was above the district level in both years.

Suspension/Expulsion Rate ⓘ

Year	School	District	State
2020-21	2.4	1.0	1.4
2021-22	4.1	1.4	6.5
2022-23	5.9	3.0	7.0

The Principal reported that at CMS, there is "a general culture of compliance and obedience. It's a privilege I don't take credit for, and I'm the beneficiary of it. "

Behavior data is reviewed with the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) team and the PBIS coach. The Principal reported: "The PBIS team is proactive. We use the CMS (Choose Kindness, Make Responsible Choices, and Select Respect) Way to focus on and reinforce positive behavior." CMS teachers have received training on the Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA) Comprehensive System which is comprised of two rating scales designed to screen, assess, guide intervention planning, monitor progress, and evaluate outcomes related to social-emotional competence and resiliency of students in Kindergarten-Grade 8. The first rating is set to take place from October through November 2023.

The teacher survey results indicated that 35 percent (n=10) *agree or strongly agree* with the statement: "The school implements an effective school-wide behavioral system." The need for a systemic approach to behavior management was supported by teachers in the teacher focus group who reported: "I don't think overall student behavior is negative or concerning. Are we all following the same process and writing up the same type of things?" and "I would like to see increased accountability with student discipline and transparency with discipline."

CPS offers the Student Assistance Program (SAP), a confidential voluntary service that provides coaching and counseling services in a variety of areas, including stress, test anxiety, and peer pressure. CMS has an Advisory Program in which each 7th- and 8th-grade student is assigned a faculty advisor. Advisory groups of approximately 10-15 students each meet five times a week. The *CMS Student Handbook* states that the goal of the Advisory Program is to improve student learning and success at school for each student. The Advisory Program does not have a set curriculum, and the leadership team reported the purpose of the program is to create a safe space for students and to help students develop Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) skills. One to two days per week are dedicated to Sustained Silent Reading during Advisory. On the day of the audit, auditors observed Advisory classes where students were engaged in random activities, including Bingo, socializing, reviewing computer loan policy, and prepping for a Spanish competition.

The district administration reported the school has "residual PBIS. This is something that we need to keep teaching into. We don't get stronger when things get challenging because we don't have strong systems." Based on teacher survey feedback, November 7, 2023, professional development focuses on de-escalating and engaging students.

Equitable Partnerships with Families:

The teacher survey results indicated that 79 percent (n=22) *agree or strongly agree* with the statement: "Families are engaged in this school." The parent survey results indicated that 75 percent (n=45) *agree or strongly agree* with the statement: "The school provides multiple opportunities for family involvement." Parents are invited to Curriculum Night, Open House, Parent Teacher Conference, plays, and band and chorus concerts. CMS has a Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), and the teacher focus group reported the participation rate is very good. The PTO has an open Google Form where teachers can request supplies for their classrooms. SchoolMessenger sends out the weekly school newsletter. The Principal reported that the school is working to make the content more engaging and relevant: "We're grappling with how to get information out, but not have it get lost in the email box." The district administration also reported that family engagement is a continued focus: "We need to do better with parents. What's the best way to get information to families?"

The parent survey indicated that the results were mixed. While 59 percent of parents who took the survey (n=36) *agree or strongly agree* with the statement: "I receive regular updates on my child's progress," 29 percent (n=18) neither *agree or disagree*, and 11 percent (n=7) *disagree*. The *CMS Faculty Handbook* states teachers are required to maintain a webpage for students and parents to access through the school website. Currently, a PowerPoint from a Team 8 Curriculum Night event is posted on the school website. In different formats, teachers shared course information with parents, which included key vocabulary words, unit topics, and the agenda for a typical class. Additionally, some PowerPoint slides included goals for the year and suggestions for how parents could support students at home. The student focus group reported teachers conduct weekly check-ins, and if students are missing work, teachers reach out to their parents.

Operations				
Indicator:	1	2	3	4
4.1. Scheduling Structures		√		
4.2. Classroom Structures and Use of Time		√		
4.3. School Site Security and Safety			√	

Summary of Strengths:

School Site Security and Safety:

The teacher survey indicated that 82 percent (n=23) *agree or strongly agree* with the statement: "The school has clear routines and processes in place that are consistently followed." CMS has a School Safety Plan that was developed with town officials, outlining procedures for various emergencies. At 7:35 a.m., each morning, the exterior doors near the auditorium are locked as well as the second set of doors inside the vestibule by the gymnasium. A buzzer system requires visitors to be buzzed in by the secretary, sign in at the Main Office, present their Identification, and wear a visitor pass. CMS has exterior and interior video surveillance for the safety of all students and staff. The school is quiet, calm, and orderly. On the morning of the audit, auditors observed teachers at their doors greeting students. During the Principal's morning announcements, hallways were clear and classrooms were quiet.

Summary of Growth Areas:

Scheduling Structures:

The teacher survey indicated that 43 percent (n=12) *agree or strongly agree* with the statement: "Teachers have enough time to work with each other to develop instructional materials."
The teacher focus group reported that CMS needs help developing an effective schedule: "We identified areas of need, but with the budget not allowing for more staff, we couldn't make the changes we wanted." The teacher focus group also reported: "There's no space for intervention or support in our schedule. It's a source of major consternation and it's a need that has to be addressed." A comment from the teacher survey also supports the need for a more effective schedule: "We need a more effective schedule that fits the needs of all areas (intervention blocks, experiential, etc.) currently students have all academic classes in the morning as a result of shared staff with the high school."

The district administration reported principals have some flexibility in scheduling: "There are things we have to do, but we want administrators to think creatively and intentionally about their time. Shared staff can also be problematic."

Classroom Structures and Use of Time:

Student focus groups reported that they wished teachers did more activities and "sometimes it feels like we get too much time to work and there is a lot of downtime." A similar comment made by a student in the focus group spoke to the length of periods: "I would change block days because the periods are too long." The teacher focus group reported they use different strategies to maximize instructional time, including tracking the time students are in the hallway, providing students who forgot their Chromebooks with a loaner, and removing the split period.

Appendix A: Operations and Instructional Audit Rubric

		TALENT		
Indicator	**Below Standard**	**Developing**	**Proficient**	**Exemplary** **All characteristics of Proficient plus one or more of the following:**
1.1 Turnaround Leadership	Does not set the strategic and logistical direction for school improvement. Short- and long-term goals identified in a school improvement plan does not exist.	Sets the strategic and logistical direction for school improvement but does not establish and communicate clear systems (policies, structures, and expectations) to work towards improvement goals.	Sets the strategic and logistical direction for the school's improvement by establishing and communicating clear systems (policies, structures, and expectations) to work towards improvement goals.	Promotes and provides opportunities for families and members of the community to provide feedback and hear updates on short- and long-term goals.
	Leadership teams are not established.	Develops leadership teams but does not build leadership capacity or distribute leadership.	Develops leadership teams by distributing leadership; however, does not build staff leadership capacity for school improvement.	Develops effective leadership teams and builds staff leadership capacity for school improvement by distributing leadership.
	Does not engage and communicate school vision, mission, and improvement priorities with stakeholders (students, faculty, and school community).	Engages and communicates school vision, mission, and improvement priorities with faculty but not students and the school community.	Engages and communicates school vision, mission, and improvement priorities with stakeholders (students, faculty, and school community).	Promotes and provides opportunities for families and members of the community to be actively engaged in decision-making that supports school improvement.
1.2 Talent Management	Does not develop or implement a coherent equitable recruitment, selection, or retention strategy.	Develops and implements coherent equitable recruitment, selection, and retention strategy but does not provide support for retention and early career teachers in alignment with the school's vision, mission, and school improvement goals.	Develops and implements coherent equitable recruitment, selection, and retention strategy and provides support for retention and early career teachers in alignment with the school's vision, mission, and school improvement goals.	Builds the capacity of staff through high-quality differentiated support.
1.3 Professional Learning Systems	Does not establish, implement, or monitor the impact of high-quality professional learning systems.	Establishes a professional learning system; however, does not implement or monitor the impact of high-quality professional learning systems.	Establishes, implements, and monitors the impact of high-quality professional learning systems designed to build the capacity needed for school improvement.	Promotes collaborative practices and fosters leadership opportunities for a professional learning system that promotes continuous improvement.

ACADEMICS				
Indicator	**Below Standard**	**Developing**	**Proficient**	**Exemplary** **All characteristics of Proficient plus one or more of the following:**
2.1 Instructional Leadership	Does not set high academic standards and instructional practices, does not communicate to staff, and does not ensure access to rigorous standards-based curricula.	Sets high academic standards and instructional practices but does not effectively communicate to staff and does not ensure access to rigorous standards-based curricula.	Sets a common vision of what effective instruction looks like including high academic standards and instructional practices that are communicated to staff, monitored, and ensure access to rigorous standards-based curricula.	Builds the capacity of staff to identify and address barriers to implementing the school's instructional vision and core instructional practices.
	Does not create a continuous improvement cycle.	Does not implement with fidelity a continuous improvement cycle.	Implements continuous improvement cycle that uses progress monitoring of multiple forms of data and student work samples about current practices and outcomes but does not use this information to guide ongoing decision-making that addresses student and/or adult learning needs and progress toward the school improvement plan or the school's vision, mission, and goals.	Implements a continuous improvement cycle that uses progress monitoring of multiple forms of data and student work samples about current practices and outcomes to guide ongoing decision-making that addresses student and/or adult learning needs and progress towards the school improvement plan or the school's vision, mission, and goals.
2.2 Challenging Instruction	Instructional activities are teacher-centered. There is no evidence of student-centered instructional activities.	Instructional tasks/activities provide opportunities for students to recall facts, terms, or concepts and demonstrate their understanding thereof.	Instructional tasks/activities provide opportunities for students to apply, differentiate, synthesize, hypothesize, and construct new meanings.	Instructional tasks/activities include the opportunity for students to reflect and assess their own learning and metacognition.
	Tasks do not include the opportunity for students to respond to content through inquiry, interpretation, and discourse.	Tasks include the opportunity for students to respond to content through discourse.	Tasks include the opportunity for students to respond to content through inquiry, interpretation, and discourse.	Instruction is culturally relevant. Instructional tasks/activities that include opportunities to evaluate/critique the instructional content (e.g., artifacts, texts, media, others' work).

		Lessons do not include questions that are scaffolded to move students to higher levels of thinking and do not require students to explain and justify their thinking.	Lessons include questions that are scaffolded to move students to higher levels of thinking; however, they do not require students to explain and justify their thinking.	Lessons include questions that are scaffolded to move students to higher levels of thinking and require students to explain and justify their thinking.	Lessons include questions to provide students the opportunity to reflect and assess their own learning and metacognition.
2.3	Engaging Instruction	Students are not cognitively or behaviorally engaged in active learning strategies individually or in small groups.	Students are behaviorally engaged in active learning strategies individually or in small groups.	Students are cognitively and behaviorally engaged in active learning strategies individually or in small groups. Students have opportunities to work collaboratively to explore, reflect, and problem-solve with opportunities to share their own ideas.	Discussion is primarily student-driven, and the student's voice is dominant.
2.4	Standards Aligned Curricula and Instruction	Rigorous, standards-based curricula do not exist, or teachers are not aware of the curricula for English Language Arts, Math, and Science content areas for all grade levels.	Rigorous, standards-based curricula are lacking in one core content area. Curricula are being implemented with fidelity across classrooms; however, teachers are not consistent in their pacing.	Rigorous, standards-based curricula exist for all content areas for all grade levels. Curricula are being implemented with fidelity across classrooms with teachers demonstrating consistent pacing.	Rigorous, standards-based curricula and/or scope and sequence exist for all grade levels and content areas rostered (advisory, intervention, electives). Curricula are being implemented with fidelity across classrooms with teachers demonstrating consistent pacing.
		There are limited classroom visuals.	Classroom visuals (e.g., learning targets and success criteria, anchor charts, word walls) support content or skill goals from the curriculum and are aligned to grade-level standards or prerequisite standards; however, they are not introduced and/or referenced throughout the lesson to support student learning.	Classroom visuals (e.g., learning targets and success criteria, anchor charts, word walls) support content or skill goals from the curriculum and are aligned to grade-level standards or prerequisite standards. The supports are introduced and/or referenced throughout the lesson to support student learning.	Classroom visuals are student-created, or students are led through the process of unpacking the content or skills goals from the curriculum that are aligned to grade-level standards.
2.5	Differentiation and Supports for Diverse Learners	All students receive the same lesson, process, and product with no evidence of differentiation.	There is some evidence of differentiation based on adjusting content, process, or product. There are no real-time adjustments based on student responses.	Lesson content/process, and/or product are differentiated to support student needs and adjusted in real-time based on student responses.	Students have a choice in content or process or product.

	Lessons are structured for one learning modality or style and/or using below grade-level concepts or skills.	Lessons are structured to include a limited number of learning modalities and styles using grade-level concepts and skills.	Lessons are structured to include multiple learning modalities and styles using grade-level concepts and skills.	Lessons provide opportunities for extension activities to provide enrichment.
	There is little to no evidence of support for multilingual learners in the instruction or classroom environment.	While there is some evidence of linguistic and academic support for multilingual learners in the classroom environment, these are not leveraged during instruction.	There are linguistic and academic supports in the classroom environment, and the teacher implements scaffolds in the instruction to support the development of multilingual learners' language and content.	Linguistic and academic supports are visible in the classroom environment and are utilized to scaffold instruction for MLs in order to make content comprehensible.
2.6 Assessment Practices and Data Use	Teachers do not check for student understanding.	Teachers monitor student understanding through whole group check-ins or questioning.	Teachers monitor student understanding through whole group check-ins, review of student work, exit tickets, one-to-one conferencing, or questioning and adjust instruction as needed.	Teachers immediately adjust instruction in response to monitoring student understanding.
	Teachers do not provide feedback.	Based on evidence (e.g., students' verbal or written responses, small group discussions) teachers provide students with whole group general feedback.	Based on evidence (e.g., students' verbal or written responses, small group discussions) teachers provide students with individualized feedback so that students know what to work on next.	Students utilize teacher feedback to independently extend their learning.
	Data teams do not exist or infrequently meet.	Data teams are scheduled to meet regularly, but they are occasionally interrupted, cut short, or canceled. Leadership support for data teams is inconsistent.	Data teams are a priority in the schedule and are rarely displaced by other events. Collaboratively, the grade-level team examines the data to identify and agree upon instructional strategies to implement before the next meeting, and the team develops a plan to measure success.	There are vertical and school-wide data teams. Collaboratively, these teams chart the data, analyze, and interpret the data, and use the data to identify grade-level band and schoolwide trends that impact school improvement. The schoolwide trends are communicated to teachers.

CULTURE AND CLIMATE				
Indicator	**Below Standard**	**Developing**	**Proficient**	**Exemplary** **All characteristics of Proficient plus one or more of the following:**
3.1 Culture & Climate Leadership	A safe school climate plan is not available.	A safe school climate plan has been created but is not posted to the district or school website. It establishes a system for supporting a positive school culture.	A safe school climate plan has been created that focuses on inclusion and cultural responsiveness as part of the school climate efforts. The plan is posted on the district or school website.	A safe school climate plan has been created and updated. It is aligned with the school improvement goals and includes input from staff, students, families, and community partners.
	Does not promote an equitable, caring, and inclusive school climate.	Developing an equitable, caring, and inclusive school climate.	Maintains and implements an equitable, caring, and inclusive school climate.	Intentionally build students' personal competencies to pursue goals and appraise their progress.
	Does not promote a positive school culture.	Developing a positive school culture by establishing systems for focused collaborative work, recognizing student effort, and academic mastery, and recognizing staff work and improvements.	Maintains/creates and promotes a positive school culture by establishing systems for focused collaborative work, recognizing student effort, and academic mastery, and recognizing staff work and improvements.	Capitalizes on the cultural competence and diversity of the community as an asset to strengthen education.

	The school fails to create a welcoming and intellectually stimulating learning environment conducive to high-quality teaching and learning. Common spaces and classrooms may be unclean, dark, or unsafe. Many classrooms are neither warm nor inviting and lack intellectual stimulation. Little to no student work or data is displayed.	The school struggles to provide a welcoming and intellectually stimulating learning environment conducive to high-quality teaching and learning. Large sections of the school are not clean, bright, welcoming, or reflective of current student work. Some classrooms and common spaces are bright but may not display current data and student work.	The school provides a welcoming and intellectually stimulating learning environment conducive to high-quality teaching and learning. The school is clean and in good repair. Most classrooms and common spaces are bright and display current data and student work.	There is clear and consistent messaging throughout the school, promoting school identity, mission/vision, and pride. Bulletin boards, displays, hall decorations, and offices show diverse students of varied racial, ethnic, gender, and people with disabilities in a variety of roles.
3.2 School Environment				
3.3 Student Attendance	Average daily attendance is ≤ 88% and/or chronic absenteeism is > 20%.	Average daily attendance is > 88% and <93% and/or chronic absenteeism is > 15% and ≤ 20%.	Average daily attendance is > 93% and ≤ 97% and/or chronic absenteeism is > 10% and ≤ 15%.	Average daily attendance is > 97% and chronic absenteeism is ≤ 10%.
	A small group of staff meets regarding students who are already chronically absent or extremely chronically absent. However, most of the responsibility falls on one person, e.g., the school counselor or social worker.	The attendance team meets periodically, is made up of mostly student support staff, and the school administrator or their designer does not lead the group.	The school attendance team meets biweekly and is led by the school administrator or their designee and is made up of various roles in the school, e.g., student supports, special education, school nurse, attendance clerk, and teacher.	The school attendance team meets weekly. Roles are clearly defined.

		The school does not incorporate attendance improvement strategies into a multi-tiered system of support. The focus for improvement is on referrals for truancy and education neglect.	The school has a supportive/restorative data-informed multi-tiered system of support with a focus primarily on Tier 3. There are no measures for monitoring the strategy implementation.	The school has a supportive, data-informed multi-tiered system of support for students with a plan for all three tiers. Implementation is monitored for quality and effectiveness.	The school has a supportive/restorative data-informed multi-tiered system of support with a focus on strong Tier 1 strategies and monitoring of effectiveness of Tier 2 and 3 strategies. Community providers are engaged as partners to help meet the needs of families and students.
3.4	Social-Emotional Behavioral (SEB) Well-Being	Structured social-emotional well-being goals, behavior plan, and interventions may be in place, and interventions are not implemented effectively for all students within a tiered structure.	Structured social-emotional well-being goals, behavior plan, and interventions are in place, and interventions are implemented inconsistently for all students within a tiered structure.	Structured social-emotional and behavioral well-being goals, behavior plan, and interventions are in place, and interventions are implemented effectively for some students within a tiered structure.	Structured social-emotional and behavioral well-being goals, behavior plan, and interventions are in place, and interventions are implemented effectively for all students within a tiered structure.
		The suspension rate is $\geq$ than 12%.	The suspension rate is between $\geq$10% and <12%.	The suspension rate is between $\geq$ 8% and <10%.	The suspension rate is <8%.
3.5	Interpersonal Interactions	There is a weak sense of community. Interactions between staff and students are negative or disrespectful and/or the staff does not promote positive social interactions among students or each other.	There is a moderate sense of community. Interactions between staff and students are generally positive and respectful and/or the staff inconsistently makes attempts to promote positive social interactions among students and each other.	There is a good overall sense of community. Interactions and communications between staff and students are consistently positive and respectful and the staff regularly promote positive social interactions among students and each other.	The school fosters an environment where students proactively demonstrate positive social interactions and conflict-resolution skills and involves learners in promoting a respectful learning environment.
3.6	Equitable Partnerships with Families	The school does not use any communication methods and does little to adapt communication strategies to meet the needs of individual families.	The school primarily uses one-way communication methods and does little to adapt communication strategies to meet the needs of individual families.	School uses a wide range of two-way communication methods that serve the needs of families to provide frequent, proactive, and personalized communication with families about student performance and learning.	Teachers utilize a wide variety of strategies, such as home visits, to build awareness of families' cultures and use this knowledge to reach out to most families in culturally respectful ways. Teachers and families co-construct strategies to engage students in learning inside and outside of the classroom.

3.7 Community Partners and Wraparound Strategy	The school does not ask families what additional programs or services they need to support their student's achievement. The school offers inadequate support to address students' nonacademic needs. There are limited wraparound services. The school makes little effort to engage community partners to expand services offered through the school.	The school determines families' needs and preferences for additional programs or services to support their student's achievement from conversations with a few families or general demographic data.	The school determines wraparound services and preferences for programs or services families need to support their students' social and emotional well-being and achievement from data collected through surveys, focus groups, and home visits. Families play a role in developing and delivering programs and services.	The school has opportunities to regularly listen to the voices of families (e.g., listening tours, coffee hours, and online social media) to engage families in proactive problem solving around barriers to accessing community organizations and services.
	The school does not have a system for monitoring and/or evaluating the services provided by the community partner.	The school has a limited system for monitoring and/or evaluating the services provided by the community partner.	The school has a system for monitoring and/or evaluating the services provided by the community partner.	School has a comprehensive system for monitoring and evaluating the services provided by the community partner.

OPERATIONS				
Indicator	Below Standard	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary All characteristics of Proficient plus one or more of the following:
4.1 Operational Leadership / Financial Management * This indicator is not measured during the Initial audit.	Decisions about the establishment, implementation, budgeting, and monitoring of organizational systems do not support the school improvement plan and orderly operation of the school.	Decisions about the establishment, implementation, budgeting, and monitoring of organizational systems generally support the school improvement plan and orderly operation of the school most of the time.	Decisions about the establishment, implementation, budgeting, and monitoring of organizational systems consistently support the school improvement plan and orderly operation of the school.	There is a clear sustainability plan for all major expenditures.
	Unable to accurately access and or leverage school and district resources; does not effectively manage budget.	Allocates resources but is not knowledgeable about possibilities for accessing alternate physical and human resources. Does not ensure educational equity for diverse student, family, and staff needs.	Allocates and maximizes resources in alignment with mission and student learning goals and assesses external resources to fill gaps; effectively plans and manages a fiscally responsible budget that supports the school's goals, and ensures school is financially secure in the long-term.	Continually assesses and reassesses resources and creatively utilizes and leverages existing school and district resources and is relentless in actively accessing human and fiscal resources that align to strategic priorities to support the achievement of school improvement plan targets.
4.2 Scheduling Structures	There is not enough time in the school schedule to appropriately meet students' academic needs. Time is underutilized in the school calendar and daily schedule. Does not include scheduled or defined blocks for instruction, intervention, or enrichment. Transition times do not maximize the use of student or staff time.	The school calendar and daily schedule could be improved to increase time on task. The schedule includes >5 and < 5.5 hours of instruction per day. ELA instruction >60 and <90 minutes each day. Intervention is scheduled but happens infrequently due to scheduling changes and/or staffing issues.	Provides adequate instructional time for students to reach academic and behavioral goals. The schedule includes >5.5 hours and $\leq$ 6.0 hours of instruction per day. ELA instruction includes > 90 minutes and < 120 minutes and math instruction is at least 60 minutes for elementary schools. There is a designated time for intervention and enrichment that is protected within the schedule.	Includes > 6 hours of instruction per day, and $\geq$ 120 minutes of ELA time and > 60 minutes for math. Includes designated time and evidence of coordination for staff collaboration for vertical and school-wide data teams.
4.3 Classroom Structures & Use of Time	Staff and students use time ineffectively. Instructional time is not maximized. There are missed opportunities to maximize time on tasks.	Staff and student use of time is somewhat effective. Some students are off task and there are missed opportunities to maximize instructional time.	Staff and student use of time is effective. Most students require little to no redirection to transition. Instructional time is maximized.	Staff and students maximize their use of time. There is no downtime. Teachers purposely use every moment of class time to prioritize instructional time on tasks.

	Common planning time is unstructured and may lack expectations for teacher collaboration (e.g., actionable next steps, development of instructional materials, analysis of student work, lesson planning).	Most academic teams have common planning periods. Collaborative planning time is used at a basic level (e.g., organization of resources or topics not directly related to classroom instruction).	Common planning periods are protected and only interrupted by emergencies. The school has established protocols to ensure that common planning time is used effectively.	All educators have weekly common planning time for vertical and horizontal planning.
4.4 School Site Security & Safety	The school is chaotic and disorderly. The safety of students and staff is a concern. Adults are not present during transitions; therefore, there is very little redirection.	The school is somewhat chaotic and/or disorderly, particularly in certain locations and during certain times of the day. Staff presence is minimal, and redirection of behavior is lacking.	The school environment is calm and orderly. Adults are present to support norms.	Adults are consistently present to reinforce norms.
	The school lacks critical operation systems (e.g., arrival, departure, lockdowns, lunch, fire drills, hallway transitions).	The school has some operational systems in place, but procedures are inconsistently implemented.	Rules and operational procedures are clear, consistent, and evident.	All stakeholders are aware of operational procedures and consistently implement.

The Commissioner's Network
Turnaround Plan Application | Cohort XIII

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

June 21, 2023

Charlene M. Russell-Tucker
Commissioner of Education
Connecticut State Department of Education
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CSDE
CONNECTICUT STATE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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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

- o authorizes the Commissioner to establish, within available appropriations, a Commissioner's Network of schools to improve student academic achievement in low-performing schools;
- o 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
- o 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 an eleventh 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

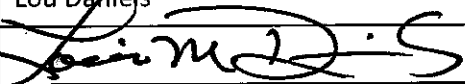All questions regarding the Commissioner's Network should be directed to:

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Irene Parisi
Chief Academic Officer
Connecticut State Department of Education
E-mail: irene.parisi@ct.gov

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PART III: COMMISSIONER'S NETWORK TURNAROUND PLAN

Section 1: Cover Page

Name of School District:	Canton Public School		
Name of School:	Canton Middle School	Grade Levels:	7-8
Name of School Principal:	Jeffrey Moore	# of Years Serving as Principal at this School:	5
		# of Years in Total as Administrator:	12
Turnaround Committee Chairperson:[1]	Jeffrey Moore	Phone Number of Chairperson:	860-693-7712
		E-mail of Chairperson:	jmoore@cantonschools.org
Address of Chairperson:	Street Address:	76 Simonds Ave	
	City: Collinsville	Zip Code:	06019
Name of School Board Chairperson:	Lou Daniels		
Signature of School Board Chairperson:[2]	[signature]	Date:	3/12/2024
Name of Superintendent:	Dr. Jordan Grossman		
Signature of Superintendent:	[signature]	Date:	3/12/2024

[1] 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.

[2] 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 to align with the impact that would like to be seen.

District Vision Statement (limit 200 words)

Our Vision: Opening Minds - Transforming Lives. As a leader among schools and a source of pride in our community, Canton Public Schools enrich the present and shape the future of its students by opening minds and transforming lives.

Our mission is to prepare independent, productive, respectful and responsible citizens who contribute to an ever changing world. We pursue continuous improvement while honoring our strong educational legacy and traditions. We unite with families and the community to provide challenging educational experiences that promote the intellectual, physical, social and emotional potential of our students.

District Theory of Action (limit 200 words)

If we identify, support, develop, and elevate our Student-Centered Learning practices then student achievement and ownership relative to Canton's Public School Vision of a Graduate will improve.

Students are the core of our instruction. By elevating our practices and focusing on the major components of student centered learning, children will be more readily engaged, instruction will be tailored to their learning styles which will yield deeper learning. Developing instructional practices that make students the owner of their own learning will enhance their ability to be Critical Thinkers, Creative Thinkers, Communicators, Collaborators and Compassionate Citizens.

> If we create a school community that is inclusive and equitable for all of our students and families, then we will have a safe and engaging learning environment that meets the unique needs of each community member, thereby increasing student achievement.
>
> For each person to thrive in our school environment, it needs to be a safe place in which each person's needs are met and differences are respected. Regardless of one's race, gender, (dis)ability or socioeconomic status, every member of our community is included and valued. When a person feels truly seen and accepted, they are then open to meet greater challenges and find greater success.

School Vision (limit 200 words)

> Canton Middle School inspires students to be lifelong learners and citizens who positively shape their community and the world.
> Canton Middle School provides a safe, supportive, and challenging environment where students experience diverse world views and a broad variety of opportunities. During this transitional time, teams create innovative, student-centered practices while cultivating independent thinking and collaboration. In partnership with families, community, and the school, students develop the empathy and self-confidence necessary for lifelong fulfillment.

School Theory of Action (limit 200 words)

> If we identify, support, develop, and elevate our Student-Centered Learning practices then student achievement and ownership relative to Canton's Public School Vision of a Graduate will improve.
>
> Students are the core of our instruction. By elevating our practices and focusing on the major components of student centered learning, children will be more readily engaged, instruction will be tailored to their learning styles which will yield deeper learning. Developing instructional practices that make students the owner of their own learning will enhance their ability to be Critical Thinkers, Creative Thinkers, Communicators, Collaborators and Compassionate Citizens.
>
> If we create a school community that is inclusive and equitable for all of our students and families, then we will have a safe and engaging learning environment that meets the unique needs of each community member, thereby increasing student achievement.
>
> For each person to thrive in our school environment, it needs to be a safe place in which each person's needs are met and differences are respected. Regardless of one's race, gender, (dis)ability or socioeconomic status, every member of our community is included and valued. When a person feels truly seen and accepted, they are then open to meet greater challenges and find greater success.

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.

The Canton Public Schools engage in national searches to identify and hire outstanding school leaders. The process includes focused feedback from staff and community members, a synthesis of community feedback and school goals to develop a leadership profile, comprehensive review of application materials which are screened based on the leadership profile, and a multi round interview process which utilizes a large interview panel representing multiple constituencies.

The personal and professional growth and support of the district administrators is facilitated from the office of the superintendent of schools. Growth and support is facilitated to regular meetings with the superintendent, coordinated instructional rounds, biweekly administrative council meetings to provide professional development and information, and allotments for professional learning with contracted partners based on district goals.

The current principal has a variety of experiences that prepare him to lead through the turnaround process. His teaching experience began in New York City and continued in a Connecticut suburban setting. As a department coordinator, he led the effort to revise the culture and climate of his school's History Department, empowering teachers with the tools and skills to do their best work. His administrative career began as an Assistant Principal for a new CREC magnet school, The Academy of Aerospace and Engineering, where he was a part of building the school from the ground up, adding new grade levels, hiring new staff and constructing a 150,000 sq. foot new school building. During this time, The Academy of Aerospace and Engineering was named the #1 high school in the nation by U.S. News and World Report. This urban magnet school, which was built to address issues of educational inequalities, became a model for what was possible in public education with great teachers, great instruction and a shared mission and vision.

Mr. Moore has continued his professional development since joining Canton Middle School, participating in a regional Principals network that meets monthly, attending biweekly administrative council meetings that include professional development, participating in local and national workshops along with his colleagues, and collaborating with the educators on his team to ensure all voices are heard and best practices are implemented.

In support and service of this improvement process, the principal will continue his own professional learning at conferences and work with instructional leadership consultants to grow and support his ability to lead this comprehensive plan. Consultants and training providers include Partners for Educational Leadership, EdAdvance, Connecticut Association of Schools, and the Turnaround Network.

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

Administrators are evaluated using the Canton Administrator Evaluation process. This process designed in conjunction with the bargaining unit promotes the development of strong goals through a continuous improvement process framework. Administrators present their goals to the superintendent at the beginning of the year, engage in two comprehensive walkthroughs and presentations during the year, and finalize evaluation through an end of year presentation.

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 utilizes a district wide continuous improvement process based on district and superintendent goals. Each administrator then develops their goals based on district goals to support coherence. Continuous improvement plan goals are regularly reflected upon throughout the year.

Budgeting is done transparently through a zero based budgeting approach with a forecasted projection of anticipated needs over several years. This process ensures administrators can articulate what is needed for operation and improvement and supports their transparent use of funds. The district engages in multi-year forecasted budgeting. The Commissioner's Network plan and budget will be a part of that ongoing review and monitoring.

These already articulated and entrenched pathways will be used to implement improvement strategies, ensure compliance with budgetary requirements, and support operational monitoring.

The district requires schools to engage in yearly continuous improvement plans. Plans are articulated to cover the areas of student achievement, equity, workforce development, culture and climate, communications and partnerships, and financial sustainability. Administrators present their plan and updates three times throughout the year to the central office administration. Thoughtful development of CIP goals and measurements allows the schools to work intently on their targets and showcase their improvement efforts. Additionally, district and board of education walkthroughs provide additional context and data on operations. The middle school's CIP will focus centrally on this Turnaround Plan, providing a strong pathway for accountability and support.

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

Canton Middle School worked closely with state turnaround office officials to adhere to the recommended protocols in developing this plan. The school gathered community and staff feedback through both the turnaround office surveys as well as used context from surveys from past year to guide the work. In this, parents, guardians, community members, and staff participated in providing feedback through the process.

Facilitation with the Canton Middle School team included multiple staff meetings across the 22-23 and 23-24 school years. Staff focused on student and school performance data, curricular conversations, reviews of practice, and consensus protocols to further clarify areas of improvement and improvement practices. The Board of Education has been kept well abreast of the areas for improvement via regular curriculum subcommittee meetings and school leadership presentations. The regular meetings of the Turnaround Committee, in partnership with the district's turnaround office liaison, allowed staff and community members the opportunity to further shape this plan into a thoughtful, actionable, coherent approach to school and systems improvement.

Further stakeholder engagement across the Network participation years will include yearly parent and staff surveys, weekly emails, school newsletters, parent and staff focus groups, and community events to showcase the growth of the school. The Turnaround team will also meet biannually to monitor the progress of the plan

and adjust as necessary. Additionally, the administration will continue the communication with the board regarding the process of the plan through curriculum subcommittee meetings and school visits.

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		
	2018-19	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24 YTD	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Student Enrollment	244	242	247	240	240	222	223
Next Generation Accountability Index*	71.9	59.9	63.2	NA	80.2	81.0	81.8
English Language Arts (ELA) School Performance Index (SPI)*	76.3	68.4	70.8	NA	75.5	75.5	75.5
ELA Smarter Balanced Growth *	56.2	43.7	54.5	NA	77.4%	81.1%	84.9%
Math School Performance Index (SPI)*	72.4	60.9	65.1	NA	73.8	74.0	74.2
Math Smarter Balanced Growth *	58.9	38.5	57.4	NA	84.3%	86.9%	89.5%
Average Daily Attendance Rate	94.4%	94.4%	94.4%	96.4%	95.1%	95.1%	95.1%
Percentage of Students Chronically Absent*	6.0%	11.3%	9.6%	5.4%	3.6%	3.6%	3.6%
Classroom Teacher Attendance (Average FTE Days Absent)	5.2	8.9	8.9	2.06	7	6	5
Suspension/Expulsion Rate	7.8%	4.1%	5.9	4.1%	7%	6%	5%
Performance Indicators	Baseline/Historic Data				Performance Targets		
	2018-19	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24 YTD	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26

Grade 7 ELA Smarter Balanced Assessment-"Meets or Exceeds Achievement Level"	72%	62%	72%	**NA**	75%	78%	80%
Grade 8 ELA Smarter Balanced Assessment-"Meets or Exceeds Achievement Level"	74%	58%	59%	**NA**	70%	75%	80%
Grade 7 Math Smarter Balanced Assessment- "Meets or Exceeds Achievement Level"	66%	50%	55%	**NA**	60%	68%	75%
Grade 8 Math Smarter Balanced Assessment- "Meets or Exceeds Achievement Level"	69%	45%	50%	**NA**	60%	68%	75%
Grade 8 NGSS Science - "Meets or Exceeds Achievement Level"	71%	59%	61%	**NA**	70%	75%	80%

* 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 outcomes within any process that, if dissolved, would eliminate or substantially reduce the outcome. Root cause analysis is the process that allows us to move from data to action. The data analysis and identification of challenges and contributing factors tell us what is happening at our schools. Root cause analysis will tell us why it is happening. Once we understand the why, we can then develop targeted interventions to address the challenge. 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. Root Cause Analysis: A School Leader's Guide to Using Data to Dissolve Problems (Preuss, 2013), provides additional examples specific to schools. Additionally, the CSDE Needs Assessment with Root Cause Toolkit utilizes data collection, analysis and protocols to aid in the process of identifying those root causes. **The root cause findings should serve as the basis for school improvement plan development.**

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.

Approved models:

      (A) A CommPACT school, as described in section 10-74g;

      (B) a social development model;

      (C) the management, administration, or governance of the school to be the responsibility of a regional educational service center, a public or private institution of higher education located in the state, or, subject to the provisions of subsection (e) of this section, an approved educational management organization;

      (D) a school described in section 10-74f;

      (E) 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, interdistrict magnet schools and charter schools or collected by the commissioner pursuant to subsection (f) of this section, or

      (F) a model developed in consultation with the commissioner or by the commissioner subject to the provisions of subsection (e) of this section.

Canton Middle School has selected Model (E) 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, interdistrict magnet schools and charter schools or collected by the commissioner pursuant to subsection (f) of this section.

Through participation in the Commissioner's Network, Canton Middle School will create and implement a plan that utilizes strategies, methods and best practices that have been proven to be effective in improving student performance. Core components of the model are detailed below:

Talent: To improve student outcomes, specifically the average percent of growth target achieved on the Smarter Balanced ELA and Math assessments, Canton Middle School will
- Create a Professional Development plan that is aligned, sustained, reflective of teacher and student needs, clearly communicated and which values staff feedback.
- Plan for regular vertical collaboration between all Canton Public Schools

Academics: To improve student performance as demonstrated on the Next Gen Accountability Performance Index and Growth Model scores in both ELA and Math, Canton Middle School will
- Create a clear vision of high quality instruction that maintains flexibility and departmental best practices
- Provide high quality academic support systems, such as tutoring, intervention, differentiation and specialized instruction
- Conduct structured and regular data team meetings

Culture/Climate: To ensure a learning environment that supports all students, specifically as evidenced by our chronic absenteeism and suspension rates, Canton

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Middle School will
- Create a safe, inclusive and equitable learning environment
- Develop students' resiliency and executive functioning skills

Operations: To improve the overall performance of our school as demonstrated on the School Accountability Index Score on the Next Generation Report Card, Canton Middle School will
- Revise schedule to increase opportunities for flexible intervention and staff team collaboration
- Allocate funding to address staffing, programming, and physical plant needs

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.
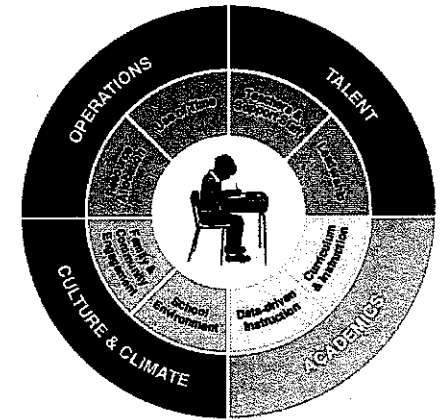
Plan Development

➤ **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, delete the examples and list 1-3 priority areas for each domain based on the needs assessment.

Talent	Academics
- Create a Professional Development plan that is aligned, sustained, reflective of teacher and student needs, clearly communicated, which values staff feedback and directly impacts Tier 1 instruction. - Plan for regular vertical collaboration between all Canton Public Schools	- Create a clear vision of high quality instruction that maintains flexibility and departmental best practices - Provide high quality academic support systems, such as tutoring, intervention, differentiation and specialized instruction - Conduct structured and regular data team meetings
Culture and Climate	**Operations**
- Create a safe, inclusive and equitable learning environment - Develop students' resiliency and executive functioning skills - Implement effective attendance and discipline processes	- Revise schedule to increase opportunities for flexible intervention and staff team collaboration - Allocate funding to address staffing, programming, and physical plant needs

➢ 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?
  - **Resources:** Identify items that require funding support from the Commissioner's Network. This could include: partnerships, professional learning, materials, personnel, supplies, etc.

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.

The initial review of school data, relative to the area of ELA growth for high needs students, provided insight on the student performance and programmatic challenges faced by the school, which include limited opportunities for intervention and support, and limited professional development and professional leadership regarding curriculum and instruction. In addition to the review of this data, the team also reviewed student growth overall for ELA, noting similar challenges illustrating a need for tier one instructional program revisions, added MTSS supports, expanded curriculum and instructional leadership, and review of associate programmatic supports. Further, the school investigated student growth within mathematics, noting similar areas of opportunity for improvement.
Based on the root cause and needs, it was determined that current classroom and special education staffing were sufficient and that additional support was necessary for both staff and students to drive improvement. Therefore, the school will be seeking to expand its coaching supports in ELA and math through consultative services, develop and expand the impact of the math interventionist and instructional coach, provide additional school climate resources with added social worker presence, and expand upon ELA program leadership with the reintroduction of a 7-12 English Department Chair.

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

CMS teachers are in need of a clearly articulated and sustained professional development plan. Built upon a shared vision of high quality instruction, a multi-year plan that values staff input will allow teachers to be supported in their professional growth and improvement.
Additionally, planning for increased support of new teachers will help new staff onboard to these expectations quickly, and a focus on protected and structured team collaboration and walkthroughs will cultivate an environment of ongoing learning.
The school will continue to do the work necessary to promote a positive environment for both students and staff, with additional learning to support that work.
Additional support will be available through consultative services to connect teachers to the support that they need in an on-demand format.

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

The district is currently in the process of developing a new Teacher Evaluation and Professional Growth plan. This plan will be developed in line with state requirements to promote continuous learning for and by staff. The plan is being developed around the Connecticut Core of Teaching standards and is planned to follow a Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) like approach to professional growth and learning.
Additionally, the district's Professional Development and Evaluation (PDEC) and Professional Learning Committees (PLC) will work with staff to prioritize professional learning preferences in light of district goals to promote continuous learning.

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

The addition of consultative services and the expansion of curricular leadership and support in ELA, math, and school culture and climate, coupled with the necessary release time, will provide staff with the intellectual capital necessary to support improvement. Consultants will be utilized to identify best practices and review standards within the curriculum, providing training on each. Curricular leadership will be added, notably, in the form of a new English Department Chair. School coaches will continue to participate in district Coaching Cabinets and coaching professional development to support teaching and learning. School leadership will participate in council meetings and professional coaching and professional learning networks.

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: 2022-23	Target Year 1: 2024-25	Target Year 2: 2025-26	Target Year 3: 2026-27
Average % of Growth Target Achieved in Math	Smarter Balanced	57.4%	86.9%	89.5%	92.1%
Average % of Growth Target Achieved in ELA	Smarter Balanced	54.5%	81.1%	84.9%	88.7%
% of staff meeting or exceeding Canton standard in professional practices	Teacher Growth and Evaluation Process	100%	90%	95%	100%

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.

Talent Priority: Create a Professional Development plan that is aligned, sustained, reflective of teacher and student needs, clearly communicated, which values staff feedback and directly impacts Tier 1 instruction.					
Root Cause: The professional development plan does not clearly articulate its purpose, alignment, and how it directly impacts student performance. Staff does not feel like they have agency in their professional learning.					
Person(s) Responsible: Central Office Administration, Principal, PDEC and PLC committees					
Strategies to address root cause	Timeline			Indicators of Success	Resources
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3		
Provide professional development support in Math and ELA to ensure curricular best practices	Partner with EdAdvance for ELA consultation, with a focus on identifying Tier 1 best practices for teaching literacy Partner with math consultant with a focus on alignment, scope and sequence with Illustrative Math curriculum	Continue work with EdAdvance, with a focus on updating curricular documents Continue work with math consultant, with a focus on best Tier 1 instructional practices in Illustrative Math	Implement revised curriculum and monitor impact through walkthroughs and student outcomes	Smarter Balanced School Index and Growth scores in Math and ELA STAR scores NGSS scores Walkthrough data	Funding for ELA and Math consultants Release time for staff professional development Warehouse for curriculum documents
Develop pathways of leadership and support	Hire, onboard, and begin programmatic review with ELA Department Chair, who can capably support the middle school improvement Hire, onboard, and begin programmatic review with Math Interventionist and Instructional Coach	Continue ELA programmatic revision to support needs of all students Continue Math programmatic revision to support needs of all students	Reflect and improve ELA programmatic revisions in support needs of all students Reflect and improve Math programmatic revisions in support needs of all students	Documented curricular revisions and improvements Demonstrated student growth and proficiency Walkthrough data	Additional FTE allocation for leadership and support Professional release time for improvement work Funding to support purchase of necessary curricular resources
Improve specialized, supportive instruction	Hire, onboard, and begin programmatic review with	Continue training of of Special Education Literacy Specialist	Scale best practices in specialized literacy	Documented programmatic and strategy development	Additional FTE allocation for Special

	Special Education Literacy specialist Expand tier 2 and 3 supports with additional tutorial staff	Provide expanded training to special education staff in key practices Provide ongoing professional support for tutorial staff.	supports across special and regular education Continue ongoing professional learning for special education and tutorial staff	Demonstrated student growth and proficiency	Education Literacy Specialist Professional release time for improvement work Professional learning Funding to support purchase of necessary curricular resources
Communication of professional development structures	Create and implement a professional learning calendar that documents district and building-based professional development themes and processes Create staff feedback tool to provide teacher agency in shaping future learning	Monitor implementation and impact of professional development calendar and modify according to performance and feedback.	Maintain the professional development calendar and adjust based on outcomes	Documentation of professional development calendar Staff feedback Staff participation in sessions Smarter Balanced performance and growth	Professional Learning Calendar Professional Feedback System
Refine the educator growth and evaluation model to support ongoing professional learning around instruction	PDEC (evaluation) committee will revise the educator growth and evaluation model in light of new state guidance, focusing on supporting professional learning Implement new educator growth and evaluation model	Monitor implementation of new educator growth and evaluation model Educators will set a professional learning goal surrounding use of best practices	Continue to monitor implementation of new educator growth and evaluation model Educators will set a professional learning goal surrounding student engagement and assessment	Educators' meaningful professional learning plans Instructional practices artifacts	Evaluations Evaluation documentation Walkthrough protocols PDEC meeting time

Talent Priority: Plan for regular vertical collaboration between all Canton Public Schools
Root Cause: Communication and alignment between schools has been limited without regular opportunities to collaborate
Person(s) Responsible: Central Office Administration, Building Principal

Strategies to address root cause	Timeline			Indicators of Success	Resources
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3		
Conduct instructional walkthroughs to identify best practices, assess areas of need and promote a culture of professional learning	Plan for and conduct district-wide walkthroughs, identifying appropriate staff, which will be inclusive of teachers, building admin and central office staff, and methods for inter-school observations. Plan for and conduct monthly in-house walkthroughs and debrief at monthly faculty meetings	Refine district-wide walkthroughs, monitor and reevaluate for effectiveness. Incorporate findings into district professional development. Monitor and refine in-house walkthroughs and staff debrief process	Monitor and revise district and in-house walkthrough process as necessary	Calendar of walkthroughs at both the district and building level Staff participation, reflection and feedback from walkthroughs Professional learning topics informed by walkthrough data	Facilitator to set up and train on best walkthrough practices Calendar and observation tools Release time and coverage for teacher participation in walkthroughs
Departmental Vertical team meetings	Create and conduct at least three convenings of the K-12 math and ELA committees to review student performance and programmatic alignment in support of the middle school program Engage in departmental walkthroughs to provide feedback to support high quality, disciplinary instructional practices in	Identify a problem of practice and conduct at least three convenings of the district math and ELA committees to review student performance, programmatic alignment, and instructional strategies in support of the middle school program Engage in departmental walkthroughs to provide	Identify a problem of practice and conduct at least three convenings of the district math and ELA committees to review student performance, programmatic alignment, and instructional strategies in support of the middle school program Engage in departmental walkthroughs to provide	Smarter Balanced School Index and Growth scores in Math and ELA STAR scores NGSS scores Walkthrough data Staff feedback Staff participation	Time for meetings Department level leadership Walkthrough training and facilitation Coverage for walkthroughs

	support of the middle school program	feedback to support high quality, disciplinary instructional practices in support of the middle school program	feedback to support high quality, disciplinary instructional practices in support of the middle school program Develop and deliver focused, departmental professional learning tied to vertical team reviews		
Create a digital, collaborative professional learning warehouse	Create a shared Google Drive and Website to house professional learning materials, aligned to school and district goals, in a coherent, sustainable manner.	Obtain staff feedback on the warehouse and improve the organization and processes accordingly	Continuously update and maintain resource.	The creation of an organized, defined collection of professional learning resources	Technical support and commitment by staff to the outlined process
Create a digital, collaborative curriculum warehouse	Utilize the district's shared Google Drive and Website to house professional learning materials in a coherent, sustainable manner.	Obtain staff feedback on the curriculum warehouse and improve the organization and processes accordingly	Continuously update and maintain resource.	The creation of an organized, defined collection of curricular resources	Technical support Commitment by staff to the outlined process Time to complete curricular documentation

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.

> Canton Middle School provides a comprehensive academic program designed to meet the needs of each and every student. The school does provide a wide variety of experiential courses, Spanish, an advanced pathway within mathematics, and offers support services through scheduled Math or ELA labs.
> Curriculum leadership is facilitated through Department Chairs who service the 7-12 grades with a clear focus on meeting and exceeding state standards.

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.

> Canton Middle School has implemented a Universal Screening process which includes STAR Reading and STAR Math for reading and mathematics proficiency. This data is used, along with curricular assessments and classroom observations, to guide instructional decisions and provide academic supports in the classroom or in tutorial services.
>
> The school also employs a number of Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment Blocks (IAB) to support student readiness for exams and support consistency in language use. This information is used to further refine classroom instruction and content area language for students.
>
> The school also uses the DESSA Mini as a strengths based assessment of student resilience skills. This data will be used to guide the school's advisory program.
>
> We will implement data review cycles in several formats to inform lesson development, differentiation and intervention supports. A data leadership team will be developed to review universal screener and formative assessment data, such as the STAR and IAB results. The team's review will lead to guidance to teacher teams and help guide team-wide instructional adjustments and specific intervention strategies for students struggling in targeted areas through our Student Intervention Team (SIT). At the team level, data protocols will be utilized to regularly review formative assessments and observational data, which can be immediately turned into classroom strategies related to student groupings, skill reteaching and prioritization and identifying areas of focus in upcoming lessons. At the department level, content area teams will additionally examine unit assessments to guide curricular and lesson development, and identify effective instructional strategies and areas for improvement. Additionally, these teams, as well as the whole-school team, will analyze the results of state and standardized assessments, the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA) and the PSAT. These annual assessments provide insight into the integrity of the curriculum and the effectiveness of our instructional strategies, and we will use that feedback to guide our annual planning and adjustments.

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

The district provides each school with four meeting times of at least two hours to meet to discuss students needs and performance. Three early release days are spread throughout the year to support the ongoing work of data collection, analysis, and next steps in support of students. Further, grade level teams discuss individual student and grade level trends regarding performance and behavior at weekly team meetings. Monthly departmental team meeting focus on curricular organization in service of instructional improvement and student growth.

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: 2022-23	Target Year 1: 2024-25	Target Year 2: 2025-26	Target Year 3: 2026-27
ELA School Performance Index	Next Gen Accountability	70.8	75.5	75.5	75.5
ELA Smarter Balanced Growth Model	Next Gen Accountability	54.5	74	74.2	74.4

Three-Year Math Goal:

Indicator	Data Source	Baseline Year: 2022-23	Target Year 1: 2024-25	Target Year 2: 2025-26	Target Year 3: 2026-27
Math School Performance Index	Next Gen Accountability	65.1	74	74.2	74.4
Math Smarter Balanced Growth Model	Next Gen Accountability	57.4	70	83	92.1

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.

Academic Priority: Create a clear vision of high quality instruction that maintains flexibility and departmental best practices

Root Cause: The District retains a Vision of the Graduate and a teaching and learning rubric, however integration and prioritization is still yet to be completed in order to develop a shared view of high quality instruction

Person(s) Responsible: Superintendent, Administration, Department Chairs, Instructional Coaches, Teachers and Staff, Professional Development and Evaluation Committee, Professional Learning Committee

Strategies to address Root Cause	Timeline			Indicators of Success	Resources
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3		
Develop shared language surrounding high quality Tier 1 instruction aligned with the vision of the graduate	Engage in consultative services to design and implement a series of workshops that focus on identifying best Tier 1 instructional practices, aligned with the Vision of the Graduate	Continue professional learning on high quality instruction with a focus on engagement, assessment and feedback	Incorporate definition of high quality instruction into educator documentation and classroom materials	Attendance at professional development sessions Documentation of shared definition of high quality instruction Increased use of best practices	High quality consultants to act as facilitators Professional development resources Walkthrough protocols Team meetings
Reengage K-12 vertical department meetings to review practices, discuss needs, and plan for coherence and cohesion in grades leading to, through, and beyond middle school.	Reengage in vertical team, K-12 committees, in the areas of ELA and Mathematics. Engage in walkthroughs in support of a review of a problems Utilize teams to develop a focused area of improvement	Continue vertical team committee meetings, expanding to include district performance data to develop problem of practice in support of walk throughs.	Continue vertical team committee meetings, with explicit "look fors" based on a definition of high quality instructional practices to provide feedback and forward for the departments.	Calendar of vertical team meetings and agendas Walkthrough formative data Department improvement plans	Time for meetings Department level leadership Walkthrough training and facilitation

Academic Priority: Provide high quality academic support systems, such as tutoring, intervention, differentiation and specialized instruction					
Root Cause: Structures of the school provide limited availability for high quality, flexible supports					
Person(s) Responsible: Central Office, Administration, Tutors, Coaches, Teachers and Staff					
Strategies to address Root Cause	Timeline			Indicators of Success	Resources
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3		
Support Special Education literacy	Design program, post for and hire a literacy specialist focused on Special Education Specialist will focus on intervening and supporting students	Specialist will continue to support students, and focus on supporting teachers and curricular decisions Monitor outcomes and revise accordingly	Continue to monitor student outcomes and adjust support Specialist will present best practices at district professional development	Smarter Balanced results Accountability Index Use of effective literacy strategies	Calibration training and time for walkthroughs and observations New staff member as specialist Funds to develop and purchase curricular resources
Identify and provide flexible, focused interventions in math and reading supports	Deliver and evaluate structures and systems Explore flexible models for intervention and support Explore math and reading intervention programs Identify practices for participation in intervention modules	Implement improved flexible intervention schedule Pilot math and reading intervention programs Utilize practices for module inclusion and evaluate efficacy	Evaluate flexible intervention schedule Evaluate math and reading intervention programs Evaluate practices for module inclusion and evaluate efficacy	Structures and space for support defined in the schedule STAR Smarter Balanced/IABs Improved curricular resources to support student needs	Schedule consultant Highly qualified tutors MTSS consultant Intervention curricular resources
Implement strategic extended academic support	Design and implement an after school tutorial program, focusing on students with high needs that have not met growth targets Design and implement a summer academic	Monitor and revise after school tutoring program to enhance effectiveness Expand after school programming to provide flexible support to all students as needed	Continue to monitor and revise after school tutoring and summer programs based upon outcomes	Smarter Balanced results for students who participated in the programs Academic performance	Staffing and funding for after school and summer hours Academic resources to support skill needs

	program that focuses on academics, executive functioning skills, and school connection for those who demonstrated that need in the past year	Monitor and revise summer program based upon feedback and outcomes		Attendance and participation Parent communications	

Academic Priority: Conduct structured and regular data team meetings

Root Cause: There have not been regular times and protocols to utilize appropriate data to inform instruction due to limited access to a formative data warehouse and limitations to the schedule to meet as a data team

Person(s) Responsible: Assessment/data service providers, Administration, Team Leaders, Instructional Coaches

Strategies to address Root Cause	Timeline			Indicators of Success	Resources
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3		
Regularly collect universal screening data and utilize tools for reflection and guiding next steps	Administer and analyze STAR three times per year Administer and analyze Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs) in each subject area, purposefully aligned to curricular units to provide more relevant real-time data and an authentic application of skills Teachers will connect professional growth plans to reflection upon and use of formative data	Continue to administer and analyze STAR and IABs Provide training on data protocols to dive into these results and use them to inform instruction	Monitor and revise data analysis protocols, adjusting strategies as informed	STAR and IAB results Data protocols in team minutes Observations	Data analysis training Meeting times Data warehouse and analytics Meeting time to evaluate and plan next steps

Student Intervention and Student of Concern Team Designs	Review and evaluate the structures and effectiveness of the Student Intervention Team (SIT) and Students of Concern support process. Meet as a district wide team to analyze intervention team processes and align as appropriate	Provide training to staff on Student Intervention Team process and forms Incorporate Data Leadership Team into SIT process Refine Student of Concern process to provide actionable feedback to staff	SIT process is fully integrated into team meetings, and Data Leadership Team regularly provides greater insights and strategies for students in need of support	Alignment of SIT process district wide SIT and Student of Concern documentation Evidence of increased strategic supports Team meeting minutes	Resources with best practices for academic support and intervention Training on intervention strategies
Instructional Data Leadership Team Utilize effective data team and coaching structures to ensure instruction is informed by data	Establish Data Leadership team and meet regularly Provide training for Data Leadership team and staff on data analysis to inform instruction Develop a schedule to regularly reflect on data with all staff members, incorporating feedback from leadership team and engaging in coaching conversations Implement coaching cycles to provide feedback and enhance best practices	Expand the role of coaches to provide targeted support and coaching to teachers Provide ongoing training in data use	Monitor and evaluate the implementation of data informed practices Evaluate the effectiveness of coaching cycles and adjust as needed	Student achievement on assessments Evidence of high quality instruction Data use protocols and team meeting minutes	Data analysis training Meeting time for Data Leadership team Documentation and warehouse of needed data

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.

The school's behavior management system employs a proactive approach, emphasizing positive reinforcement and clear expectations communicated through school wide agreements. Strategies include implementing restorative practices, promoting resiliency and executive functioning skills through advisory programs, and fostering a sense of community through recognition of student achievements and contributions.

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

Canton Middle School will host regular family engagement events. Additionally, we will establish partnerships with local organizations and community resources to provide support for students and families, fostering a collaborative approach to achieving school goals. We will also utilize digital communication platforms and newsletters, focusing on comprehensive but purposeful strategic communications, to keep families informed and involved in school activities and initiatives.

Describe the school's attendance intervention system.

Our attendance intervention system presently needs increased consistency and strategic steps to address absenteeism. We are implementing early intervention measures, such as personalized outreach to families, and collaborating with families and community organizations to identify and address underlying barriers to attendance. Through these efforts, we aim to increase student attendance and engagement, ensuring all students have the opportunity to succeed academically.

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

Canton Middle School will integrate resiliency-building activities into the Advisory program. Through targeted lessons and discussions, students will develop coping strategies, problem-solving skills, and a growth mindset to navigate challenges effectively. Additionally, we will increase the amount of support counseling services available and ensure we continue our work to be an equitable school in which all students are well-known and well-taught. Removing barriers to each individual's success is essential to ensure students have the resources and support they need to thrive emotionally and academically.

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: 2022-23	Target Year 1: 2024-25	Target Year 2: 2025-26	Target Year 3: 2026-27
Chronic Absenteeism	Edsight	9.6%	3.6%	3.6%	3.6%
Suspension/Expulsion Rate	PowerSchool	4.1%	6%	5%	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 Culture and Climate goal.

Culture and Climate Priority: Create a safe, inclusive and equitable learning environment					
Root Cause: The use of clear and purposeful strategies will ensure a safe and inclusive environment for all. While the school has engaged in conversations around equity and inclusion, a sustained and systemic approach has not yet been implemented.					
Person(s) Responsible: Principal, Equity Team, Culture and Climate Committee, Teachers and Staff					
Strategies to address Root Cause	Timeline			Indicators of Success	Resources
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3		
Establish District and School Equity Teams that will develop an equity action plan	District equity team will focus on collecting data, suggesting professional learning based on need, and developing processes and practices for improvement. District equity team members, in partnership with the principal, will support school data reviews, plan and present training and resources, and implement district processes and practices in support of high expectations for all students	District and School Equity Teams will plan and present training and resources in support of reviewing data with an equity lens, and supporting high expectations for all students	Continue implementation of equity action plan, with further training for staff and actions that remove barriers to success and build cultural competence. Monitor and revise role of the District Equity Team, adjusting to respond to current needs	District and School Equity Action Plan Staff participation in training and implementation of strategies	Meeting times for School Equity Team Training resources for school staff
Reinvigorate positive school culture and climate practices with systematic, sustainable, well articulated practices	Create a school culture and climate committee to review SEL screening data, behavior data, attendance data. Make recommendations to clarify school expectations, acknowledgement of behaviors, response to	Continue school culture and climate committee to review SEL screening data, behavior data, attendance data developing clear response protocols Make recommendations to clarify school expectations, acknowledgement of	Continue school culture and climate committee to review SEL screening data, behavior data, attendance data and develop professional learning Clarify and communicate school expectations, acknowledgement of	School behavioral expectations Positive School Climate Plan and events plan Committee protocols developed School climate survey improvement	Training for Positive School Climate leadership team Financial resources for positive school climate events Revised school climate survey

	behaviors, collection of data, and reflection practices. Create action plan of school wide positive behavior events	behaviors, response to behaviors, collection of data, and reflection practices. Create action plan of school wide positive behavior events	behaviors, response to behaviors, collection of data, and reflection practices.		

Culture and Climate Priority: Develop students' resiliency and executive functioning skills					
Root Cause: To achieve our Vision of the Graduate, students need to learn greater resiliency and executive functioning skills					
Person(s) Responsible: Principal, Culture and Climate Team, Advisory teachers, Support Staff, Teachers					
Strategies to address Root Cause	Timeline			Indicators of Success	Resources
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3		
Hire an additional Social Worker with a focus on implementing and supporting the plan to increase student resiliency and executive functioning skills	Write job description, post and hire exceptional Social Worker Onboard new social worker Develop plan to increase social workers' role to proactively building these skills school-wide	Implement social worker's plan and monitor for impact on school community Respond to student needs, intervening as needed	Social Worker will serve as a strategic partner with teachers, problem solving and providing guidance to address student needs in class Monitor implementation of plan and revise as needed Prepare budget to sustain this position past participation in the Commissioner's Network	Student academic performance Discipline data School climate surveys	Addition of 1.0 FTE social worker Curricular resources regarding executive functioning

Develop a resilience based advisory program	Train staff, particularly Advisory teachers, on components of the Resiliency Program Integrate the lessons and resources into school practice, particularly the Advisory program	Evaluate the effectiveness of the Resiliency Program and make adjustments to the curriculum and implementation plan	Evaluate the effectiveness of the program and make adjustments to the curriculum and implementation plan	Student surveys Observations Discipline data Academic performance	Social Worker Consultation with the Farmington Valley Health District Resiliency curriculum Training resources and time School Culture and Climate Team

Culture and Climate Priority: Implement effective attendance and discipline processes

Root Cause: There are not clearly articulated attendance and discipline support processes

Person(s) Responsible: Principal, Support Staff, Attendance Committee

Strategies to address Root Cause	Timeline			Indicators of Success	Resources
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3		
Develop proactive and responsive attendance practices	Establish partnership with WestEd, focusing on identifying our target area for improvement in attendance Conduct research and needs assessment related to attendance practices.	Implement strategies surrounding partnering with families to reduce truancy and promoting school attendance	Evaluate the effectiveness of new strategies and trainings through analysis of attendance data and revise as needed	Daily attendance rates and number of students at truancy levels Number of home visits	Partnership with WestEd Social Worker Training documentation Resources to support attendance program
Effectively address discipline concerns	Establish partnership with WestEd, focusing on identifying our target area for improvement Conduct research and needs assessment related to our target area in attendance and discipline. Identify where our processes need improvement.	Develop and implement a comprehensive training plan for staff on new processes and expectations Implement strategies surrounding partnering with families to reduce truancy and promoting positive behavior to reduce suspensions	Evaluate the effectiveness of new strategies and trainings through analysis of attendance and discipline data, and revise as needed	Daily attendance rates and number of students at truancy levels Number of office discipline referrals and overall suspensions	Partnership with WestEd Training documentation Resources to support attendance and discipline programs

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 length of the school day and year will be in accordance with the collective bargaining agreement with the Education Association of Canton, which currently stipulates 182 instructional days, a 7 hour and 20 minute workday, with seven 47 minute periods with a daily 20 minute advisory. This totals 350 total minutes of student contact. Within those parameters, our schedule is in need of revision to provide several key items. 1) Increased flexibility for students to receive support, 2) increased opportunities for staff teams to collaborate, and 3) reduced constraints for shared staff members and between our Music, PE and specials classes. Addressing those needs, while maintaining Advisory and appropriate instructional minutes, will be key to creating a schedule that maximizes instructional time for all content areas.

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.

As stated above, the school day and year will be in accordance with the collective bargaining agreement with the Education Association of Canton. As it relates to teacher learning, teachers have orientation days for new staff, a protected teacher preparation day and professional development time at the start of the year, and five hours per month of after school meetings. There are 10 additional half days for professional development throughout the year as well. Finally, we try to schedule a period per day when teachers can meet as a team or by department. Our schedule revision will need to make this more available and consistent.

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: 2022-23	Target Year 1: 2024-25	Target Year 2: 2025-26	Target Year 3: 2026-27
Overall School Accountability Index Score	Next Generation Report Card	63.2	70	75	82.6

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 operations goal.

Operations Priority: Revise schedule to increase opportunities for flexible intervention and staff team collaboration					
Root Cause: School schedule provides limited availability for high quality, flexible supports and staff collaboration					
Person(s) Responsible: Principals, Teachers and Staff					
Strategies to address Root Cause	Timeline			Indicators of Success	Resources
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3		
Increase opportunity for flexible support and intervention, and for staff team collaboration	In partnership with a scheduling consultant, conduct needs assessment, vet options, and identify the schedule that best addresses the needs	Conduct training on best practices enabled within the new schedule Implement the revised schedule	Monitor implementation and adjust as necessary	New schedule that meets our needs Student performance outcomes Student and staff surveys Observations	Scheduling consultant Training resources

Operations Priority: Allocate funding to address staffing, programming, and physical plant needs					
Root Cause: The available staff, resources and spaces do not support the needed changes to best meet student needs					
Person(s) Responsible: Central Office staff, Business Manager, Director of Facilities, Building Principals					
Strategies to address Root Cause	Timeline			Indicators of Success	Resources
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3		
Evaluate school plant configuration to optimal usage of space to support scheduling and learning	In alignment with the schedule revision, analyze space needs and potential solutions Develop plans for plant reconfiguration and go through any required approval process	Conduct the recommended plans, building and reconfiguring as needed	Continue construction work, as larger projects are broken out over two years Monitor and evaluate the impact of new space	Revised schedule, enabled by reconfigurations Renovated spaces that meet instructional and programmatic needs	Consultantative services Zoning, planning and building resources

Assess classroom learning environment to ensure furniture, technology, and instructional resources meet the ambitious needs of improvement	In alignment with the schedule revision, analyze furniture, technology and instructional resource needs. Develop a plan for purchasing, training and rolling out those items	Implement the first stage of the plan by acquiring essential furniture, technology and instructional resources Provide training on any new items as needed Monitor the implementation and usage of new items	Continue to acquire planned for furniture, technology and instructional resources Monitor the implementation and effectiveness of all new resources, adjust and train as needed	Provision of essential furniture, technology and instructional resources Student achievement Observations	Analyst resource to identify key areas of need Instructional Technology services to identify appropriate tools Funding to acquisition of resources
Evaluate FTE allotments to ensure proper and responsive staffing	In alignment with the schedule revision, analyze staffing needs Develop job descriptions and a plan for hiring over time	Hire and onboard new staff	Monitor the impact and effectiveness of new roles, adjusting as necessary	Staffing the meets students' academic and social-emotional needs Student achievement	Process for analyzing staffing needs Funding for hiring and training of new staff

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?

Canton Middle School will invest in professional development initiatives aimed at enhancing staff capacity to sustain progress beyond participation in the Commissioner's Network. This includes utilizing resources and assistance provided by the Commissioner's Network to provide training sessions and workshops focused on building expertise in key areas relevant to our improvement focus areas. Additionally, we will focus on establishing robust systems and infrastructure to support ongoing initiatives, such as implementing data tracking mechanisms and developing sustainability plans.

Preparing to succeed beyond participation in the Network, the district will continue to provide support and monitor the implementation of plans and activities. This will involve ongoing collaboration between the school and district administration, with a focus on maintaining communication channels and reporting mechanisms to track progress effectively. The district will also play a pivotal role in providing continued guidance, resources, and support to ensure that the initiatives funded by the grant are seamlessly integrated into the broader district goals and priorities.

Finally, the district will work with the school to support the necessary staffing and services beyond the grant, including a progressive plan for retention of necessary budgeted staff through forecasted budgeting. The district engages in a budget forecasting model and is proactively building the proportional cost of the positions in to the outer year budget to ensure sustainability. Additionally, the district will work with durational consultants to support improvement efforts and evaluate the efficacy and need based on school improvement metrics in order to support future district funding.

Section 8: Budget Information

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:   80 percent paid through Commissioner's Network funding/20 percent paid through other funding

Year 2:   65 percent paid through Commissioner's Network funding/35 percent paid through other funding

Year 3:   50 percent paid through Commissioner's Network funding/50 percent paid through other funding

Year 4:   35 percent paid through Commissioner's Network funding/65 percent paid through other funding

Year 5:   20 percent paid through Commissioner's Network funding/80 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.

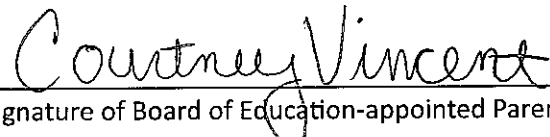## Appendix A: Turnaround Committee Signatures Page

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.

_____   3/14/24
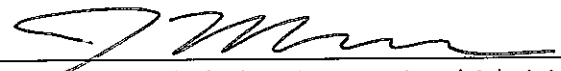Signature of Assistant Superintendent, Non-Voting Chair   Date

Jon Bishop_____   _____
Name of Assistant Superintendent *(typed)*

_____   3/12/2024
Signature of Board of Education-appointed Parent   Date

Courtney Vincent_____

Name of Board of Education-appointed Parent *(typed)*

_____   3/14/2024
Signature of Board of Education-appointed Administrator   Date

Jeffrey Moore_____
Name of Board of Education-appointed Administrator *(typed)*

Amanda Burkhart   _3/14/2024_

Signature of Union-appointed Teacher   Date

Amanda Burkhart

Name of Union-appointed Teacher *(typed)*

Elana S. Chafetz   _3/14/24_

Signature of Union-appointed Teacher   Date

Elana Chafetz

Name of Union-appointed Teacher *(typed)*

          _3/12/2024_

Signature of Union-appointed Parent   Date

Andrew Buckle

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
Jeffrey Moore	Canton Middle School Principal
Jon Bishop	Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Amanda Burkhart	Math Teacher
Elana Chafetz	English Teacher
Andrew Buckle	Parent
Courtney Vincent	Parent, PTO President

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

PROJECT TITLE: Commissioner's Network

THE APPLICANT: **Canton Public Schools**   HEREBY ASSURES THAT:

Canton Middle School

(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;

II. NONDISCRIMINATION
   A. For purposes of this Section, the following terms are defined as follows:
      1. "Commission" means the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities;
      2. "Contract" and "contract" include any extension or modification of the Charter;
      3. "Contractor" and "contractor" include any successors or assigns of the Charter Board;
      4. "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.
      5. "good faith" means that degree of diligence which a reasonable person would exercise in the performance of legal duties and obligations;
      6. "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;
      7. "marital status" means being single, married as recognized by the State of Connecticut, widowed, separated or divorced;
      8. "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;
      9. "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
      10. "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. 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, status as a veteran, 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 ensure 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, status as a veteran, 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 and 46a-68f; 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 the 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.
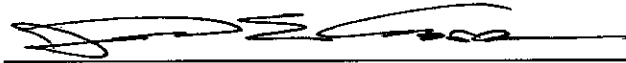
H. The Contractor shall include the provisions of the foregoing paragraph in every subcontract or purchase order entered into in order to fulfill any obligation of a contract with the State and such provisions shall be binding on a subcontractor, vendor or manufacturer unless exempted by regulations 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)*   Dr. Jordan Grossman

Title: *(typed)*   Superintendent of Schools

Date: 3/15/24

PART V: REFERENCES

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