

**Connecticut State Board of Education  
Hartford**

**To Be Proposed:**  
June 14, 2023

**Resolved,** That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-223h of the Connecticut General Statutes, approves the continued participation of Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School, Bridgeport, in the Commissioner’s Network for an additional year commencing July 1, 2023, 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 fourteenth day of June, Two Thousand Twenty-Three.

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

**Connecticut State Board of Education  
Hartford**

**To:** State Board of Education  
**From:** Charlene M. Russell-Tucker, Commissioner of Education  
**Date:** June 14, 2023  
**Subject:** Approval of Commissioner’s Network Extension for Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School, Bridgeport

*Executive Summary*

**Introduction**

Section (§)10-223h of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) established the Commissioner’s Network to provide new resources, increased flexibilities, and greater accountability to improve student achievement in some of the state’s lowest-performing schools. The Commissioner’s Network is a commitment between local stakeholders and the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) to improve student achievement in up to 25 schools. There are sixteen schools presently participating in the Commissioner’s Network.

The purpose of the Commissioner’s Network is to turnaround chronically low-performing schools and improve outcomes for students who attend these schools. Commissioner’s Network Turnaround Plans must include intensive and transformative strategies that are necessary to positively impact schools that, to date, have been unsuccessful in their improvement efforts. These plans must reach beyond surface reforms to achieve dramatic and transformative outcomes, address past turnaround efforts, and provide an explanation as to how the proposed interventions will succeed where previous efforts have failed.

Schools are accepted into the Commissioner’s Network for a minimum of three years. C.G.S §10-223h(h) 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. For the reasons set forth below, Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School (Roosevelt) in Bridgeport is recommended to remain in the Commissioner’s Network for a fifth year.

**Background:**

Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School currently serves 466 students in PreK through Grade 8. Of those 466 students, 91 percent are eligible for free or reduced-price meals; 18 percent are identified as needing special education services; and 30 percent are multilingual learners/English Learners (MLs/ELs). Approximately 56 percent of the students are Hispanic/Latino, 30 percent are Black, and 9 percent are White.

On June 13, 2018, the CSDE received an *Expression of Interest Form* from the Bridgeport Public Schools (BPS), volunteering Roosevelt for participation in the Commissioner's Network.

On September 7, 2018, the Commissioner of Education initially selected Roosevelt 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, Roosevelt and the Bridgeport Education Association appointed members to serve on the school's Turnaround Committee, and the CSDE conducted an Operations and Instructional Audit on October 3, 2018. The audit revealed that while leadership effectiveness was a strength, effective standards-based instruction, student achievement in literacy and mathematics, and chronic absenteeism were areas of growth.

During the 2018-19 planning year, the school's Turnaround Committee developed the turnaround plan for Roosevelt in accordance with C.G.S. §10-223h(d). The priorities of the Roosevelt turnaround plan are to improve Tier 1 instruction, improve student academic performance, and decrease chronic absenteeism. Talent is supported by professional learning and coaching in literacy and mathematics to build teacher capacity, integrate science and social studies into the literacy blocks, and implement restorative practices. In academics, the Roosevelt turnaround plan includes the implementation of a structured 120-minute literacy block, teacher training for effective Tier 1 instructional practices, and redesigning Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions. Investments to improve the culture and climate of Roosevelt include increasing family and community engagement, partnerships, and wraparound services as well as afterschool programming to support student achievement and attendance. Operations include plans for common grade level planning meetings and maximizing instructional time while minimizing transition times.

On September 4, 2019, after their turnaround plan was approved by the SBE, Roosevelt officially entered the Commissioner's Network. As noted, schools are accepted into the Commissioner's Network for a period of three years, and pursuant to C.G.S. §10-223h(h), the SBE may allow such schools to continue in the Commissioner's Network for up to two additional years if necessary.

Since joining the Commissioner's Network, Roosevelt has been provided with varied supports by the CSDE. These supports include bi-weekly walkthrough visits by CSDE consultants with school and district leadership, the provision of professional learning sessions multiple times per year through a NetStat Professional Learning Series, and the facilitation of Principal Roundtable discussions with other Commissioner's Network leaders. Additionally, technical support and planning meetings are provided around budget development and implementation, including necessary revisions. Finally, a mid-year audit is conducted each year to provide progress updates and recommendations tied to the approved turnaround plan.

Under the Commissioner's Network Grant, the school and/or district have aligned funding and expenditures closely with school goals and student needs.

**Improvements:**

- Roosevelt has made progress to exit the Turnaround Category status in the Next Generation Accountability System (NGAS) as its three-year weighted average of the Accountability

Index for two consecutive school years (2018-19 and 2021-22) was not in the bottom five percent. To exit the Turnaround Category status, Roosevelt must continue to stay above the cutoff for the fifth percentile of schools' three-year weighted average of the NGAS Accountability Index and show substantial improvement and continued progress.

- The Next Generation Accountability Report for 2021-22 demonstrates an increase in Roosevelt's English Language Arts (ELA) Academic Growth – All Students, from 56.1 percent in 2018-19 to 56.8 percent in 2021-22.
- The Next Generation Accountability Report for 2021-22 demonstrates an increase in Roosevelt's Mathematics Academic Growth– All Students, from 41.8 percent in 2018-19 to 61.8 percent in 2021-22.
- The Next Generation Accountability Report for 2021-22 demonstrates an increase in Roosevelt's Mathematics Academic Growth – High Needs Students, from 43.9 percent in 2018-19 to 62.5 percent in 2021-22.
- The Next Generation Accountability Report demonstrates growth in the Progress Toward English Proficiency –Oral indicator, from 39.5 percent in 2018-19 to 51.1 percent in 2021-22.
- The Next Generation Accountability Report for 2021-22 demonstrates an increase in Roosevelt's On-Track to High School Graduation, from 71.9 percent in 2018-19 to 78.4 percent in 2021-22.
- Teachers received professional learning and coaching supports to improve Tier 1 instructional practices as follows:
  - HILL for Literacy focused on foundational reading skills, using data to plan for students' intervention and the implementation of the district's curricular resource, *Wonders*, which is aligned to Connecticut Core Standards (CCS).
  - HMH *Into Math* focused on the implementation of the district's CCS-aligned curricular resource.
  - Roosevelt's Administration and teacher leaders provided professional learning to staff that focused on planning, data analysis, accelerating learning through small group instruction, science of reading aligned small group instruction, and the implementation of the district's CCS-aligned curricular resource.
- Roosevelt has structured common planning sessions to focus on academic, behavioral, attendance, and instructional strategies.
- Family-school partnerships have strengthened through before school and afterschool programs for student academic and social support, that includes translation/interpretation services and educational materials for home to support learning.

### **Continued Areas of Focus:**

- There is a continued need to focus on chronic absenteeism. The school's chronic absenteeism rate increased from 13.9 percent in 2018-19 to 28.2 percent in 2021-22. As of April 2023, the current chronic absenteeism rate is 28.0 percent. Roosevelt would benefit from creating a Multi-Tiered System of Supports for attendance.
- BPS has provided CCS-aligned curricular resources for ELA and mathematics; however, the collected evidence indicates that teachers have not implemented the resources with fidelity. It is recommended that the Roosevelt administration prioritize the implementation of the district's CCS-aligned curricular resources and continue to monitor and provide teachers support.

## **Next Steps:**

During the 2022-23 school year, Roosevelt will continue strategies that have shown steady improvement over the past four years, abandon those that have not, and target areas requiring further growth and development. The CSDE Turnaround Office will provide intensive monitoring and support as Roosevelt enters Year 5 of the Commissioner's Network. The Year 5 plan will prioritize the following:

- Implementation of an instructional framework that incorporates instructional priorities and expectations that promote rigor and coherence, and align with lesson plan templates, district pacing guides, district curriculum scope and sequence, and Tier 1 common formative assessments.
- Implementation of accelerated learning by identifying the required prerequisite skills that students need to access grade level learning and integrating small group instruction and interventionists in Tier 1 instruction for both ELA and mathematics.
- Implementation of district recommendations for mathematic instructional minutes in kindergarten through Grade 6. Roosevelt should maximize instructional time for Grades 7 through 8 for ELA and mathematics to at least sixty minutes.
- Implementation of a MTSS for the protocols and accountability of interventionists, including collaboration with teachers around Tier 1 instruction.
- Provision of professional development that will improve teaching and learning with a focus on Tier 1 reading comprehension, progress monitoring of Tier 1 instruction in ELA and mathematics, and evidence-based instructional strategies to support multilingual learners and students with disabilities in all classrooms.
- Development of a sustainability plan for the interventionists to implement a diagnostic-prescriptive approach for ELA and mathematics intervention/small group instruction for all tiers, including progress monitoring to monitor the effectiveness of the interventions.
- Implementation of a Multi-Tiered System of Supports for attendance to decrease chronic absenteeism.

## **Recommendation:**

The CSDE recommends that the SBE approve an additional year commencing July 1, 2023.

Prepared by:

Margaret Hughes, School Improvement Project  
Manager, Turnaround Office

Approved by:

Irene E. Parisi, Chief Academic Officer