CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford

TO BE PROPOSED:
July 1, 2015

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-223h of the Connecticut General Statutes, as amended by Section 261 of Senate Bill 1502, and subject to final approval, adopts and approves the Turnaround Plan for East Hartford Middle School in East Hartford for the Commissioner's Network, subject to the conditions noted in the Commissioner's July 1, 2015, memorandum 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 first day of July, Two Thousand Fifteen.

Signed: _____
Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Secretary
State Board of Education

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner of Education

DATE: July 1, 2015

SUBJECT: Commissioner's Network Turnaround Plan: East Hartford Middle School

Introduction

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

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

Background

C.G.S. § 10-223h(a) permitted the Commissioner to select up to 25 schools for participation in the Network by July 1, 2014.
- Four "Cohort I" schools are completing their third year of participation in the Network: Curiale School, Bridgeport; High School in the Community, New Haven; Milner School, Hartford; and Stanton School, Norwich.
- Seven "Cohort II" schools are completing their second year of participation in the Network: Briggs High School, Norwalk; Crosby High School, Waterbury; DiLoreto Magnet School, New Britain; Dunbar School, Bridgeport; Walsh School, Waterbury; Wilbur Cross High School, New Haven; and Windham Middle School, Windham.

- Five "Cohort III" schools are completing their first year of participation in the Network: Uncas School, Norwich; Marin School, Bridgeport; O'Brien STEM Academy, East Hartford; Lincoln-Bassett Community School, New Haven; and Clark School, Hartford.

CGS 10-223h was amended by the passage of Senate Bill 1502 in the 2015 Special Session of the General Assembly and is under review by the Governor's Office. Specifically, Section 10-223h, as amended by section 261 of Senate Bill 1502:

- 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 twenty-five 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.

On January 30, 2015, the CSDE received an *Expression of Interest Form* from East Hartford Public Schools (EHPS) volunteering EHMS for participation in the Network. On April 23, 2015, the Commissioner initially selected EHMS for possible participation in the Network based on the following factors: (a) the district's expression of interest; and (b) the academic and developmental needs of the school's students and the capacity of the district to address those needs. Following initial selection, the East Hartford Board of Education and the East Hartford Education Association appointed members to serve on the school's Turnaround Committee, and the CSDE conducted an Operations and Instructional Audit. The Turnaround Committee developed the Turnaround Plan for EHMS in accordance with C.G.S. § 10-223h(d).

Turnaround Plan for EHMS

EHMS serves 1,149 Grade 6 through 8 students. The majority of students (74 percent) are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Sixteen percent of the students are identified as needing special education services, and 10 percent are English learners. Approximately 42 percent of the students are Hispanic and 35 percent are Black. EHMS is one of two middle schools in the EHPS system, though students and families may choose to attend magnet schools outside of the district system and located in surrounding communities. School and district leaders face increasing pressure to establish EHMS as a school of choice for East Hartford families and middle school students. The Turnaround Plan supports that goal.

The size of the school and academic and nonacademic needs of the student population necessitate new and expanded strategies to enhance engagement and improve the quality of

teaching and learning at EHMS. EHMS' students and staff will be organized in six smaller teams to promote engagement and a stronger sense of community. EHMS strives to create personalized learning environments for students and a collaborative, professional environment

for teachers and staff. Leaders and staff will focus intently on ensuring high expectations for students' social and academic development, both inside and outside of the classroom.

The following strategies speak to the transformative nature of the EHMS Turnaround Plan:

Talent:
- High-quality and school-specific professional learning aligned to teacher development areas and student needs;
- Opportunities for teacher leadership;
- Nine professional development days, including two new optional summer days;
- Collaborative planning and data team meetings six times per week;
- Job-embedded coaching aligned to teacher needs and school goals; and
- Distributed leadership model for instruction, climate, and operations.

Academics:
- Common Core-aligned curricula and assessments with continued development in the areas of science, social studies, anchor activities, and unit assessments;
- Team-based academic model;
- Enhanced intervention services for Tier III students struggling with mathematics and/or reading;
- Technology integration across classrooms; and
- Enhanced data collection, analysis, and use.

Culture and Climate:
- Focus on improving attendance and decreasing chronic absenteeism;
- Implementation of PBIS and a tiered behavior-response system;
- New RISE Tier III de-escalation and therapeutic support center;
- Implementation of a new character education curriculum and advisory program;
- Purposeful and academically-oriented family engagement opportunities; and
- Additional social service staff, including a new social worker and a new school psychologist.

Operations:
- A committee to explore possible scheduling changes for 2016-17; and
- Increased technology and facilities improvements.

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

3

Through this budgeting process, East Hartford Public Schools will work to evaluate and repurpose existing funding streams (e.g., local, state, federal, and grants) to support Network reform efforts and foster long-term sustainability. Funding for EHMS is contingent upon the

availability of funds and will be based on the transformative nature of the Turnaround Plan, as well as the size of the school.

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

Next Steps

1. By July 31, 2015, as necessary, negotiations pursuant to C.G.S. § 10-153s have been completed.

2. By July 31, 2015, EHPS shall commit to specific transformation expectations regarding school-level staffing, professional development, academics, enrollment, before- and after-school student programming, budgeting, transportation, facilities, technology, and communication.

3. By July 31, 2015, EHMS shall submit a multi-year action plan for developing heterogeneous teams and classrooms. This will ensure that all students are encouraged to participate in and have access to challenging coursework at the middle school level. This plan must demonstrate high expectations for all EHMS students.

4. By July 31, 2015 (pending the availability of 2014-15 verified data), EHMS and the CSDE shall establish annual performance targets for EHMS aligned to leading and lagging indicators of school turnaround.

5. By August 31, 2015, as necessary, any agreement resulting from the aforementioned negotiations has been submitted for approval and ratified by the members of the exclusive bargaining representative employed by the East Hartford Board of Education, and who have been identified and/or selected to work at EHMS during the 2015-16 school year.

6. The Superintendent or his designee, on behalf of the Turnaround Committee, shall submit plan amendments to the CSDE Turnaround Office on an annual basis in the spring, following school audits, detailing proposed strategies, budget requests, and

implementation timelines for the following school year. The Commissioner or her designee may reconvene the Turnaround Committee to consider annual plan amendments, as appropriate and necessary. If the Committee does not enact plan amendments or the amendments are unlikely to result in sufficient progress or adequately

address implementation concerns, the Commissioner may take appropriate actions to ensure sufficient progress at EHMS, including, but not limited to, developing a revised Turnaround Plan and/or exercising any and all authority prescribed in C.G.S. § 10-223h.

7. EHMS 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.

The deadlines contained in each condition may be subject to revision by the Commissioner.

Recommendation

Pending final review by the Office of the Governor, I recommend that the Board approve the Network Plan for East Hartford Middle School, which would be subject to the successful completion of items 1-7 in the preceding section.

Materials

Please see enclosed:

1. EHMS Audit Report resulting from the Operations and Instructional Audit conducted on May 6, 2015.

2. Turnaround Plan developed and agreed to by the Turnaround Committee.

Prepared by: _____
                Kaylan Ricciardi
                Education Consultant, Turnaround Office

Approved by: _____
                Ellen Cohn
                Interim Chief Academic Officer

The Commissioner's Network
Turnaround Plan Application | Cohort IV

East Hartford Middle School, East Hartford Public Schools

Section 10-223h of the Connecticut General Statutes
Form Number: RFP 803

Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell
Commissioner of Education
Connecticut State Department of Education
165 Capitol Avenue | Hartford, CT 06106
www.sde.ct.gov

CONNECTICUT STATE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

PART I: COMMISSIONER'S NETWORK OVERVIEW

A. 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 schools. The Network offers new resources and authorities to empower teachers and school leaders to implement research-based strategies in schools selected by the Commissioner. Network schools remain part of their local school districts, but the districts and the CSDE secure school-level flexibility and autonomy for the schools in exchange for heightened accountability. Schools participate in the Network for a period of three to five years. At present, there are 16 schools participating in the Network.

Pursuant to C.G.S. § 10-223h(a), on or before July 1, 2014, 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 shall give preference for selection to schools: (a) 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; (b) 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 (c) 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. The Commissioner shall not select more than two schools from a single school district in a single school year and shall not select more than four schools in total from a single district.

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.[1]

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 will:

1. Provide a rigorous needs analysis informed by the operations and instructional audit.

2. Identify an evidence-based turnaround model, aligned to school needs and growth areas.

3. Provide robust strategies to secure, support, develop, evaluate, and retain top talent.

4. Summarize the school's academic model, including curricula, assessments, and data-driven instruction.

---

[1] The CSDE is initiating the planning process for a fourth prospective cohort of Commissioner's Network schools, pending legislative authorization and the appropriation of funds to extend and expand the Network.

5. Outline a comprehensive approach to build a positive school culture and climate.

6. 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.
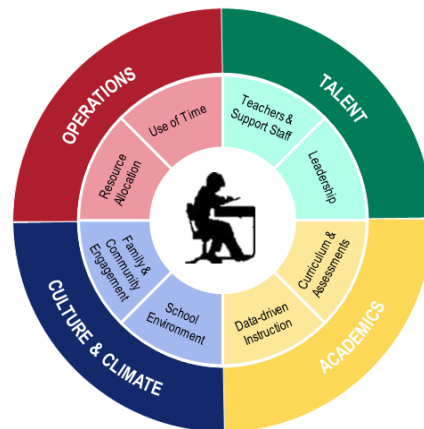
The State Board of Education (SBE) must approve the Turnaround Plan before the school may implement it. Once the Turnaround Plan is approved, Network school leaders will work with the CSDE Turnaround Office, and/or other partners, to operationalize the Turnaround Plan by planning and designing tools, systems, and/or policies including, but not limited to:

1. School bell schedule.

2. School calendar.

3. Annual assessment calendar.

4. Staff evaluation schedule.

5. Professional development calendar.

6. SRBI processes and protocols.

7. School organizational chart.

8. Curricular materials (e.g., lesson plan template, unit plans, pacing guides).

9. School budget.

10. Discipline policy.

11. Calendar of family and community engagement opportunities.

PART II: TURNAROUND PLAN APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

A. Instructions

Please review and follow all directions carefully when completing this application. Please 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, one benchmark meeting with the Commissioner to provide updates on elements of the draft Turnaround Plan as it evolves, and receive formative feedback. Please be prepared to share draft Turnaround Plan components prior to these meetings.

B. Timeline Summary

Consistent with C.G.S. § 10-223h, the Commissioner's Network process is outlined below. As noted, the extension and expansion of the Commissioner's Network requires new legislative authorization; therefore, initial planning activities for a fourth 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 develops the Turnaround Plan.
5. Turnaround Committee reaches consensus or the Commissioner may develop a plan.
6. SBE votes to approve or reject the Turnaround Plan.
7. CSDE and the district collaboratively develop a Network budget proposal.
8. Local board of education negotiates MOUs with collective bargaining units for certified staff, if necessary, to establish the working conditions for the school during its turnaround period.
9. Certified staff identified and/or selected to work at the school ratify MOUs on working conditions, if necessary.
10. CSDE awards resources to the school, depending on available funds.
11. Network school begins implementation of the Turnaround Plan with support from the CSDE.

C. Freedom of Information

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), Section 1-200 et seq. of the Connecticut General Statutes. 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:

Ellen Cohn
Interim Chief Academic Officer
Connecticut State Department of Education
E-mail: Ellen.Cohn@ct.gov

Section 1: Cover Page

Name of School District:	East Hartford Public Schools
Name of School:	East Hartford Middle School
Turnaround Committee Chairperson:[2]	Anne Marie Mancini
Phone # of Chairperson:	860-622-5096
E-mail of Chairperson:	mancini.am@easthartford.org

Address of Chairperson:	Street Address:	1110 Main Street		
	City:	East Hartford	Zip Code:	06108

Name of School Board Chairperson:	Bryan Hall		
Signature of School Board Chairperson:[3]		Date:	
Name of Superintendent:	Nathan D. Quesnel		
Signature of Superintendent:		Date:	

---

[2] 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.

[3] 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.

2.1. NEEDS AND ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS

Instructions: Using the spaces provided, please identify the school's greatest strengths and growth areas based on the results of the operations and instructional audit. Add/Delete rows, as necessary. Provide specific data points to support the analysis and include root causes for each of the identified growth areas.

Summarize the school's greatest strengths as identified in the operations and instructional audit:

Strengths:	Data and Evidence:
Talent:	
East Hartford Middle School (EHMS) has a strong leadership team. Administrators have effectively communicated a vision, mission, and goals for the school community.	▪ Network survey results indicate that 82% of teachers agree with the statement: "School leaders effectively communicate a clear mission, vision, and set of school-wide priorities." ▪ EHMS has a clear plan for professional development, which is aligned to the District and School Improvement Plans. ▪ Excluding retirements and promotions, only two teachers have left EHMS in the last three years.
Academics:	
The school has established clear instructional expectations for every teacher and classroom. The implementation of these standards is supported through professional development and coaching. Student progress is monitored throughout the year using Renaissance Learning's STAR reading and mathematics assessments. The results are reviewed by teachers during instructional data team meetings and the school-wide data team process.	▪ According to the Network Audit: "Teachers spoke knowledgably about the school's instructional model." ▪ All classrooms visited had the instructional expectations posted. ▪ According to the Network Audit: "Teachers and school leaders have described an emerging data culture." Auditors saw STAR data posted in all classrooms. ▪ Network Survey results indicate that 78% of teachers agree with the statement: "The school consistently uses data to measure student progress, identify necessary interventions, and provide teachers with data to perform instruction."
Culture and Climate:	
EHMS has developed strong relationships with students and families. The school offers a range of family activities throughout the year. The school building houses a school-based health center and the district's Community Resource Center. The school offers a wide variety of athletic teams, as well as a comprehensive music program. The administration and staff at EHMS have worked hard to improve student	▪ EHMS has an active School Governance Council, which meets monthly. ▪ Administrators meet biweekly with teachers and students and quarterly with parents. ▪ Family activities offered during the year include, but are not limited to, Family Fun Night, Awards Night, School Orientation, Open House, conferences, sporting events, and instrumental and choral concerts. ▪ Approximately 40% of the students participate in the band or chorus. ▪ Students receive physical education/health and band five days per week, along with individual music lessons. ▪ EHMS' daily attendance rate improved from 91% (2013-14) to

Strengths:	Data and Evidence:
behavior and the rate of chronic absenteeism. EHMS has implemented a safe school climate program that features three components: positive behavioral interventions and support (PBIS), school safety, and bullying prevention.	92% (2014-15 year-to-date). Chronic absenteeism decreased from 13% (2013-14) to 11% (2014-15 year-to-date). ▪ Although incidents of out-of school suspensions (OSS) have increased slightly this year, the rate of in-school suspensions (ISS) and OSS over the last three years has reduced significantly. ▪ The school has developed an attendance taskforce and a hallway taskforce. ▪ EHMS has two school resource officers. ▪ EHMS has implemented a robust incentive program for students through its PBIS program to recognize positive behavior (e.g. Flying Falcons).
Operations:	
The principal and the leadership team have established strong systems protocols to support smooth school operations. EHMS's schedule allows teachers ample time for personal planning and collaboration.	▪ Auditors observed smooth and orderly morning arrivals, transitions between classes, and dismissals. ▪ Teachers have six planning periods per week.

Summarize and provide a root cause analysis for the school's most significant growth areas as identified in the operations and instructional audit:

Growth Areas:	Data, Evidence, and Root Causes:
Talent:	
Instructional quality at EHMS is inconsistent. Coaching supports are spread thin and limited to mathematics, and student achievement necessitates a greater focus on and investment in instruction.	▪ Through funding secured through the Alliance District grant, EHMS hired one math instructional coach. According to the STAR results, math scores increased by an average of 6% during the 2014-15 year. ▪ EHMS lacks coaching supports in all grade levels and content areas. Auditors observed variable instructional quality, particularly in the areas of rigor and differentiation. ▪ According to the audit, some staff members demonstrate an aversion to change and anxiety associated with the school's continued evolution. Implementation of the school-wide instructional standards is somewhat compliance-based.
Academics:	
To align with the Connecticut Core Standards and prepare students for college and career success, the level of rigor and differentiation in classrooms at EHMS must improve.	▪ According to the STAR math data, 41% of students did not meet the proficiency benchmark in 2014-15. ▪ According to the STAR reading data, 65% of the students did not meet the proficiency benchmark in 2014-15. ▪ According to the Network Audit, "Six of the seven classrooms visited were teacher-led" and "rigor and differentiation were lacking in most classrooms." Teachers may lack strategies in these areas.

Growth Areas:	Data, Evidence, and Root Causes:
	▪ In prior years, student placement on leveled teams may have limited all students' access to rigorous coursework.
Culture and Climate:	
Despite recent improvements, chronic absenteeism and student behavior remain continued growth areas.	▪ According to the Network Audit: "Teachers, administrators, and parents expressed a desire for more social service staff." ▪ At day 135 of the 2014-15 school year, EHMS had 132 students who were chronically absent. More work is needed to understand the contributing factors for these students' absences. ▪ Although incidents of ISS are down 8% from the 2013-14 year, incidents of OSS have increased by 5%. Teachers cited some confusion regarding behavior protocols. ▪ EHMS lacks a formal character education program.
Operations:	
EHMS lacks technology to support student instruction. EHMS is an old building requiring facility upgrades (e.g. bathrooms, floors, lockers).	▪ According to an audit conducted by the district's Director of Technology, all of the computers in the school are six years old or older. Many classrooms lack SmartBoards, and all of the computers in the existing labs require replacement. ▪ According to the Network Audit: "Students and teachers commented on bathroom cleanliness and functionality; students noted that some students avoid using bathrooms during school hours."

2.2. ACCOUNTABILITY METRICS AND PERFORMANCE TARGETS

Instructions: Network school progress will be measured against the leading and lagging indicators identified in the below chart. Under the "Baseline and Historic Data" columns, please enter school data for each of the past three years. Please do not enter targets in the "Performance Targets" columns; targets will be determined in collaboration with the CSDE and school leader after the SBE's approval of the Turnaround Plan.

Performance Indicators	Baseline/Historic			Current*	Performance Targets	
	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Student enrollment	1,050	1,040	1,101			
Average daily attendance rate	91.2%	91.2%	91.4%			
Chronic absenteeism rate	14.6%	13.0%	13.1%			
In-school suspensions as a proportion of enrollment	27.8%	25.1%	22%			
Out-of-school suspensions as a proportion of enrollment	23%	17%	14.6%			
School Performance Index (SPI)	65.0	61.7	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Smarter Balanced Assessment Data	To be added.					

Performance Indicators	Baseline/Historic			Current *	Performance Targets	
	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Number of teachers rated "Exemplary"	N/A	N/A	24			
Number of teachers rated "Proficient"	N/A	N/A	68			
Number of teachers rated "Developing"	N/A	N/A	5			
Number of teachers rated "Below Standard"	N/A	N/A	0			

*2014-15 data will be added once collected and verified by the CSDE's Performance Office.

2.3. TURNAROUND MODEL

Instructions: Please select one of the turnaround models described in C.G.S. § 10-223h(d), as amended by Public Act 13-64 § 2. Using the space provided, describe the core components of the model that pertain to talent, academics, culture and climate, and operations.

Through participation in the Commissioner's Network, EHMS will enhance teaching and learning through a team-based model. Research suggests that smaller learning communities offer many benefits. First, because teachers share the same students, they develop strong relationships with students and one another. This promotes increased learning through sustained contact, personalized connections, and fewer disciplinary interruptions. Second, teaming allows teachers to coordinate curricula across the disciplines, allowing students to make connections across subject areas and to engage in meaningful learning experiences. Third, teaming allows teachers to create shared expectations, plan collaboratively, and engage in reflective practices. Finally, teaming affords teachers the flexibility to create schedules that support learning goals and teaching strategies.

EHMS is a large facility, with more than 100 teachers serving approximately 1,200 students in Grades 6 through 8. By teaming, EHMS seeks to create "schools within the school." EHMS strives to create personalized learning environments for students and a collaborative, professional environment for teachers and staff. Each team will have approximately 200 students, a unique name (named after an area college to promote a college-going culture), specific extended learning experiences, and opportunities for honors-level classes. EHMS will strengthen its team-based model to achieve the aforementioned goals. Students and staff will be divided into six smaller learning communities within the larger EHMS campus structure. The six teams will consist of approximately 200 students each in Grades 6 through 8.

The team structure will create a more engaging and community-oriented learning environment. Students and teachers will have the opportunity to forge deeper relationships rooted in high expectations for teaching and learning. The EHMS campus will come together for important community-building purposes (e.g., sports, extracurricular activities, teacher collaboration); however, the team structure will strengthen core courses and instruction. This Turnaround Plan includes investments in the areas of talent, academics, culture and climate, and operations, ensuring that EHMS maximizes the potential of its students and staff.

East Hartford values its teachers, leaders, and staff and understands the central role staff play in the improvement process. Section 3 of this plan outlines a number of strategies to ensure EHMS recruits, identifies, develops, and retains an exceptional teaching and support staff. Core talent strategies include:

- High-quality and school-specific professional learning;
- Opportunities for teacher leadership;

- Collaborative planning six times per week;
- Job-embedded coaching aligned to teacher needs and school goals; and
- Distributed leadership model.

EHMS's improvement process will focus heavily on strengthening the instructional core, including curriculum, instruction, and assessments. As described in Section 4 of this plan, core academic strategies include:

- Common Core-aligned curricula and assessments;
- Team-based academic model;
- Enhanced intervention services;
- Technology integration across classrooms; and
- Enhanced data protocols.

EHMS will cultivate a strong learning environment where students, teachers, and families take pride in their school. Section 5 of this plan includes the following core culture and climate strategies:

- Focus on attendance and chronic absenteeism;
- Implementation of PBIS and a tiered behavior-response system;
- RISE Tier III de-escalation and therapeutic support;
- Character education;
- Purposeful family engagement opportunities; and
- Additional social service staff.

This plan will be supported and enabled by several important improvements to school operations. As presented in Section 6, such improvements include:

- A committee comprised of administration, teachers, team leaders, and school counselors explore possible scheduling changes for 2016-17; and
- Increased technology.

3.1. TEACHERS

Instructions: Using the space provided:
1. Explain how the district and school will cultivate a professional learning environment to attract, support, develop, and retain high-quality teachers;
2. Explain how administrators will have the ability to staff the school based exclusively on student and programmatic needs; and
3. Describe how teachers will be evaluated on an annual basis to inform professional development offerings and staffing decisions.

Recruitment and Hiring: EHMS employs multiple strategies to recruit and retain high-quality teachers. East Hartford Public Schools (EHPS) participates in job fairs organized by local regional educational service centers (RESCs) and higher education institutions. EHPS maintains a comprehensive internship program in collaboration with several universities. These provide EHMS with opportunities to meet potential employees, interview them, and see them interact with students in classrooms. The EHMS principal has the authority to recommend new employees for hire, pending central office approval. EHMS is committed to starting each school year fully staffed. Relatedly, EHMS administrators focus intently on retaining top staff to promote continuity and local talent investments.

Teacher Leadership: EHPS and EHMS offer a robust career ladder for teachers ready and willing to explore leadership opportunities. For example, experienced teachers serve as mentors to beginning instructors. The district offers a Teacher Leadership Academy program in collaboration with the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS). EHMS also offers building-based teacher leadership roles, including team, committee, and program leaders. Teachers are encouraged to create and lead initiatives and special projects (e.g., securing grants, facilitating professional development, leading a student club).

Evaluation: Implementation of evaluations at EHMS will be objective, timely, fair, and consequential. Importantly, results from the evaluation process will also inform school and district professional development offerings throughout the year. EHPS' district-wide Educator Evaluation and Professional Development Plan supports the growth and development of all staff. Each year, the plan is reviewed with teachers, highlighting important aspects, such as goal-setting and new components, including the Connecticut Core of Teaching (CCT) rubric in 2014. During the course of the year, school administrators and department heads devote time during staff meetings to review important aspects of the plan that align with the district's timeline. For example, in March and April, the expectations for the summative self-assessment and conference are discussed in depth and teachers are provided with examples to assist them in their preparation.

In addition to formal evaluations, school and district administrators also conduct informal classroom walkthroughs to provide teachers with formative feedback. The principal, assistant principals, and district content supervisors collaboratively conduct classroom observations and will use this process and develop a set of "look fors" to ensure forward momentum in instruction.

Professional Learning: EHMS teachers will receive nine days of professional development during the 2015-16 school year. This includes two district-wide PD days, two new school-based volunteer July PD days, two full days, and six half days of school-based PD throughout the school year. District administrators review the results of the annual PDEC survey and teacher evaluation data to plan two full-day, district-wide PD days. These sessions include choice-based workshop sessions, as well as required sessions for certified staff (e.g. Writer's

Workshop, Common Core Mathematical Practices). School-based PD sessions will be planned and facilitated by school administrators, department supervisors, teachers, and/or school-based instructional coaches. PD over the last two years focused intensely on intentional instructional planning. Department supervisors reinforced school-wide PD through aligned content-specific sessions. In 2015-16, PD focus areas will include:

- Data-informed differentiation;
- Academic rigor and Depth of Knowledge questioning strategies;
- Differentiation;
- Small-group instruction and independent practice;
- Bringing lesson objectives to life;
- PBIS and character education; and
- Student discourse and academic conversations.

In addition to formal PD sessions, teachers participate in collaborative planning six times per week. The chart below outlines the frequency and purpose of collaborative planning sessions.

Collaborative Planning:	Times/Week:	Facilitator:	Purpose:
Instructional Data Team	2	District Content Supervisor	- Analyze academic data - Plan interventions - Discuss academic pacing - Review curricula and assessments - Plan common lessons
Team Meetings	3	Team Leader	- Analyze behavior and attendance data - Discuss student progress - Plan team-wide activities
School-Wide Committee Meetings (e.g., attendance, technology, family engagement)	1	Committee Leader	- Analyze pertinent data - Design and lead the implementation of school-wide strategies aligned to committee focus (e.g., attendance, technology, family engagement)

Instructional Coaching: EHMS will invest heavily in three full-time instructional coaches:

1. A mathematics coach (existing position);
2. An English language arts coach (new position); and
3. A science/humanities coach (new position).

Coaches will collaborate with school-based administrators and district content supervisors to develop and implement a strong coaching system. Coaches and administrators will work to ensure all teachers have a formal evaluator and informal coach (e.g., principal, AP, coach, district supervisor). Coaches will support a caseload of teachers. Coaches will employ a coaching cycle whereby the coach visits a teacher's classroom, meets with the teacher to an identify an action step, and supports the teacher in achieving the action step. The frequency and the type of coaching support will depend on each teacher's experience level and developmental needs. Through ongoing collaboration with and input from teachers and team leaders, coaches will provide frequent and embedded coaching through model lessons, co-teaching, observations, and debriefing sessions. Coaches will also help to lead, structure, and facilitate common planning time and school-based professional development. Importantly, Network funding will seed new positions, and EHMS will gradually assume costs for new positions.

3.2. ADMINISTRATORS

Instructions: Using the space provided:
1. Describe the process to secure an exceptional school principal with a track record of success, preferably in school turnaround and/or an urban school environment;
2. Explain how administrators will be evaluated on an annual basis to inform leadership staffing decisions; and
3. Describe ongoing supports and coaching opportunities for school leadership.

Distributed Leadership: EHMS will institute a distributed leadership model to empower teachers and leaders, and divide responsibilities among administrators. The chart below summarizes school leadership positions and key roles and responsibilities.

Leader:	Primary Responsibilities:
Principal	• Building management/oversight • District and community engagement • Administrator and teacher evaluation • Teacher coaching • PD design and facilitation
Assistant Principals (3 FTEs)	• Teacher evaluation • Teacher coaching • Team oversight • Operations/Behavior management • Instructional collaboration with Department Supervisors, instructional coaches, team leaders, and teachers
Instructional Coaches (3 FTEs)	• Teacher coaching • PD design and facilitation • Curriculum, assessment, intervention, and data leadership • Common planning/data team meeting facilitation support
District Content Supervisors (Shared with EHHS)	• Teacher evaluation • Teacher coaching • PD design and facilitation • Curriculum, assessment, intervention, and data leadership • Common planning/data team meeting facilitation support
Team Leaders (12 FTEs)	• Team meeting facilitation • Team leadership • School leadership liaison • Curriculum, assessment, and intervention, as needed on team
Committee Leaders	• Committee meeting facilitation • Committee (e.g., attendance, technology, family engagement) leadership • School leadership liaison

To ensure close communication and collaboration, school leaders will meet periodically:

Meeting:	Frequency:	Attendees:	Purpose:
School Leadership Team	Weekly	• Principal • APs	• School operations • School priorities
Instructional Leadership Team	Biweekly	• Principal • Coaches • District content supervisor • Team Leaders, when appropriate	• Academic data • Classroom walkthrough data • Instructional/Academic priorities
School-Wide Data Team	Monthly	• Principal • APs • Committee leaders	• Nonacademic data • Team priorities • Committee progress • School-wide communication • Instructional decision-making and goal-setting

Principal: Mr. Menard has served as the principal of EHMS since 2012. Mr. Menard participated in an interview and selection process to become school principal and previously served as the school's first assistant principal for three years. In 2013, Mr. Menard was recognized as a Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) Outstanding First Year Principal. In addition, under his leadership, EHMS was recognized by the New England League of Middle Schools (NELMS) as a Spotlight School.

Leadership Evaluation and Development: All school administrators employed by EHPS are evaluated according to its Administrator Evaluation and Professional Development Plan. Tenured administrators are observed two times during the academic year. Administrators participate in midyear and summative meetings. After both meetings, administrators receive oral and written feedback. After the summative meeting, administrators receive an official rating.

The principal meets monthly with his supervisor, the Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Schools, to report on the progress toward his SLOs and focus areas. Mr. Menard participated in and successfully completed the LEAD Connecticut program during the 2013-14 year.

4.1. CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENTS

Instructions: Using the space provided:
1. Describe the school's academic program and instructional philosophy, including the process to ensure alignment to the Common Core State Standards and next-generation assessments; and
2. Describe the school's early literacy strategy, including targeted interventions.

Curriculum: EHPS and EHMS have adopted curricula fully aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). EHPS and EHMS have developed units of study for reading, writing, social studies and science for Grades 6-8 under the guidance of district coaches and Larry Ainsworth (*Rigorous Curriculum Design*). The mathematics curriculum was developed using the CCSS units made available by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE). Dr. Shelbi Cole, former EHPS staff member and current Deputy Director of Content for the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, is supporting the development of anchor activities and unit assessments. Laurie Pendleton from ReVision Learning and The Leadership & Learning Center is supporting curricular development work in science and social studies. During summer/fall 2015, EHMS will engage in a curriculum audit to identify gap areas and prioritize curriculum development needs.

CCSS Curriculum Training and Teacher Resources: In making the transition to the CCSS and the Next-Generation Assessments, EHMS teachers received targeted PD and resources. Reading teachers utilize Janet Allen's Plugged-in to Reading as the core resource, and the school has adopted the "Elite 8" strategies for ensuring reading across the disciplines. EHPS has identified additional resources to support mathematics (AP Springboard from The College Board) and writing instruction (Columbia Writer's Model Units of Study). *The Workshop Model is Common Core-aligned. The Workshop Model is a planned, sequential, explicit writing program that gives students repeated opportunities to practice different kinds of writing and receive explicit, assessment-informed feedback at frequent intervals.* The middle school Units of Study provide a coherent, systematic curriculum in the three types of writing mandated by the CCSS —*opinion/argument, information,* and *narrative writing*— and it reflects the latest research on data-based, responsive instruction. The College Board's Springboard resource leverages instructional strategies supporting CCSS content and practice standards. Springboard's instructional approach emphasizes mathematical reasoning and communication while providing more practice to build procedural fluency. Additional PD around the CCSS and the Smarter Balanced Assessments will be provided by department heads. Educators gain knowledge and skills through CSDE-sponsored CCSS trainings, as well as national and local conferences. Teachers will have the ability to offer input and suggest changes to refine the curriculum, making it more accessible for all students at different ability levels. Teachers will communicate with department supervisors regarding the choice of instructional materials and tools necessary to teach specific skills and concepts to ensure rigor and differentiation in all subject areas. Teachers will also communicate with department supervisors regarding curriculum pace.

Intentional Instructional Planning: EHMS has established an instructional philosophy in alignment with the implementation of the CCSS. In an effort to encourage intentional instructional planning, teachers are required to identify and post the lesson objective, provide an agenda, engage students in a warm-up/Do Now, and conclude lessons with an exit activity. They are also asked to plan lessons that incorporate specific questions utilizing the Depth of Knowledge (DOK) guidelines, as well as opportunities for student discourse. This template provides a structure for a daily plan that encourages student engagement, formative assessment, and academic conversations. Teachers will have the ability to assess student needs and tailor instruction to teach specific skills and concepts, as necessary. This will give teachers the ability to spend more or less time on specific skills based on student performance and understanding.

Curriculum Monitoring: EHPS has two main ways for monitoring the implementation of the district's curriculum and instruction. In the secondary schools, the district monitors curriculum and instruction through the use of an academic walkthrough; these occur three times per year in each school. Under each model, principals provide the visiting team with an overview of the school's area of focus; reviewers collect data, discuss trends, and identify next steps for improvement. Schools then receive comprehensive feedback, which is shared with staff. The information gained from these experiences has been very valuable to the schools and the district as a whole. For example, results collected as a part of academic walkthroughs conducted at EHMS show that 98% of teachers had a clear instructional plan in June 2015, as evidence by posted objectives, agendas, and initiation and exit activities. This is a substantial increase from October 2014 when results indicated that only 50% showed any evidence of intentional instructional planning. These two monitoring systems have also had a positive decrease in the amount of teacher-directed instruction in district schools. The information gathered during monitoring visits will be disseminated to department chairs to share with their departments in data team meetings. Based on the data collected, department chairs will work in conjunction with teachers to determine next steps for the department.

Tiered Interventions: In alignment with the district's mission -- "To deliver a high quality learning experience for *Every Child, Every Day*"-- EHMS has established interventions for students who are not able to meet the identified proficiency levels in reading and mathematics. The school utilizes both certified teachers and tutors to support children in need of growth. Although the STAR results indicate there is a significant number of students who are in need of math and literacy intervention (approximately 50% of the school population in math and 65% in reading), EHMS does not currently have sufficient staffing to meet the children's needs. The school does have a tiered intervention system for reading and math:

Tier	Reading	Mathematics
Tier 1	District CCSS-aligned curriculum Resource: Plugged-in to Reading	CSDE CCSS curriculum Resource: Springboard Math
Tier 2	Read 180	Math "80-20" Math Excellence Lab (MEL)
Tier 3	Lexia Reading Interventionist	Math Interventionist

In summer/fall 2015, EHMS will work to create a menu of research-based interventions by tier on a continuum. Through the Network grant, EHMS plans to hire additional interventionists to provide targeted one-on-one and small group instruction for students needing targeted support (i.e., performing below grade level). As noted, EHMS will provide PD for all teachers around differentiated Tier I core instruction in an effort to reduce the percentage of students requiring targeted Tier II and III interventions. For example, through PD, teachers will learn how to access and incorporate leveled texts.

Team-Based Academic Model: As noted, EHMS students and staff will be divided into six smaller teams of approximately 200 students each in Grades 6 through 8. Each academy will be staffed with two English, one math, one social studies, one science, and other content teachers. During the 2015-16 school year, students will have 7 classes per day (46 minutes per class), including daily English, math, science, social studies, and other related classes, such as physical education/health, technology, and the arts. Reading and writing teachers will work to increase alignment between courses. Each team will be heterogeneously grouped and offer advanced coursework and interventions for students. Students will be scheduled for interventions, as needed, during the school day. Students will not be removed from Tier 1 instruction to receive Tier 2 and 3 supports. Efforts will be made to minimize the time students miss courses (e.g., social studies, health/PE, and other unified arts) for interventions.

4.2. DATA-DRIVEN INSTRUCTION

Instructions: Using the space provided:
1. Describe how staff will use data to inform lesson plans, differentiate instruction, and provide remedial support to meet the academic and development needs of all students; and
2. Describe ongoing professional development opportunities to build staff capacity around the collection, analysis, and use of data to drive and differentiate instruction.

Assessment System: EHPS and EHMS implement nationally-normed STAR assessments in reading and mathematics three times per year in Grades 6, 7, and 8. STAR assessments are online and adaptive, similar to the Smarter Balanced Assessment testing format. Teachers, leaders, and students use STAR assessment data to monitor progress and identify gap areas. STAR assessments measure student, class, cohort, and school-wide progress and growth relative to a national data-set of students with similar demographics. STAR assessments can be used to pinpoint skill and content deficiencies, and provide some predictive data relative to the Smarter Balanced summative assessments. Data teams will work to develop common formative assessments, as needed, aligned to Smarter Balanced assessments to diagnose areas of strength and weakness, and drive future instruction.

Data Culture: EHMS teachers and leaders are committed to using data to personalize and differentiate instruction to meet students' individual learning needs. Teachers meet twice weekly for instructional data team meetings. Working with district content supervisors, teachers unpack and analyze STAR data, as well as data from classroom formative assessments. During instructional data team meetings, teachers will use a clear agenda and collaboratively agree upon assessment tools, protocols, and meeting roles. Teachers also use data team meetings to collaborate in an item analysis process, identifying common skill gaps and skill deficiencies. Teachers discuss and develop lessons, strategies, and assessments to advance teaching and learning in their own classrooms. Teachers bring student work and classroom artifacts to data team meetings, ensuring that conversations are grounded in practice. During the 2015-16 school year, EHMS coaches and administrators will collaborate with teachers to define and strengthen expectations, protocols, and reporting requirements for data team meetings, ensuring the maximum impact of these meetings. Math intervention needs are determined each semester, and reading intervention needs (i.e., Read 180) are determined annually (i.e., until a student tests out of the program).

A school-wide data team meets once per month with representatives from the various content areas and teams. During the 2015-16 school year, this team will solicit and utilize input from data teams in order to oversee the school improvement plan and its implementation. This representative group analyzes school-wide data trends (e.g., behavior, attendance, chronic absenteeism, academic growth, academic proficiency). The team maintains a school-wide and longitudinal lens for analysis. This team will assist with preparing "State of the School" reports every 45 days, presenting progress reports to the staff, and leading staff in a planning process informed by the data.

5.1. SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURE

Instructions: Using the space provided, describe the school's behavior management system and strategies to shape a positive school culture.

Expectations and Positive Reinforcements: EHMS will strengthen school-wide implementation of the Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) model by seeking input from the PBIS coordinator, PBIS committee, team leaders, teachers, and other school leadership. EHMS will create a culture that celebrates, expects, and encourages strong character, and positive behaviors and interactions. Students/Classrooms/Teams will earn rewards for laudable behaviors; faculty and staff will norm around what warrants such awards and incentives. Students/Classrooms/Teams can identify ways to earn incentives (e.g., prizes, activities, pizza parties). This approach supports and creates camaraderie, positive peer encouragement, and character development. EHMS will educate families around positive behavior management, so as to ensure home-school consistency and reinforcement. The staff Behavior Committee will lead the design and implementation of the school's PBIS system. Teachers and leaders will proactively teach, post, and reinforce behavioral expectations, including in different locations and during different times of the school day.

Tiered Behavior Management/RISE Intervention: In addition to positive reinforcement, the PBIS coordinator, PBIS committee, and school leaders will design and implement a tiered response to behavioral infractions. The tiered system will clearly articulate common infractions (e.g., teasing, swearing, physical altercations) and the range of consequences for each infraction. The Safe School Climate Team will lead the design and implementation of the tiered behavior management system, promoting staff buy-in and fidelity in implementation. The Safe School Climate Team will monitor student behavior data and apply targeted supports and interventions, as needed.

Students requiring "Tier III" behavior interventions will participate in the RISE program (Restore, Inspire, Sustain, and Educate). Students receiving RISE interventions will receive therapeutic counseling and support. Students will be temporarily removed from their classroom to work with an adult who can help them to address and resolve the root causes of the classroom outburst. This approach will ensure the student is ready to reenter the classroom without unnecessarily disrupting teaching and learning for the other students in the classroom. During fall 2015, staff will develop a comprehensive plan for RISE, including student referral criteria, support programming, data collection and analysis, and exit criteria.

Additional Social Services Staff: EHMS plans to increase nonacademic support staff through participation in the Commissioner's Network. EHMS currently has 1.5 Social Workers and plans to add 1 FTE, allowing for .5 FTE to support Grade 6, 1.0 FTE for Grade 7, and 1.0 FTE for Grade 8. The social workers will employ a case management approach working with students and families to address social, health, and wellness needs and challenges that may be impeding a student's academic development. A new psychologist (1.0 FTE) will provide full-time support for students receiving the RISE intervention. He/she will provide therapeutic de-escalation services, quickly moving students back to the classroom setting after addressing root issues. The nonacademic support team will work with administrators to design school-wide PD sessions, building teacher and staff capacity to address behavior challenges that may arise in the classroom or common spaces. Importantly, the Network grant will seed new positions, and EHPS will ensure their long-term sustainability by moving positions to the local budget over time (e.g., 25% in YR 2 and 50% in YR 3).

Character Education: The PBIS committee, PBIS coordinator, and school leaders will research and select a

character education curriculum to develop students' 21st century skills and character. Monthly advisory classes will be organized and executed within teams to promote strong student-teacher relationships. The advisory period will be dedicated to character education, interdisciplinary skills, and college and career readiness.

Focus on Attendance: The staff Attendance Committee will work with school leadership, the PBIS committee, and the PBIS coordinator to design and lead the implementation of strategies to address attendance and chronic absenteeism. The Attendance Committee and each of the six teams will monitor attendance and chronic absenteeism data and apply targeted supports and interventions, as needed. Staff and community partners will employ a number of strategies to promote daily attendance and on-time student arrival. Strategies may include:

- Full-time attendance officer to work with students and families and to monitor daily attendance;
- Attendance committee meeting to analyze data and plan the roll-out of targeted strategies to promote student attendance;
- Notification system for parents about their children's attendance record and increasing communication of sanctions as the student approaches/surpasses truant status;
- Daily phone calls home by school personnel and/or the parent liaison by 10:00 AM to inquire as to when absent/tardy students will arrive at school;
- Check-in/check-out system for students who are chronically absent from school (i.e., assigning chronically absent students to an adult mentor in the school);
- School-wide, classroom, team, and student celebrations for weekly and monthly perfect attendance; and
- Engaging instruction and a welcoming school environment that make students want to attend school on a daily basis.

5.2. FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Instructions: Using the space provided, explain how the school will promote strong family and community connections to support academic achievement.

School Governance Council: EHMS will continue to convene and leverage its SGC, particularly as the school begins implementation of its Commissioner's Network plan. The SGC -- which includes approximately 25 teachers, parents, leaders, and community members -- will provide important feedback and implementation support. The SGC provides guidance and advice to school leadership on important governance decisions.

Community Resource Center: EHMS will continue to leverage its Community Resource Center to provide a welcoming place in the school for parents and family members, particularly those who are bilingual. EHMS strives to create a welcoming learning environment where all students and families are excited to visit the school. The Community Resource Center provides students with informational materials and serves as a venue for family events at the school. Serving all members of the community, the Community Resource Center also provides local and state resources, referrals and support services to East Hartford residents.

Family and Community Engagement Opportunities: EHMS offers a variety of meaningful family engagement events throughout the school year. For example, last year, EHMS hosted a number of open houses, concerts, sporting events, and family fun nights. It is not uncommon for EHMS to draw upwards of 1000 parents and family members to these events. Next year, EHMS will work to increase the academic nature of family events. For example, staff will look to engage families (in fun and meaningful ways) around academic standards, their

student's progress, and strategies to reinforce learning and behaviors outside of school hours. In addition to the EHMS Open House and the one night of parent conferences, each team may organize an academically/team-oriented family event. Additionally, the staff Family Engagement Committee will develop a family engagement and communication calendar for the 2015-16 school year. This committee will work with community partners and business leaders to identify and leverage the many assets in the surrounding community (i.e., volunteers, mentors, donations, fundraising).

6.1. SCHEDULE AND USE OF TIME

Instructions: Using the space provided:
1. Propose the length of the school day and year for students, and describe how the proposed schedule will maximize instructional time on task; and
2. Propose the length of the school day and year for staff, including additional time before and during the school year for professional development and/or common planning time.
3. The teacher work day and work year will be in accordance with the existing collective bargaining unit including the start and end tome of the school day.

Technology: EHMS is committed to preparing all students for success in the colleges and careers of their choosing. This means that EHMS must strengthen technology integration in daily lessons. EHMS plans to increase hardware and software throughout the building through Network and bond grant investments. Specially, EHMS plans to make technology investments in the following areas:

- Data wiring and memory upgrade
- World language lab—update the existing configuration
- Replace 4 computer labs
- Replace 2 Read 180 rooms
- Add 2 math intervention rooms
- Add 3 new computer labs
- 70 ipads—including 2 multi-unit charging stations, OtterBoxes, and cables for docking station
- 18 Smart Boards
- Hardware and software for intervention classrooms
- Multimedia library center

A staff Technology Committee and instructional coaches will support teachers in using technology in new and innovative ways to strengthen their daily lessons. The Technology Committee and coaches will design and lead PD sessions and co-teach lessons to strengthen teachers' familiarity and comfort levels using technology.

Schedule: EHMS will implement a 7-period daily schedule with 46-minute class periods (please reference p. 21). The teacher work day is and will be in accordance with the existing collective bargaining agreement, including daily start and end times. Below, please find a copy of the 2015-16 schedule. Beginning in fall 2015, administrators will facilitate a staff committee to review the current schedule and begin planning for any scheduling improvements during the 2016-17 school year. Please reference the "Talent" section for more information about staff collaborative planning time.

2015-2016 Schedule
Regular Day Schedule M/W/Th (47 Minute Period/ 28 Minute Lunch)

Period	Common Bells	Yale 7/8; RISE	UConn 7/8; Trinity	CCSU 7/8; Wesleyan 8	Conn College; UNH
Warning Bell(s)	8:05/8:09				
Homeroom	8:10-8:18				
Period 1	8:22-9:09				
Period 2	9:13-10:00				
	10:04	Lunch 10:04-10:32	Period 3 10:04-10:51	Period 3 10:04-10:51	Period 3 10:04-10:51
	10:51	Period 3 10:34-11:21			
	10:55		Lunch 10:55-11:23	Period 4 10:55-11:42	Period 4 10:55-11:42
	12:12	Period 4 11:25-12:12	Period 4 11:25-12:12		
				Lunch 11:44-12:12	Period 5 11:46-12:33
	12:16	Period 5 12:16-1:03	Period 5 12:16-1:03	Period 5 12:16-1:03	
	1:03				Lunch 12:35-1:03
Period 6	1:07-1:54				
Period 7	1:58-2:45				

Activity Day Schedule T/F (41 Minute Periods/ 39 Minute Activity Period)

Period	Bells	Yale 7/8; RISE	UConn; 7/8	CCSU 7/8; Wesleyan 8	Conn College; UNH
Warning Bell	8:05/8:09				
Homeroom	8:10-8:17				
Period 1	8:21-9:02				
Period 2	9:06-9:47				
Activity	9:51-10:30				
	10:34	Lunch 10:34-11:02	Period 3 10:34-11:15	Period 3 10:34-11:15	Period 3 10:34-11:15
	11:15	Period 3 11:04-11:45			
	11:19		Lunch 11:19-11:47	Period 4 11:19-12:00	Period 4 11:19-12:00
	12:30	Period 4 11:49-12:30	Period 4 11:49-12:30	Lunch 12:02-12:30	Period 5 12:04-12:45
	12:34	Period 5 12:34-1:15	Period 5 12:34-1:15	Period 5 12:34-1:15	
	1:15				Lunch 12:47-1:15
Period 6	1:19-2:00				
Period 7	2:04-2:45				

6.2. 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). In addition, the school is invited to submit a bond funding proposal to the CSDE for approval by the Commissioner and the State Bond Commission.

Instructions: After SBE approval, please collaborate with the CSDE to create a one-year budget proposal outlining new costs associated with the Turnaround Plan and leveraging all available funding sources.

1. **Budget Cover Page:** Please enter the school name on the cover sheet. The remaining cells summarizing the entire budget workbook will be auto-generated as you complete the Network proposal and bond request; do not enter cost information on the cover page.

2. **Part I: Commissioner's Network Year 1 Budget Proposal:** Please insert information pertaining to the proposed Commissioner's Network budget for the school. The budget should reflect all new expenditures contained in the Turnaround Plan and show the proposed funding source(s) for each new cost. Possible funding sources include, but are not limited to, the school's local operating budget, the federal budget, the Alliance District grant, the Priority School District grant, the Commissioner's Network grant, and/or other grants. Please categorize proposed expenditures by Uniform Charts of Accounts (UCOA) codes (see Appendix B). For each expenditure, provide the following information in the appropriate columns: (a) label the position/service/item; (b) provide cost information and/or a budget justification (e.g., summary of the expense, # of units, cost per unit, etc.); (c) enter the total cost; (d) list all funding sources; and (e) show how the investment is strategically aligned to the Turnaround Plan by identifying the section of the plan that describes the corresponding strategy. The budget proposal will be evaluated for strategic alignment and anticipated impact as the award amount is determined by the CSDE after the State Board of Education approves the Turnaround Plan.

3. **Part II: Low-Performing Schools Bond Request:** Public Act 12-189 § 9(e)(3) and Public Act 13-239 § 32(g)(3) authorize **"**grants-in-aid to assist targeted local and regional school districts for alterations, repairs, improvements, technology and equipment in low-performing schools." Accordingly, the district may submit a bond request for up to $500,000.00 by completing the final tab in the budget workbook. The bond request must support capital improvements and technological investments at the school. Also, the request must outline and provide a cost basis for all proposed bond investments. Please note that while the Commissioner will review the bond request for reasonableness and strategic alignment to the Turnaround Plan, the bond request will ultimately be considered for approval by the State Bond Commission.

Instructions: Using the project planning template provided below, develop an initial implementation timeline for the school during the 2015-16 school year. Please note the school leadership team, once identified, will be empowered to modify and/or expand upon the initial timeline below. Please create a timeline aligned to the contents of this Turnaround Plan, identifying:

- **Activities:** What core activities, strategies, and/or initiatives will the school undertake to improve talent, academics, culture and climate, and operations at the school?
- **Owners:** Who will be responsible for implementing the activity, strategy, and/or initiative?
- **Timeline:** When will the activity occur and/or be completed?

Activity:	Owner:	Timeline:
Talent:		
1. Post/recruit for/hire 2 instructional coaches.	Anthony Menard	August 1, 2015
2. Develop 2015-16 PD schedule.	Anthony Menard and School Improvement Team	August 1, 2015
3. Develop teacher coaching cycle/caseloads.	Department Supervisors	On-going
4. Establish protocols for common planning.	Department Supervisors, teachers	On-going
5. Launch staff committees.	Anthony Menard	On-going
Academics:		
1. Continue curriculum development work.	Department Supervisors	On-going
2. Hire interventionists.	Anthony Menard	On-going
3. Restructure academic teams and submit de-tracking plan to CSDE.	Anthony Menard	On-going
4. Establish data team protocols/reporting templates.	Department Supervisor and teachers	On-going
Culture and Climate		
1. Post/recruit for/hire social service staff.	Anthony Menard	September 1, 2015
2. Design and launch RISE intervention.	Department Supervisor and David Caruso	August 1, 2015
3. Develop 2015-16 family engagement calendar.	Spencer Clapp	September 1, 2015
4. Develop/revise behavior plan.	Anthony Menard	On-going
5. Develop/review attendance plan.	David Caruso	August 1, 2015
Operations:		
1. Pursue technology investments.	Anthony Menard	On-going
2. Pursue facilities upgrades.	Anthony Menard	On-going
3. Form committee to review scheduling changes.	Anthony Menard	On-going

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 her 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.

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

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

_____   _____
Signature of Superintendent, Non-Voting Chair   Date

_____
Name of Superintendent *(typed)*

_____   _____
Signature of Board of Education-appointed Parent   Date

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

_____   _____
Signature of Board of Education-appointed Administrator   Date

_____
Name of Board of Education-appointed Administrator *(typed)*

_____   _____
Signature of Union-appointed Teacher   Date

_____
Name of Union-appointed Teacher *(typed)*

_____   _____
Signature of Union-appointed Teacher   Date

_____
Name of Union-appointed Teacher *(typed)*

_____   _____

Signature of Union-appointed Parent   Date

_____

Name of Union-appointed Parent *(typed)*

_____   _____

Signature of Commissioner of Education   Date

_____

Name of Commissioner of Education (*typed*)

As noted in Section 6.2, please code all expenditures in accordance with the state's Uniform Charts of Accounts as summarized below.

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

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

PROJECT TITLE: Commissioner's Network

THE APPLICANT: HEREBY ASSURES THAT:

(insert Agency/School/CBO Name)

A. The applicant has the necessary legal authority to apply for and receive the proposed grant;

B. The filing of this application has been authorized by the applicant's governing body, and the undersigned official has been duly authorized to file this application for and on behalf of said applicant, and otherwise to act as the authorized representative of the applicant in connection with this application;

C. The activities and services for which assistance is sought under this grant will be administered by or under the supervision and control of the applicant;

D. The project will be operated in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws and in compliance with regulations and other policies and administrative directives of the State Board of Education and the Connecticut State Department of Education;

E. Grant funds shall not be used to supplant funds normally budgeted by the agency;

F. Fiscal control and accounting procedures will be used to ensure proper disbursement of all funds awarded;

G. The applicant will submit a final project report (within 60 days of the project completion) and such other reports, as specified, to the Connecticut State Department of Education, including information relating to the project records and access thereto as the Connecticut State Department of Education may find necessary;

H. The Connecticut State Department of Education reserves the exclusive right to use and grant the right to use and/or publish any part or parts of any summary, abstract, reports, publications, records and materials resulting from this project and this grant;

I. If the project achieves the specified objectives, every reasonable effort will be made to continue the project and/or implement the results after the termination of state/federal funding;

J. The applicant will protect and save harmless the State Board of Education from financial loss and expense, including legal fees and costs, if any, arising out of any breach of the duties, in whole or part, described in the application for the grant;

K. At the conclusion of each grant period, the applicant will provide for an independent audit report acceptable to the grantor in accordance with Sections 7-394a and 7-396a of the Connecticut General Statutes, and the

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

L.   REQUIRED LANGUAGE (NON-DISCRIMINATION)

References in this section to "contract" shall mean this grant agreement and to "contractor" shall mean the Grantee.
(a) For purposes of this Section, the following terms are defined as follows:

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

For purposes of this Section, the terms "Contract" and "contract" do not include a contract where each contractor is (1) a political subdivision of the state, including, but not limited to, a municipality, (2) a quasi-public agency, as defined in Conn. Gen. Stat. Section 1-120, (3) any other state, including but not limited to any federally recognized Indian tribal governments, as defined in Conn. Gen. Stat. Section 1-267, (4) the federal government, (5) a foreign government, or (6) an agency of a subdivision, agency, state or government described in the immediately preceding enumerated items (1), (2), (3), (4) or (5).

(b) (1) The Contractor agrees and warrants that in the performance of the Contract such Contractor will not discriminate or permit discrimination against any person or group of persons on the grounds of race,

color, religious creed, age, marital status, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity or expression, mental retardation, mental disability or physical disability, including, but not limited to, blindness, unless it is shown by such Contractor that such disability prevents performance of the work involved, in any manner prohibited by the laws of the United States or of the State of Connecticut; and the Contractor further agrees to take affirmative action to insure that applicants with job-related qualifications are employed and that employees are treated when employed without regard to their race, color, religious creed, age, marital status, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity or expression, mental retardation, 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 Connecticut General Statutes §§ 46a-68e and 46a-68f and with each regulation or relevant order issued by said Commission pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §§ 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 Connecticut General Statutes § 46a-56. If the contract is a public works contract, the Contractor agrees and warrants that he will make good faith efforts to employ minority business enterprises as subcontractors and suppliers of materials on such public works 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 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 Connecticut General Statutes §46a-56; 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, 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 Connecticut General Statutes § 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 Connecticut General Statutes § 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 Connecticut General Statutes § 46a-56; 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, the Contractor may request the State of Connecticut to enter into any such litigation or negotiation prior thereto to protect the interests of the State and the State may so enter.

M. The grant award is subject to approval of the Connecticut State Department of Education and availability of state or federal funds.

N. The applicant agrees and warrants that Sections 4-190 to 4-197, inclusive, of the Connecticut General Statutes concerning the Personal Data Act and Sections 10-4-8 to 10-4-10, inclusive, of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies promulgated there under are hereby incorporated by reference.

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

Superintendent Signature: _____

Name: *(typed)* _____

Title: *(typed)* _____

Date: _____

Commissioner's Network Operations and Instructional Audit Report

East Hartford Middle School
East Hartford Public Schools
May 6, 2015

CSDE

CONNECTICUT STATE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Table of Contents

Part I: Introduction

Part II: School Information

Part III: Audit Findings

Appendix Section

On April 23, 2015, the Commissioner initially selected East Hartford Middle School to participate in the Commissioner's Network, pending legislative authority to extend and expand the Commissioner's Network to include a fourth cohort of schools. Pursuant to C.G.S. § 10-223h(b), the East Hartford Board of Education established the Turnaround Committee. On May 6, 2015, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) conducted, in consultation with the board of education, the East Hartford 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.

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 Network offers new resources and authorities to empower teachers and school leaders to implement research-based strategies in schools selected by the Commissioner. Network schools remain part of their local school districts, but the districts and the CSDE secure school-level flexibility and autonomy for the schools in exchange for heightened accountability. Schools participate in the Network for a period of three to five years. At present, 16 Cohort I, II, and III schools are participating in the Commissioner's Network.

Network schools make targeted investments in the following areas:

- **Talent:** Employ systems and strategies to recruit, hire, develop, evaluate, and retain excellent school leaders, teachers, and support staff.

- **Academics:** Design and implement a rigorous, aligned, and engaging academic program that allows all students to achieve at high levels.

- **Culture and Climate:** Foster a positive learning environment that supports high-quality teaching and learning, and engages families and the community as partners in the educational process.

- **Operations:** Create systems and processes that promote organizational efficiency and effectiveness, including through the use of time and financial resources.

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

Operations and Instructional Audit Overview

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

(1) has established a strong family and community connection to the school;

(2) has a positive school environment, as evidenced by a culture of high expectations and a safe and orderly workplace, and has addressed other nonacademic factors that impact student achievement, such as students' social, emotional, arts, cultural, recreational and health needs;

(3) has effective leadership, as evidenced by the school principal's performance appraisals, track record in improving student achievement, ability to lead turnaround efforts, and managerial skills and authority in the areas of scheduling, staff management, curriculum implementation and budgeting;

(4) has effective teachers and support staff, as evidenced by performance evaluations, policies to retain staff determined to be effective and who have the ability to be successful in the turnaround effort, policies to prevent ineffective teachers from transferring to the schools, and job-embedded, ongoing professional development informed by the teacher evaluation and support programs that are tied to teacher and student needs;

(5) uses time effectively, as evidenced by the redesign of the school day, week, or year to include additional time for student learning and teacher collaboration;

(6) has a curriculum and instructional program that is based on student needs, is research-based, rigorous and aligned with state academic content standards, and serves all children, including students at every achievement level; and

(7) uses data to inform decision-making and for continuous improvement, including by 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.

East Hartford Middle School (EHMS) serves 1,149 Grade 6 through 8 students. Approximately 42 percent of the students are Hispanic and 35 percent are Black. Sixteen percent of the students are identified as needing special education services, and 10 percent are English language learners. The majority of students (74 percent) are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. EHMS is one of two middle schools in the East Hartford Public School system, though students and families may choose to attend magnet schools outside of the district system and located in surrounding communities. EHMS' students and staff are currently organized in six smaller teams in an effort to promote engagement and a stronger sense of community. EHMS employs a seven-period daily schedule with an added activity period two days per week. EHMS has experienced significant leadership transitions, including nine principals in the past 12 years. The current principal served as the school's assistant principal starting six year ago, and assumed the principal position three years ago.

School Data Profile

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

Enrollment Data (2014-15):			
Grades:	6-8	5-Yr Enrollment Trend:	+ 241
Student Enrollment:	1,149	Mobility Rate:	14.4%
Personnel Data (2014-15):			
# of Administrators:	4	% of Teachers "Below Standard":	0%
# of Teachers:	108	% of Teachers "Developing":	2.9%
# of Support Staff:	4	% of Teachers "Proficient":	82.6%
# of Psychologists:	1	% of Teachers "Exemplary":	14.5%
# of Social Workers:	1.5	3-yr Teacher Retention Rate:	
School Day Per Year (2014-15):			
Total # of Student Days Per Year:	180	Instructional Minutes/Day:	335
Total # of Teacher Days Per Year:	184	Extended Day Program?	No
Student Demographic Breakdown (2014-15):			
% Black:	36%	% Male:	53%
% Hispanic:	43%	% Female:	47%
% White:	14%	% ELL:	11%
% Other:	7%	% Special Education:	17%
% F/R Meals:	68%	% Eligible for HUSKY Plan, Part A:	-

School Climate Data:	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015 YTD
Student Attendance Rate:	97%	92%	95%	92%
Chronic Absenteeism Rate:	7%	32%	15%	11%
Total # of ISS/OSS/Expulsions:	903/474/6	793/365/9	556/272/7	556 ISS
Teacher Attendance Rate:	97%	98%	98%	98%
School/District Index:	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
School Performance Index (SPI):	58.7	64.0	65.0	61.7
District Performance Index (DPI):	58.8	60.8	61.8	60.5
CMT at or above Goal:	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Grade 6 – Reading	--	66.3	46.0	50.4
Grade 7 – Reading	49.1	49.3	57.3	48.0
Grade 8 – Reading	43.5	43.7	51.0	48.6
Grade 6 – Math	--	38.5	27.8	41.7
Grade 7 – Math	30.6	45.8	39.3	32.0
Grade 8 – Math	36.8	31.1	35.0	34.6

Part III: Audit Findings

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

Domain:	Indicators:	1	2	3	4
1. **Talent:** Employ systems and strategies to recruit, hire, develop, evaluate, and retain excellent school leaders, teachers, and support staff.	1.1. Instructional practice		✓		
	1.2. Evaluation and professional culture		✓		
	1.3. Recruitment and retention strategies			✓	
	1.4. Professional development		✓		
	1.5. Leadership effectiveness			✓	
	1.6. Instructional leadership		✓		
2. **Academics:** Design and implement a rigorous, aligned, and engaging academic program that allows all students to achieve at high levels.	2.1. Academic rigor*	✓			
	2.2. Student engagement*		✓		
	2.3. Differentiation*	✓			
	2.4. Curriculum and instruction aligned to CCSS		✓		
	2.5. Supports for special populations		✓		
	2.6. Assessment system and data culture		✓		
3. **Culture and Climate:** Foster a positive learning environment supporting high-quality teaching and learning, and engages families and the community as partners in the educational process.	3.1. School environment			✓	
	3.2. Student attendance		✓		
	3.3. Student behavior		✓		
	3.4. Interpersonal interactions		✓		
	3.5. Family engagement			✓	
	3.6. Community partners and wraparound strategy		✓		
4. **Operations:** Create systems and processes promoting organizational efficiency and effectiveness, including through the use of time and financial resources.	4.1. Adequate instructional time		✓		
	4.2. Use of instructional time*		✓		
	4.3. Use of staff time			✓	
	4.4. Routines and transitions			✓	
	4.5. Financial management			✓	

Ratings for these four sub-indicators are based largely on a composite or average score generated from all classroom observations.

1	Below Standard
2	Developing
3	Proficient
4	Exemplary

Talent

The following section provides quantitative and qualitative evidence to support the cumulative ratings provided in the chart on Page 7.

Summary of Strengths:

- **School Vision:** EHMS maintains a clear and compelling vision: "A school that is the pride of the community." The school's mission statement corresponds with the vision: "Committed to learning." During the audit site visit, the principal conveyed a sense of urgency through his actions, demeanor, and interactions with students, staff, and families. The principal's commitment to continuous improvement was evidenced through focus group conversations, school observations, and data and artifacts provided prior to the audit. Teachers and administrators explained the principal has successfully created a clear vision and sense of direction for the school community. On a teacher survey conducted prior to the audit site visit (N=72), 82 percent of teachers agreed with the statement: "School leaders effectively communicate a clear mission, vision, and set of school-wide priorities." One teacher stated, "The administrative team has clearly outlined a vision and plan for EHMS."

- **Staff Retention and Staffing Autonomy:** Teachers and leaders explained that EHMS experiences minimal staff turnover. This is particularly important as EHMS invests in its staff through targeted professional development and seeks to create teams and a sense of community. Students, parents, and staff commented on the staff's commitment to the school and its students and families. In the event of a vacancy, the principal has the authority to identify and hire new staff with district central office approval. Administrators noted that EHMS is building a strong faculty, including veteran staff and strong new hires.

- **Leadership:** Administrators have established strong systems, routines, and protocols for EHMS. School leaders maintain a visible presence throughout the school, and the leadership team has established routines for classroom walkthroughs. The principal was recognized with the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) Outstanding First Year Principal Award in 2013. During the audit, the principal genuinely and enthusiastically greeted students and teachers at the start of the school day and was a constant presence throughout the day. Parents, students, and staff expressed support for leaders. School leaders meet with team leaders on a biweekly basis to promote distributed leadership and open communication. Teachers participate in monthly faculty meetings.

- **Some Embedded Coaching:** EHMS has one school-based instructional coach supporting math teachers. Math teachers noted the value of having a mentor and coach to provide informal feedback and ideas to strengthen teacher pedagogy. Teachers in other content areas expressed the desire for additional, embedded coaching support. Interestingly, students' math performance levels are higher relative to reading, which may correspond to the increased math support. Dr. David Cormier, an external consultant and professional development partner with the district, provides additional teacher coaching. Teachers spoke favorably about Dr. Cormier's professional development and classroom coaching and feedback.

Summary of Growth Areas:

- **Instructional Leadership:** EHMS has one principal and three assistant principals. Assistant principals oversee each of the various teams and unique school functions (e.g., attendance, assessments, special education, transportation). District content supervisors provide content-specific instructional leadership for teachers at the middle school and high school. EHMS has one school-based coach in the area of math. During the audit site visit, it was clear that the principal serves as the school's instructional leader; however, instructional leadership did not seem to extend enough beyond the principal. Assistant principals described primarily operational functions, overseeing the various teams and behavior issues that arise on their teams. Assistant principals explained they conduct eight, five-minute classroom observations per week, totaling approximately 40 minutes in classrooms per administrator, per week. District content supervisors meet with the principal on a monthly basis to coordinate instructional priorities; however, assistant principals are not consistently a part of these meetings. Given these variables, it is unclear how effectively district and school leaders collaborate to provide consistent and aligned instructional leadership for staff.

- **Instructional Practice:** The quality of instruction was variable across classrooms and teams. In the observed classrooms, auditors saw primarily teacher-led lessons with low levels of rigor, differentiation, and student engagement. In several instances, the content did not appear age-appropriate and lesson pacing failed to maximize instructional time. Given student performance levels on STAR and the Connecticut Mastery Test, there is a demonstrable need to focus on instruction. Administrators did acknowledge instruction has improved in recent years.

- **Professional Learning Strategy:** As noted, EHMS has emerging structures to facilitate professional learning and instructional coaching; however, coaching opportunities are limited by content area. On the teacher survey, 49 percent of teachers agreed with the statement: "The professional development I received this year has improved my professional practice and allowed me to better meet the needs of my students." Professional development is limited to half-day session throughout the year. This year, much of the professional development time was led by Dr. Cormier and district department supervisors. In addition to group professional development, teachers could pursue embedded coaching with Dr. Cormier. Teacher collaboration with Dr. Cormier was optional, which may mean teachers most in need of coaching support did not request and receive it. Additionally, the reliance on an external consultant providing a large volume of the school's professional development and coaching may pose sustainability challenges.

- **Substitute Coverage:** Teachers and leaders expressed frustration regarding adequate sub coverage. When asked whether teacher attendance was the root issue, teachers explained teacher attendance is good relative to other East Hartford schools. Auditors observed one classroom supervised by a substitute, which substantiated these concerns. The substitute lacked the ability to manage the classroom, let alone ensure students complete assignments.

- **Aversion to Change:** Some staff members demonstrated an aversion to change and anxiety associated with the school's continued evolution. For example, some staff members expressed reluctance regarding the new college-themed teams. It seemed the largest complaint was that teams are no longer names after the team's teacher leader. A commitment to past practices

may be inhibiting the school's advancement. Some teachers expressed frustration that administrators do not solicit staff opinions or sufficiently engage teachers in school planning. The principal communicated his commitment to further engage teachers, explaining that foundational systems and frameworks are now in place, allowing for increased staff engagement.

Academics

The following section provides quantitative and qualitative evidence to support the cumulative ratings provided in the chart on Page 7.

Summary of Strengths:

- **Instructional Philosophy:** This year, the principal collaborated with Dr. Cormier to establish classroom-level non-negotiables. In an effort to improve instruction and reduce variability across classrooms, the principal and Dr. Cormier identified six areas to support intentional instructional planning: objectives/learning targets; lesson agendas; do-now/warm-up exercises; Depth of Knowledge (DOK) questioning strategies; academic conversations; and exit activities/lesson closure. Teachers spoke knowledgably about the school's instructional model; however, the depth and effectiveness of implementation was variable in the classrooms observed during the audit site visit. Each of the seven classrooms observed had visible objectives and agendas.

- **Assessment System:** Last year, East Hartford Public Schools adopted the STAR assessment system, providing administrators, teachers, and students with data on student progress and growth in math and reading. Teachers and leaders expressed validity and reliability concerns regarding the STAR data, yet seemed to appreciate the additional data. Relatedly, teachers and leaders described an emerging data culture. Auditors saw STAR data posted in classrooms throughout the school, suggesting teachers are interpreting data and students are aware of their significance. On the teacher survey, 78 percent of teachers agreed with the statement: "The school has and consistently uses data to measure student progress, identify necessary interventions, and provide teachers with data to inform instruction." Intervention programming and classroom differentiation emerged as growth areas through the audit process.

- **Emerging Co-Teaching Model:** EHMS is implementing the co-teaching model in several classrooms. Teachers explained the process works well when teachers are paired together for most of the instructional day, allowing for true collaboration around lesson design and delivery. In some instances, however, teachers co-teach in multiple classrooms throughout the day, making collaboration more challenging. The co-teaching model emerged, in part, as EHMS eliminated the push-in model for special education students.

Summary of Growth Areas:

- **Leveled Teams:** EHMS students and teachers belong to one of six college-named teams: UCONN, Yale, Trinity, Central, Connecticut, and Wesleyan. The teams create smaller learning communities rooted in a college-going theme. Administrators explained that four of the teams

are heterogeneously grouped; however, Yale is an honors program and Trinity serves primarily English language learners. This suggests teams lack heterogeneity. Students and parents suggested they know which teams are the "smart" teams, which may be demoralizing and demotivating for students who cannot access the honors track. Administrators explained it was unintentional that the honors team was named Yale. Teachers explained the leveled teams impact teacher assignments; for example, teachers said behavioral incidents are more prevalent on some teams and special education students do not seem to be enrolled on the Yale team. Despite the stated goal to promote team-building, teachers described little interdisciplinary collaboration on teams. The team concept reflects good intentions; however, some of the unintended consequences seem to undercut the potential.

- **Interventions:** Teachers expressed a variety of concerns regarding interventions, including the process to identify students and quality of programming. Each team has a paraprofessional to hypothetically support small group instruction; however, teachers explained paras are often pulled to provide sub coverage. Teachers said they lack leveled texts and up-to-date subscriptions to online intervention programs. Students may require up to three interventions. In order to accommodate interventions, students miss activities and may miss social studies. Teachers also questioned the format of the Math Excellence Learning Lab (MELL) for students needing remediation; special education students cannot access the MELL.

- **Active Student Engagement:** In six of seven classrooms observed, students behaved and were compliant during activities; however, meaningful student engagement was lacking in five of seven classrooms. Auditors observed student discourse in one classroom – the only classroom where students were working in small groups. During the student focus group, when asked to describe a typical lesson, students explained it usually involves note-taking.

- **Compliance Orientation:** Many teachers seem to have a compliance mindset with regard to the new instructional philosophy. For example, objectives and agendas were posted on teacher whiteboards; however, auditors did not observe any teachers referencing these required components during observed lessons. Some teachers described the new instructional approach as "cookie cutter" and failed to see ways they could customize their lessons using the new format. The principal and district administrator acknowledged that compliance is the first step in the process. For example, the principal is now working to ensure teachers "give voice to objectives" throughout their lessons, reminding students of the lesson purpose or aim.

- **Rigor and Differentiation:** In the observed classrooms, six of seven were teacher-led; however, none of the teachers were using higher-order DOK question stems. Some lessons and assignments did not appear developmentally or age appropriate. Rigor and differentiation were lacking in most classrooms. When asked whether students have to work hard to get good grades, Yale students agreed there are high expectations for students. One of the observed teachers used whiteboards to check for student understanding. When asked how students can access help if they are struggling to understand a concept, students explained teachers do not have time to provide individualized support during lessons. They said students need to be responsible for their learning. This sentiment was shared among students in the focus group, suggesting students may be taking responsibility for their own learning and/or dissuaded from accessing necessary supports. Interestingly, on the teacher survey, 60 percent of teachers agreed with the statement: "Instructional quality and academic rigor are consistently high at this

school." This suggests a potential mismatch between teacher perceptions and actual instructional quality.

- **Special Populations:** Teachers expressed concerns regarding the quality of academic programming and support services for students with disabilities. Teachers were hopeful that the co-teaching model would evolve into a good pedagogical strategy for special education students. Special education teachers explained that curricula are lacking for their students. On the teacher survey, only 33 percent of teachers agreed with the statement: "This school adequately meets the needs of its special education students and English language learners." Importantly, supports for English language learners did not emerge as a concern; the school employs the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model to support language acquisition.

Culture and Climate

The following section provides quantitative and qualitative evidence to support the cumulative ratings provided in the chart on Page 7.

Summary of Strengths:

- **Family Engagement and Support:** EHMS offers a Family Resource Center, and parents and staff explained that families frequent the center. The principal coordinates one parent focus group per quarter to maintain two-way communication with families and solicit feedback on how the school can strengthen family connections. EHMS maintains approximately 20 people on its School Governance Council. EHMS offers a range of family activities throughout the year, including a Family Fun Night, which was scheduled for the week of the audit and students were clearly looking forward to the event. The principal expressed a desire to increase academic connections during these events. EHMS also offers a school-based health center, providing students with access to medical and dental services.

- **Extracurricular Activities:** EHMS offers a wide variety of competitive sports, clubs, and intramural sports. Student noted that extracurricular activities build team camaraderie and students' enthusiasm toward school. Members of the school community also commented on the strength of the school's music program. A large proportion of students participate in band, and music teachers provide students with instrumental lessons.

- **Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism:** Though administrators expressed a desire to improve attendance, EHMS has made progress in this area and maintains strong data relative to other secondary schools in the Commissioner's Network. EHMS' 2014-15 year-to-date attendance rate is 92 percent, compared to 91 percent in 2013-14. The school's year-to-date chronic absenteeism rate is 11 percent, compared to 13 percent in 2013-14. EHMS employs several strategies to promote student attendance, including: home visits, phone calls home, tiered interventions based on the number of days missed, a tardy room, and a monthly attendance taskforce meeting.

- **Behavior Data:** EHMS has significantly reduced the number of behavioral incidents resulting in suspensions. In 2012-13, EHMS recorded 563 in-school suspension days compared to 381 days in 2013-14, impacting 226 and 187 students respectively. In 2012-13, EHMS had 1,016 out-of-school

suspension days compared to 757 in 2013-14, impacting 157 and 110 students respectively. A variety of strategies comprise the EHMS behavior management system. EHMS uses the positive behavioral interventions and support (PBIS) model to incent and reward positive behaviors. Students spoke enthusiastically about the "Flying Falcons" reward system for quarterly student progress. ARC serves as a de-escalation space. Administrators communicate the results of all referrals back to teachers within 24 hours. Administrators also organize professional development on behavior management, including a session where teachers discussed which infractions might warrant particular consequences. Some teachers expressed concerns regarding the recent decline in suspensions, suggesting that figures are misrepresentative. Teachers suggested there is a disincentive for teachers to refer students to the office.

Summary of Growth Areas:

- **Character Education:** Many teachers had the perception that the heightened focus on academics is at the expense of character education. The school lacks a formal curriculum for character education or interdisciplinary skill-building. Teachers described quarterly advisory sessions at the end of each marking period; however, they underscored that these are insufficient for personalized goal-setting conversations.

- **Sense of Community:** Though not obvious to auditors, staff described a weakened overall sense of community with the shift to college-themed teams. When asked whether they feel a strong affiliation to their teams, most students in the focus group simply shrugged. The team structure may not yet be achieving the desired level of impact in terms of creating a personalized and engaging learning environment for all students. Similarly, the school is not yet achieving the college and career culture it aspires to infuse across teams. When asked how they learn about post-secondary options, students said that happens in high school.

- **Support Services:** Teachers, administrators, and parents noted the school is understaffed in the areas of nonacademic social services. The school has four guidance counselors, one psychologist, and one social worker to serve over one thousand students. Teachers, administrators, and parents expressed a desire for more social service staff. Importantly, when asked whether they have an adult to turn to in the building to discuss academic or personal issues, all students in the focus group agreed that they had a strong relationship with at least one adult at the school.

Operations

The following section provides quantitative and qualitative evidence to support the cumulative ratings provided in the chart on Page 7.

Summary of Strengths:

- **Systems and Routines:** The principal and leadership team have established strong systems, protocols, and procedures to support smooth school operations. Morning arrivals, transitions between classes, and dismissals were relatively calm and orderly during the audit site visit. Students and staff demonstrated respect toward one another.

- **Collaborative Planning:** EHMS teachers have six planning periods per week, including one personal prep period, two team meetings, and three department/content-area meetings. Team meetings allow for collaboration around team issues, student needs, and team climate data. Content-specific planning time allows for common planning and academic data analysis, supporting student intervention planning. Teachers and administrators explained that collaborative planning time is variable in its effectiveness.

- **Resource Ingenuity:** The principal demonstrates strong resource management, particularly as the district facing a difficult budget climate. The principal advocates on behalf the school with the district central office and works to procure supports from local businesses and community organizations. District administrators support the principal in securing prioritized investments.

Summary of Growth Areas:

- **Instructional Resources and Technology:** Teachers described a shortage of critical instructional supplies and educational technology. For example, teachers cited the need for leveled texts and updated subscriptions to intervention programs. Teachers, parents, and administrators also commented on insufficient technology. Stakeholders raised technology equity concerns. Whereas East Hartford elementary schools have iPads and SMART Boards, EHMS lacks adequate technology. Auditors also observed insufficient use of technology currently installed in classrooms, which may also allude to a training/teacher implementation issue.

- **Facility:** EHMS has taken steps to create a safe, clean, and welcoming learning environment. Hallways were clean, and the school is well branded with the falcon mascot, school values, and inspirational quotes. Students and teachers did comment on bathroom cleanliness and functionality; students noted that some students avoid using bathrooms during school hours. Classroom observations also revealed messy and cluttered classrooms lacking purposeful displays and organization.

- **Schedule:** As noted, the current bell schedule does not include opportunities for interventions during the daily schedule; therefore, students receiving interventions do so in lieu of other coursework and enrichment activities.

****

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

Appendix A: Operations and Instructional Audit Rubric

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

		TALENT			
	Indicator	**Below Standard**	**Developing**	**Proficient**	**Exemplary**
1.6.	**Instructional Leadership**	Few staff can articulate a common understanding of what excellent instruction looks like. School norms and expectations are not clear. Instructional leaders do not demonstrate a commitment to developing consistent and high-quality instructional practice school-wide.	Some staff can articulate a common understanding of what effective instruction looks like. School norms and expectations are enforced with limited consistency. Instructional leaders demonstrate some commitment to improving instructional practice school-wide.	Most staff articulates a common understanding of what effective instruction looks like. School norms and expectations are consistently enforced. Instructional leaders consistently demonstrate a commitment to improving instructional practice school-wide.	All staff articulates a common understanding of what effective instruction looks like. Educators relentlessly pursue excellent pedagogy. Instructional leaders have communicated and enforced high expectations school-wide.

		ACADEMICS			
	Indicator	**Below Standard**	**Developing**	**Proficient**	**Exemplary**
2.1.	**Academic Rigor*[4]**	Most observed lessons are teacher-led and whole group. Teachers rarely engage students in higher-order thinking. Most students demonstrate a surface-level understanding of concepts. Observed lessons are indicative of low expectations and little sense of urgency.	Some observed lessons are somewhat student-centered, challenging and engaging. Teachers engage students in some higher-order thinking. Many students demonstrate only a surface-level understanding of concepts. Teachers demonstrate moderate expectations and some urgency.	Observed lessons are appropriately accessible and challenging for most students. Teachers engage students in higher-order thinking, and students are pushed toward content mastery. Lessons begin to engage students as self-directed learners. Teachers communicate solid expectations.	All observed lessons are appropriately accessible and challenging. Teachers push students, promoting academic risk-taking. Students are developing the capacity to engage in complex content and pose higher-level questions to the teacher and peers. Teachers promote high expectations.
2.2.	**Student Engagement***	Few students are actively engaged and excited about their work. The majority of students are engaged in off-task behaviors and some are disruptive to their classmates. Observed lessons primarily appeal to one learning style. Few students are truly involved in the lessons.	Some students exhibit moderate engagement, but many are engaged in off-task behaviors. Some observed lessons appeal to multiple learning styles. Students are involved in the lessons, but participation is more passive than active. Students are easily distracted from assigned tasks.	Most students are engaged and exhibit on-task behaviors. The observed lessons appeal to multiple learning styles. Students are involved in the lesson, but participation is, at times, more passive than active. A handful of students are easily distracted from the task at hand.	All students are visibly engaged, ready to learn, and on task. Students are clearly focused on learning in all classrooms. The lessons appeal to and seem to support all learning styles. Students are actively engaged in the lessons and excited to participate in classroom dialogue and instruction.
2.3.	**Differentia-tion and Checking for Under-standing***	Most teachers take a one-size-fits-all approach and struggle to differentiate their instruction to meet individual learning needs. There is no evidence around the use of data to inform instruction and minimal efforts to check for student understanding.	Some teachers are differentiating at least part of the observed lessons; however, the practice is not consistent or widespread. There is some evidence of the use of student data to adapt the learning process. Some teachers use strategies to monitor understanding.	Most teachers employ strategies to tier or differentiate instruction at various points in the lesson. Most teachers use data or checks for understanding to differentiate the learning process on the fly. Teachers take time to support students struggling to engage with the content.	Teachers consistently and seamlessly differentiate instruction. Teachers use data and formal/informal strategies to gauge understanding, and differentiate the learning process accordingly. Tight feedback loop between monitoring efforts and instruction.
2.4.	**Curriculum and Instruction Aligned to Common**	The school lacks a rigorous, standards-based curriculum that is aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and/or the curriculum is not being implemented with fidelity. As a result, pacing is inconsistent. The percentage	The school has curricula for some grades and content areas, some of which are rigorous, standards-based. Curricula are implemented with some fidelity. Teachers struggle with consistent pacing. The percentage of	Rigorous, standards-based curricula exist for almost all grade levels and content areas, and are being implemented consistently across classrooms. Teachers demonstrate consistent pacing. The percentage of	Rigorous, standards-based curricula exist for all grade levels and content areas. Curricula are aligned with the CCSS and are being implemented with a high degree of fidelity throughout the school. The percentage of

---

[4] Ratings for the four sub-indicators marked with an asterisk (*) are largely based on a composite or average score generated from all classroom observations.

ACADEMICS				
Indicator	**Below Standard**	**Developing**	**Proficient**	**Exemplary**
Core State Standards	of students at or above goal on state assessments is > 10 points below the state average.	students at or above goal on state assessments is 6-10 points below the state average.	students at or above goal on state assessments is within 5 percentage points of the state average.	students at or above goal on state assessments meets or exceeds the state average.
2.5. Support for Special Populations	The school is inadequately meeting the needs of its high-needs students. IEP goals are not regularly met. Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) is not fully considered when making placements. The school lacks appropriate interventions and supports for ELLs. There are significant achievement gaps between subgroups and non-identified students as measured by state assessments, and no evidence of progress.	The school typically meets the needs of its high-needs students. Most special education students meet their IEP goals, but LRE is not always considered when making placement determinations. The school typically meets the needs of its ELLs, and attempts to track progress and set content and language mastery goals. There are significant gaps between subgroups and non-identified students as measured by state assessments and marginal progress over time.	The school consistently meets the needs of its high-needs students. Special education students regularly meet their IEP goals and LRE is a critical factor in placement determinations. The school meets the needs, tracks progress, and sets content and language mastery goals for all ELLs. There are small gaps between subgroups and non-identified students as measured by state assessments, and some signs of progress toward closing the gaps.	The school is successfully closing the achievement gap for its high-needs students. General and special education teachers work collaboratively to support students. The school tracks the effectiveness of language acquisition instructional strategies and adjusts programming accordingly. There is no achievement gap between subgroups and non-identified students as measured by state assessments.
2.6. Assessment Systems and Data Culture	The school lacks a comprehensive assessment system (including summative and benchmark assessments). Teachers rarely collect, analyze, and/or discuss data. The school lacks or fails to implement SRBI protocols linking data to interventions.	The school has some consistent assessments; however, there are major gaps in certain grades and content areas. There are some efforts to collect and use data. SRBI systems and processes are somewhat present.	The school implements a clear system of benchmark assessments. Some teachers are developing familiarity with regularly using formative assessments to differentiate instruction. The school has emerging processes in place to use the data to inform interventions.	Teachers consistently administer assessments throughout the year. Assessments are standards-based and provide real-time data. Teachers embed formative assessments in their daily lessons. The school has strong processes to collect, analyze, and use data to inform interventions.

CULTURE AND CLIMATE				
Indicator	**Below Standard**	**Developing**	**Proficient**	**Exemplary**
3.1. School Environment	The school fails to create a welcoming and stimulating learning environment. Communal spaces and classrooms may be unkempt, rundown, unsafe, or sterile. Many classrooms are neither warm nor inviting and lack intellectual stimulation. Little to no student work or data is displayed to help convey a sense of pride and high expectations.	The school struggles to provide a welcoming environment conducive to high-quality teaching and learning. Large sections of the school are not clean, bright, welcoming, or reflective of student work. Though the school has some data and student work displayed, efforts to brand the school and convey high expectations are very minimal. Sections of the school need significant attention.	The school generally provides a welcoming learning environment. Most of the facility is in good repair and conducive to teaching and learning. Most classrooms and common spaces are bright and clean, displaying data and student work; however, some sections lack visual stimulation. The school has made an effort to foster school identity through branding and consistent messaging in classrooms and communal spaces.	The school provides a welcoming and stimulating learning environment. Common spaces and classrooms are bright, clean, welcoming, and conducive to high-quality teaching and learning. Data and student work are visible and present throughout the school, inspiring students and teachers to do their best work. There is clear branding and consistent messaging throughout the school, promoting school identity and pride.
3.2. Student Attendance	The school has few, if any, strategies to increase attendance. Average daily attendance is ≤ 88% and/or chronic	The school has some strategies to increase attendance. Average daily attendance is between 89% and 93%	The school has multiple, effective strategies to increase attendance. Average daily attendance is between	The school implements effective strategies to increase attendance and on-time arrival. Average daily

CULTURE AND CLIMATE				
Indicator	**Below Standard**	**Developing**	**Proficient**	**Exemplary**
	absenteeism is > 20%.	and/or chronic absenteeism is between 16% and 20%.	94% and 97% and/or chronic absenteeism is between 11% and 15%.	attendance is > 97% and chronic absenteeism is ≤ 10%.
3.3. Student Behavior	A school-wide behavior management plan may exist, but there is little evidence of implementation. Student misbehavior is a significant challenge and creates regular distractions. Disciplinary approaches appear to be inconsistent; students and staff do not have a common understanding of behavioral expectations. Discipline is mostly punitive. The rate of suspensions/expulsions as a proportion of student enrollment is greater than 20% (total # incidents/total enrollment).	A school-wide behavior management plan is in place, and there are some signs of implementation. Student misbehavior is a challenge and creates frequent disruptions. There may be confusion among students and staff regarding behavioral expectations. Discipline is primarily punitive, and there is inconsistent reinforcement of desired behaviors. The rate of suspensions/expulsions as a proportion of student enrollment is between 15% and 20%.	A school-wide behavior management plan is in place and effectively implemented most of the time. Student behavior is under control. Misbehavior is infrequent, with periodic distractions to instruction. Most students behave in a calm and respectful manner. Students and staff have a common understanding of the behavior policy. There is positive reinforcement of desired behaviors. The suspension/expulsion rate is between 10% and 14%.	A school-wide behavior management plan is consistently and effectively implemented. All students behave in a calm, orderly, and respectful manner throughout the school day. Classroom distractions are minimal, and immediately and appropriately addressed. Rewards and consequences are clear and appropriate, and are consistently applied across the school. The suspension/expulsion rate is < 10%.
3.4. Interpersonal Interactions	There is a weak sense of community. The quality and types of student, adult, and student/adult interactions raise concerns. There are signs of divisiveness or hostility among students and with staff. There are minimal signs of connections between students and staff; interactions are largely transactional or triggered when students are off task.	There is a moderate sense of community. Students are somewhat respectful toward one another and adults. There is some teasing and divisiveness; however, it does not define school culture. Communication between students and staff is somewhat positive. There are some connections between students and staff.	There is a good overall sense of community. Students are generally respectful toward one another and adults. Interactions are mostly positive. There is minimal teasing and divisiveness. Communication between students and staff is generally positive and respectful. There are signs of connections between students and staff. Most staff seem invested in their students.	There is a strong sense of community. Students are respectful and courteous of one another and adults. Student interactions are overwhelmingly positive and polite. The school has an inclusive and welcoming environment. Student/adult interactions are positive and respectful, demonstrating strong relationships. Staff seems invested in the well-being and development of students.
3.5. Family and Community Engagement	The school offers infrequent opportunities to involve parents in the school community. Family involvement is minimal. Teachers rarely reach out to families regarding their child's academic progress.	The school offers several family events throughout the year. Roughly half of families participate in school activities. More than half of all teachers reach out to families regarding their child's academic progress.	The school offers periodic, meaningful opportunities for parents/families to engage in student's education. Most families participate in school activities. Most educators communicate regularly with families.	The school frequently engages parents/family as partners in student's education. Almost all families participate in school activities. Nearly all educators communicate with families on a regular basis.
3.6. Community Partners and Wraparound Strategy	The school offers inadequate supports to address students' nonacademic needs. There are limited wraparound services. The school makes little or no effort to engage community partners to expand services offered through the school.	The school offers some support to address students' nonacademic needs through wraparound services. Community and partner engagement is spotty and event-specific.	The school offers a range of wraparound services to address students' nonacademic needs. The school has several sustained community partnerships.	The school has a clear process for evaluating students' needs and connecting students to appropriate wraparound services. The school has sustained community partnerships to help address student needs.

OPERATIONS				
Indicator	**Below Standard**	**Developing**	**Proficient**	**Exemplary**
4.1. Adequate Instructional Time	There is not enough time in the school schedule to appropriately meet students' academic needs. There is a significant amount of wasted time in the school calendar and daily schedule. The schedule includes ≤ 5 hours of instruction per day, and ≤ 60 minutes of ELA time.[5]	Students would benefit from increased instructional and/or intervention time. The school calendar and daily schedule could be improved to increase time on task. The schedule includes > 5 and ≤ 5.5 hours of instruction per day, and > 60 and ≤ 90 minutes of ELA time.	The school has taken steps to increase instructional time on task through extended learning opportunities. The school calendar and daily schedule are well constructed. The schedule includes > 5.5 and ≤ 6 hours of instruction per day, and > 90 and ≤ 120 minutes of ELA time.	The school has multiple extended learning opportunities available to students. The school implements a thoughtful and strategic school calendar and daily schedule. The schedule includes > 6 hours of instruction per day, and > 120 minutes of ELA time.
4.2. Use of Instructional Time*	Staff and students use time ineffectively. Misused instructional time results from misbehavior, poor scheduling, and inefficient transitions. There are missed opportunities to maximize time on task. Observed teachers struggle with pacing and fail to use class time in a constructive manner.	Staff and student use of time is somewhat effective. Some students are off task and there are missed opportunities to maximize instructional time. Lesson schedules are moderately well planned, paced, and executed. Teachers could be more skilled and/or methodical in the use of class time.	Most staff and students use time well. A handful of students require redirection; however, the majority of students transition quickly to academic work when prompted by the teacher. There is minimal downtime. Lessons are well planned, paced, and executed. Teachers are adept at managing and using class time.	Staff and students maximize their use of time. There is no downtime. Transitions are smooth and efficient. Students transition promptly to academic work with minimal cues and reminders from teachers. Teachers meticulously use every moment of class time to prioritize instructional time on task.
4.3. Use of Staff Time	Educators lack adequate and/or recurring professional development and/or common planning time. Common planning time is currently disorganized and the time is not used effectively. As a result, staff members are unable to develop and/or share practices on a regular basis.	Most academic teams have common planning periods (less than 1 hour/week); however, the school has failed to secure vertical and horizontal planning. Collaborative planning time is used at a basic level (e.g., organization of resources or topics not directly related to classroom instruction).	All academic teams have common planning periods (1-2 hours/week) and they are seldom interrupted by non-instructional tasks. Staff members use this time to discuss instructional strategies, discuss student work, develop curricular resources, and use data to adjust instruction.	All educators have weekly common planning time for vertical and horizontal planning (more than 2 hours/week). Common planning periods are tightly protected and only interrupted by emergencies. The school has established tight protocols to ensure that common planning time is used effectively.
4.4. Routines and Transitions	The school is chaotic and disorderly. The safety of students and staff is a concern. The school lacks critical systems and routines. Movement of students is chaotic and noisy with little adult intervention. Adults are not present during transitions; therefore, there is very little re-direction.	The school is somewhat chaotic and/or disorderly, particularly in certain locations and during certain times of day. Some staff make an effort to maintain procedures and routines; however, staff presence is minimal and redirection of misbehavior is lacking.	The school environment is calm and orderly in most locations and during most of the day. Rules and procedures are fairly clear, consistent, and evident. Routines seem somewhat apparent and institutionalized. Adults are present to reinforce norms.	The school environment is calm and orderly. Rules and procedures are clear, specific, consistent, and evident. Routines are largely unspoken and institutionalized. Adults are consistently present to reinforce norms.
4.5. Financial Management	The school and/or district do not make sound budgetary decisions based on student need and projected impact. Budget decisions are largely governed by past practice and do not account for sustainability. There is little to no	Budget decisions are sometimes focused on factors unrelated to student needs and school goals. A number of expenditures and initiatives lack a plan for sustainability beyond the current school year. School and/or	The school and/or district have emerging strategic budgeting practices. The school and/or district have begun to repurpose funds to align expenditures more closely with school goals and student needs.	The school and district engage in strategic budgeting. The school and district invest in high-yield, research-based initiatives aligned to student needs and school goals. There is a clear sustainability plan for all major

---

[5] The total amount of ELA instructional time per day at the secondary level can include reading- and/or writing-intensive coursework.

Note: The rubrics draw from the CSDE's School Quality Review and Network Walkthrough Tool, and Mass Insight Education's School Readiness Assessment.

	OPERATIONS			
Indicator	Below Standard	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
	evidence around school and/or district leaders successfully advocating for school resource needs.	district leaders do not effectively advocate for school needs or pursue additional resources.	Sustainability may pose a concern. School/district leaders effectively advocate for school needs and pursue additional resources.	expenditures. School/district leaders effectively advocate for school needs, and build strategic relationships to pursue needed resources.