

Attendance & Engagement System of Support & Professional Communities



Developed by the CSDE in collaboration with SERC

1/7/2025



Today's Agenda

Welcome

Christine Kuehlewind, Ann Marie Cordisco, and Holli Ryan, State Education Resource Center (SERC)

What's New at CSDE and Partners

Kari Sullivan Custer, Attendance & Engagement Consultant, CSDE

Jay Brown, Bureau of Special Education Consultant (Academic Office), CSDE

Kimberly S. Traverso, Ph.D., LPC, Office of Student Supports and Organizational Effectiveness, Consultant and Program Manager, CSDE

Comprehensive Mental Health and Wellness at Norwalk Public Schools

Robert Pennington - Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Norwalk Public Schools

Dr. Robin Gredinger - Social Worker in Residence, Norwalk Public Schools

Upcoming Attendance & Engagement Meetings

Christine Kuehlewind, SERC



Welcome

December 5, 2024

- [Press Release: Regional School Choice Application Open Now Through February 7, 2025](#)
- [U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights Releases New Resource Explaining Civil Rights Implications of Schools' Use of Artificial Intelligence](#)

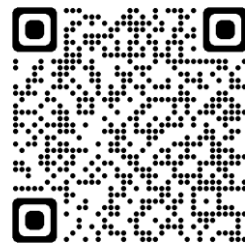
December 9, 2024

- [Educator Recruitment by the Numbers](#)

December 12, 2024

- [FAFSA Completion Status Data Now Available](#)
- [CT State Department of Education 2025 Legislative Proposals](#)
- [Connecticut National Guard – Recruiter Access to Schools](#)

[Superintendent's Digest](#)





A UNIVERSE OF OPPORTUNITIES



CONNECTICUT
Education

2024-2025

Talk Tuesday

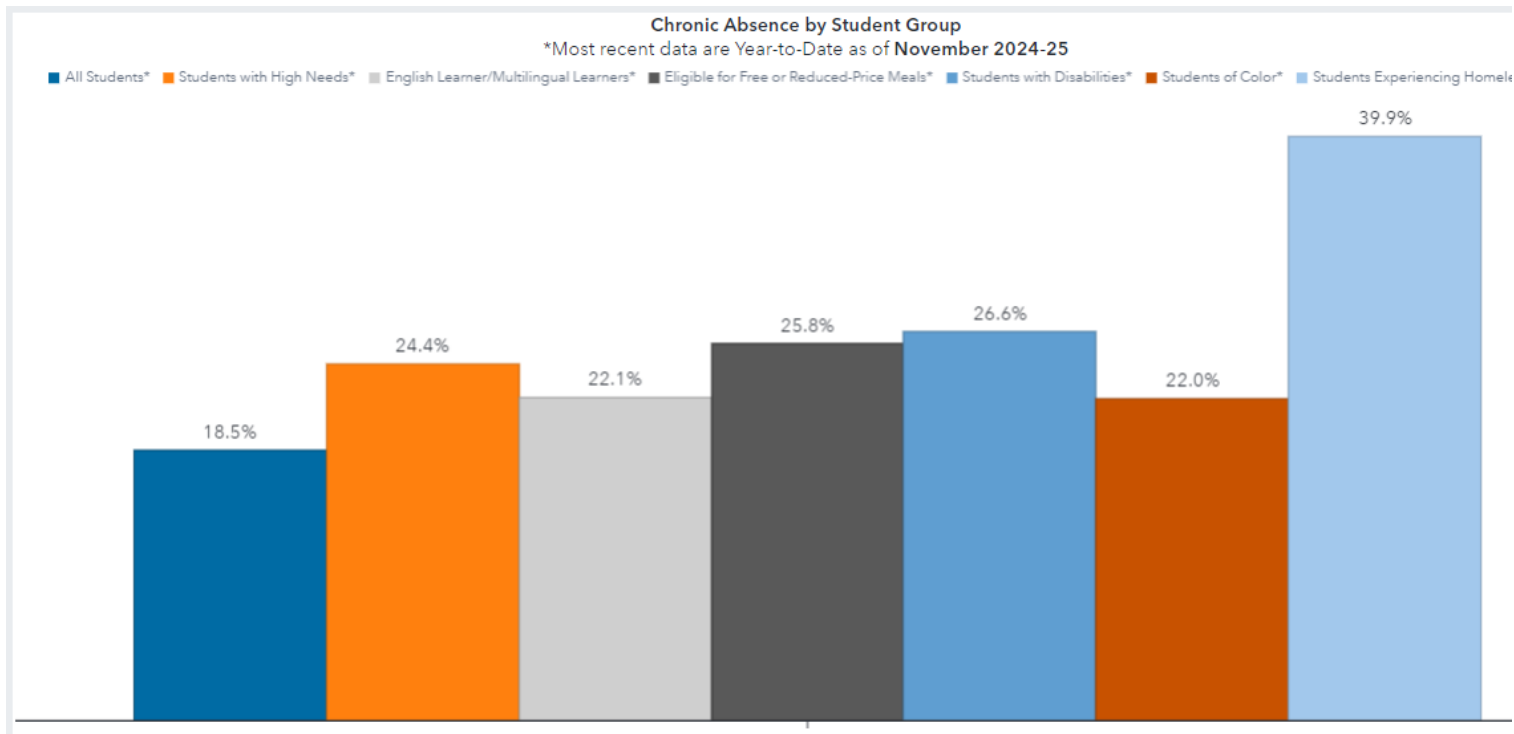
Kari Sullivan Custer
January 7, 2025

Connecticut State
Department of Education



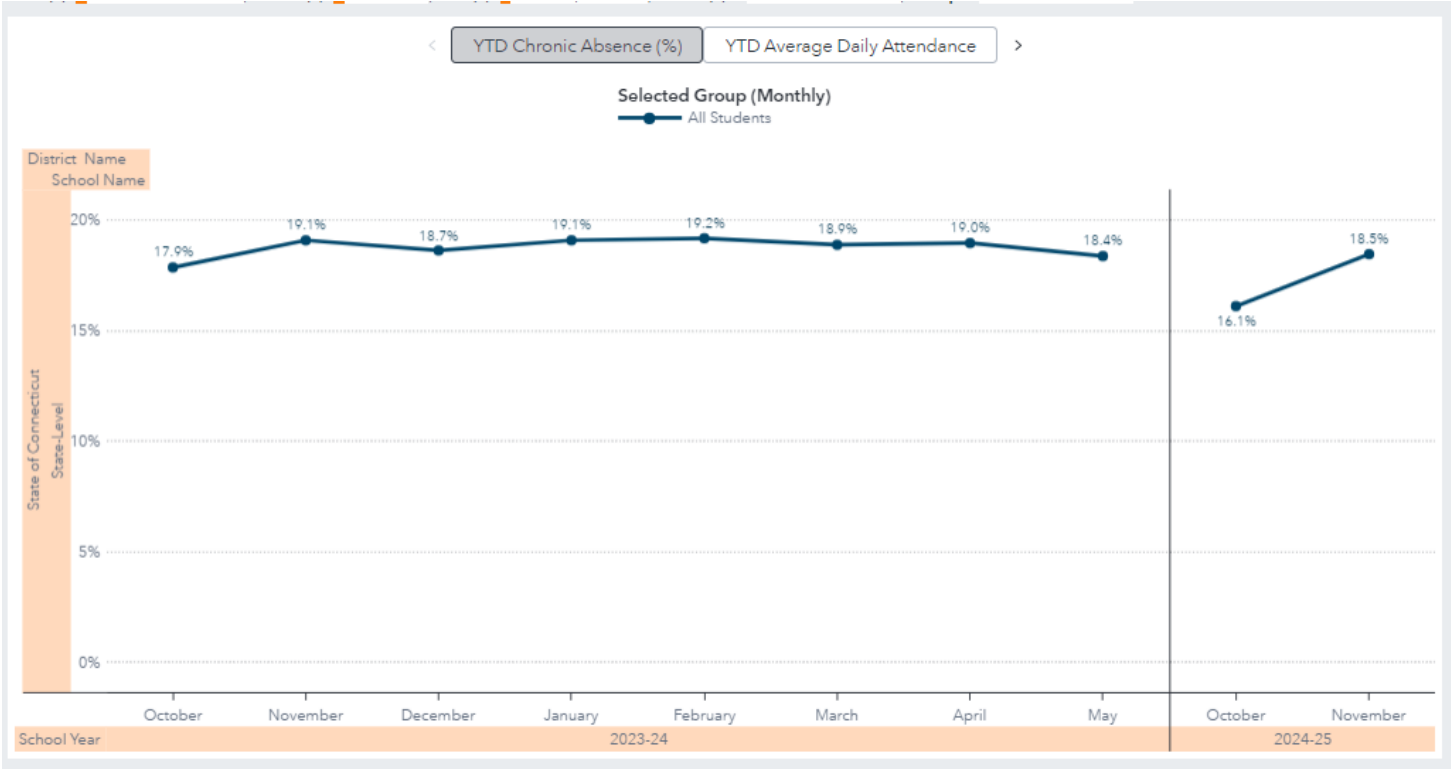
EdSight Attendance Dashboard

November 2024





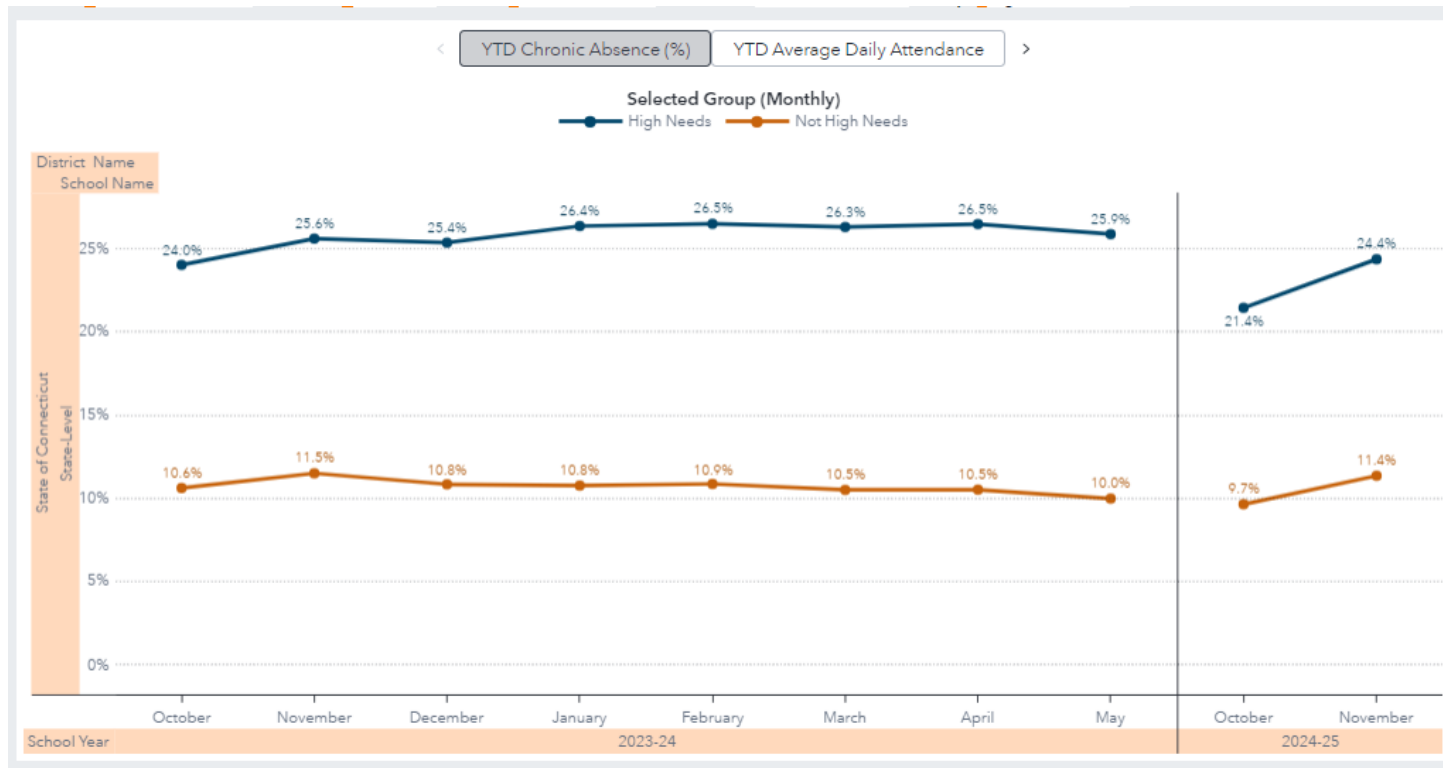
Three Year Trend – November All Students





A UNIVERSE OF
OPPORTUNITIES

Three Year Trend – November High Needs vs. Non High Needs





Effective Strategies: Boosting Attendance this School Year



Have you observed any seasonal or health-related attendance trends, and how are you planning to mitigate these?



Effective Strategies: Boosting Attendance this School Year

Have you observed any seasonal or health-related attendance trends, and how are you planning to mitigate these?

What steps are you taking to ensure strong communication with families about the importance of regular attendance during the colder months?



Winter Resources for Addressing Attendance

1. Preventing Absences in Winter Months - Attendance Works

- Offers strategies and tools to combat seasonal challenges like illnesses, transportation issues, and weather-related barriers.
- [Attendance Works Resources](#)

2. Bright Spots CT Report 2023

- Includes Connecticut-specific examples and strategies to improve attendance.
- [Bright Spots CT Report 2023](#)

3. CDC Guidance for Schools During Cold and Flu Season

- Tips on reducing illness-related absences by promoting hygiene practices and vaccination programs.
- [CDC School Health Resources](#)

4. EdSight Attendance [Dashboard](#)

- Helps districts analyze chronic absenteeism data to identify trends and plan interventions.

5. "[School is Better With You!](#)" Attendance Awareness Campaign

- A Connecticut-focused initiative promoting attendance messaging and engagement ideas.

6. [Talk Tuesdays!!!](#) Where we learn from each other.



School is Better with You!

Spread the Word [Toolkit](#)

- Parent Flyer (English & Spanish)
- School Staff Flyer (English & Spanish)
- Tip Sheet – morning announcements
- Tips for Talking to Parents and Families
- When is sick too sick for school? (English & Spanish)
- Is your child missing school due to anxiety? (Attendance Works)
- Logos
- Social media memes (English & Spanish)

Get Answers [FAQs](#) (12 items)

- Why is daily attendance important?
- What kind of mental/social emotional health benefits come from being in school?
- When should I keep my child home from school?
- My family has travel plans...
- How can I help my child stay engaged and interested in school?



www.ct.gov/sde/betterwithyou



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OPPORTUNITIES

Handle with Care

Handle With Care

An alert system initiated by first responders for students who are exposed to trauma-inducing experiences outside of school.

The Problem

- From a national survey referenced by Handle with Care Massachusetts:
 - 60% of American children have been exposed to violence, crime, or abuse.
 - 40% were direct victims of two or more violent acts.
- Extended exposure to violence and trauma can negatively impact a child's ability to learn and thrive in school. **Potential consequences** include academic failure/grade retention, truancy, suspension/expulsion, drop-out, and involvement with the juvenile justice system.

A Solution: What is Handle With Care?

An alert system initiated by first responders for students who are exposed to traumatic incidents, such as domestic violence, drug overdose, and other trauma-inducing experiences outside of school. Through school-community partnerships, this initiative confidentially alerts schools to observe the student and determine whether there is need for additional support, as well as respond with empathy if their behavior is dysregulated.

Mission

To provide context for educators and school staff if a child's behavior in school is altered because of an incident and to be proactive in the provision of supports. Ultimately, the goal is to optimize a school's response and promote student success.

Benefits

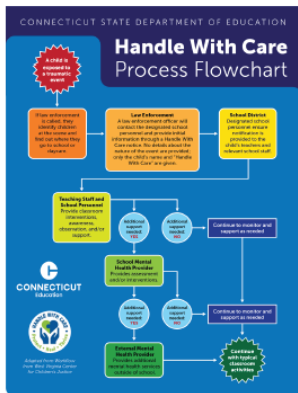
- Immediate notification for school staff
- Supports children who are exposed to trauma in their home, school, or community in connecting with appropriate resources
- Promotes positive relationships between families, schools, and law enforcement

Do we have Handle with Care in Connecticut?

Enfield, North Haven, and East Hampton are currently implementing Handle with Care in their school districts!

Common Key Stakeholders

Child exposed to violence or trauma, law enforcement officer/Child Protective Services worker, superintendent, principal, school mental health providers, teacher(s), families, community partners.



See larger version on next page.

What is Handle with Care?

Handle with Care is an alert system initiated by first responders for students who are exposed to traumatic incidents, such as domestic violence, drug overdose, and other trauma-inducing experiences outside of school. The alert is sent to predetermined school official(s) following first responder or law enforcement's involvement in such community incident occurring the day or night before.

Next Steps

The CSDE, OEC and DESPP are working together to expand this program already operating in other states and a number of districts in Connecticut. **Please join us for a virtual meeting on January 28, 2025, from 9:00-10:00 at this link: [Handle With Care Alert System Informational Meeting](#)** for a discussion with Connecticut school leaders and law enforcement partners already implementing this program with success.



Comprehensive Mental Health and Wellness at Norwalk Public Schools

Robert Pennington - Assistant Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Robin Gredinger - Social Worker in Residence



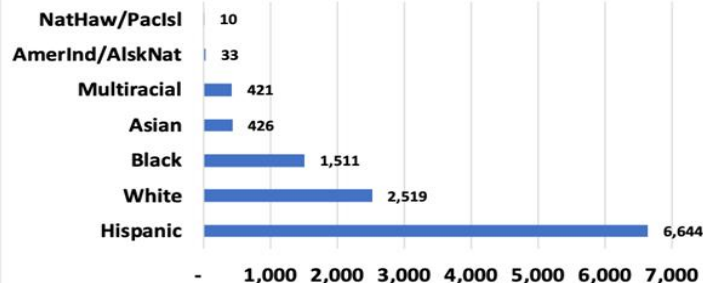
NPS Enrollment: 11,564

Student Demographics Dashboard (12/1/2024) (includes Pre-K)

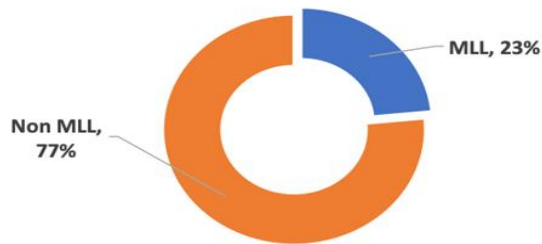
Free & Reduced Lunch



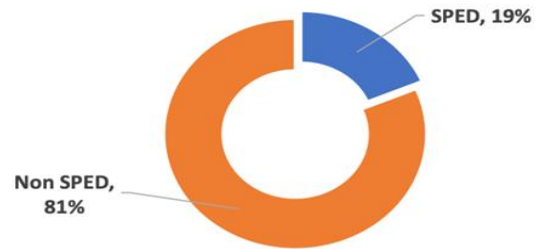
Enrollment By Race/Ethnicity



Multilingual Learners (MLL)



Specialized Education (SPED)



Behavioral Health Pilot

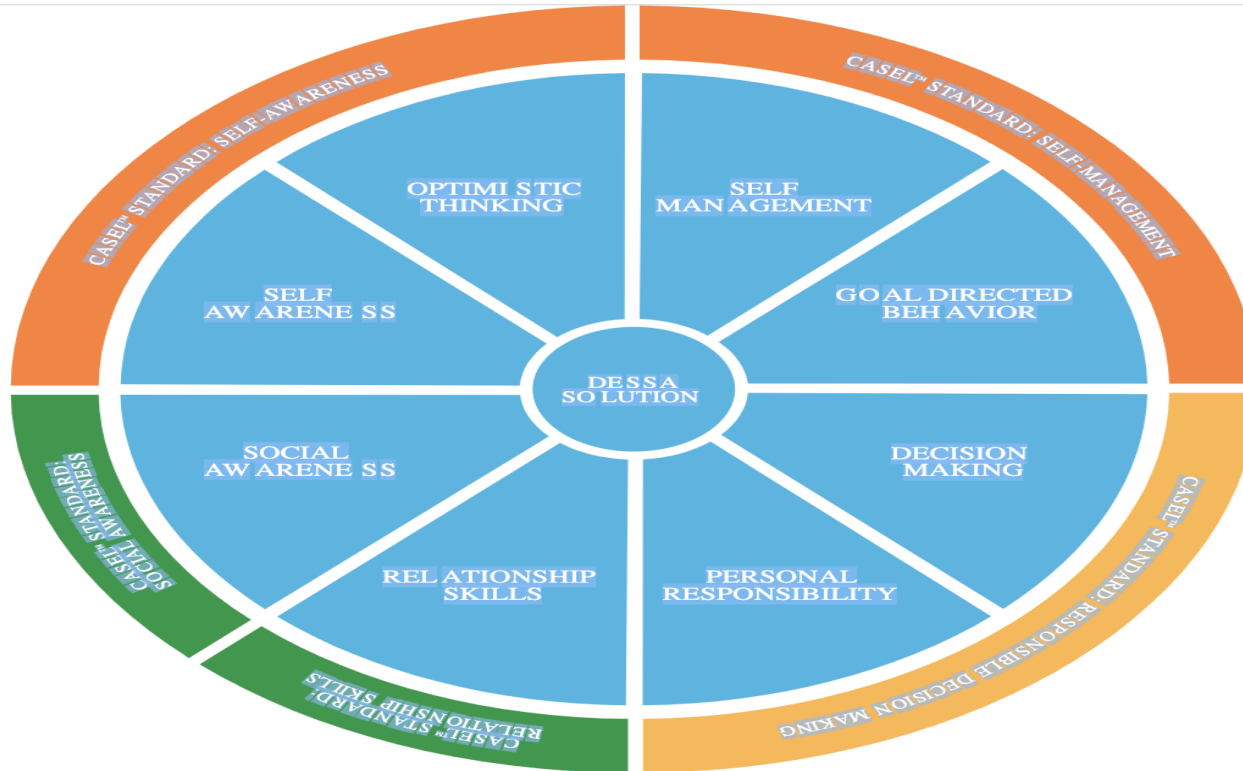
- CHDI/CSDE/NPS Grant
- Shape Assessment given at district level and all 21 Schools.
- Provided baseline data on mental health and wellness supports.
- Results drove district initiatives.



Shape Assessment Results

	District	NPS ES	NPS MS	NPS HS	All Schools
Teaming	3.6	4.3	4	4	4.1
Needs Assessment/Resource Mapping	2.7	3.1	2.7	2.9	2.9
Mental Health Promotion Services and Supports	2.9	4.1	3.2	3.9	3.7
Early Intervention and Treatment Services and Supports	2.4	4.6	3.6	3.9	4.0
Screening	3	3.1	2.6	3	2.9
Funding and Sustainability	4.3	3.8	3	3.3	3.4
Impact	2.8	3	2.7	2.8	2.8

K-8 Mental Health & Wellness Screeners - DESSA



Mental Health & Wellness Screener

School Counselors Grades 8 -12

- At least 3 meetings
- Date & Meeting Documented
 - 504 Counseling, Academic, Anxiety, Behavior reflection, Course selection, Crisis, Emotional regulation, Friend/Peer issue, Home support, LBGTQIA support, Post-Secondary planning, Schedule support, Staff/Teacher issue, Substance support.

Developmental Guidance

- K - 2nd Grade
 - Workforce Development
- 6th - 7th Grade
 - Social Emotional Learning



The District Comprehensive Mental Health and Wellness Team (CMHW)

The District Comprehensive Mental Health and Wellness Team (CMHW) was created in 2023-2024 to address the needs of our K - 8 schools scholars and faculty/staff. This diverse team analyzed data and systems to improve schools and support the needs.

Comprehensive Mental Health and Wellness Team

District Level Team Created K - 8th Grade: In order to work with all stakeholders to assess current systems and create future systems.

Members Invited:

- Assistant Principals
- Cabinet
- Cooperative Educational Services (CES)
- Data Team
- Dean of Students
- Leadership Team
- Mid-Fairfield Child Guidance
- MLL Teachers
- Principals
- Psychologists
- SRBI
- School Counselors
- School Discipline
- School Safety
- Social Workers



Mental Health and Wellness Vision Statement

Norwalk Public Schools' vision of comprehensive mental health and wellness is centered on fostering a vibrant and inclusive learning experience where all community members including families, scholars and staff are empowered to thrive academically, emotionally and socially. We are committed to building and sustaining a culture that prioritizes the development of essential life skills, including emotional intelligence, interpersonal relationships and resilience.



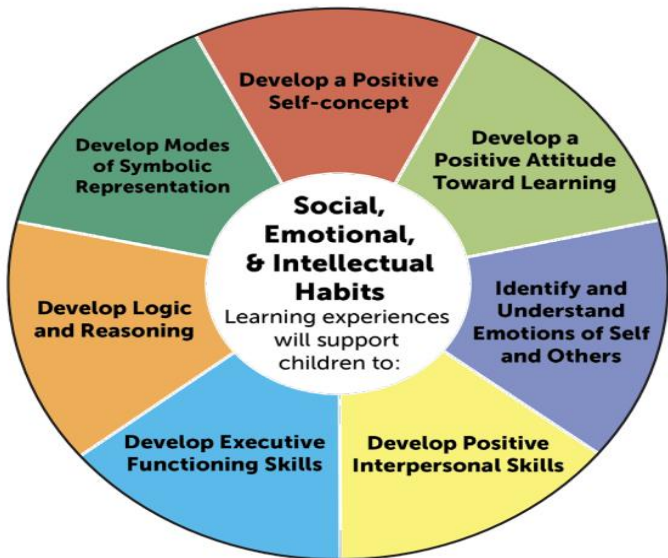
Whole Child Initiative

Goal: Develop Comprehensive Tiered Behavioral Health Support Systems

Objective: Establish/enhance tiered systems to provide mental health and wellness support for scholars.

Action Plans:

- Expanded partnerships with community organizations for school-based services.
- Disseminated Norwalk HELPS, resource mapping
- Implemented K - 8 School-Wide Comprehensive Mental Health and Wellness programs.
- K - 2, 6 & 7 developmental guidance lessons provided to foster resilience, emotional well-being and career readiness.
- Universal mental health screeners given to 95% of all K - 8 scholars
- Develop MTSS Behavioral Health system
- Provided Adult Wellness supports to all educators
- Community and School collaborated Trainings



DESSA Competencies



Optimistic Thinking



Relationship Skills



Self-Management



Responsible
Decision-Making



Social Awareness



Self-Awareness



Social/Emotional/Intellectual Habits



Aligned DESSA Competencies

1	Develop a Positive Self Concept	Self Awareness, Self Management, Optimistic Thinking
2	Develop a Positive Attitude Toward Learning	Self Awareness, Self Management, Optimistic Thinking
3	Identify and Understand Emotions	Self Awareness, Social Awareness, Self Management
4	Develop Interpersonal Skills	Social Awareness, Relationship Skills
5	Develop Executive Functioning Skills	Self Awareness, Self Management, Responsible Decision Making, Optimistic Thinking
6	Develop Logic and Reason	Responsible Decision Making, Optimistic Thinking, Relationships Skills
7	Develop Modes of Symbolic Representation	Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, Responsible Decision Making



Instructional Leadership Team (ILT)

Classroom Patterns & Trends

Learning Walks
Student Shadowing
Coaching Cycles
Professional Learning Plan

Possible Next Steps

Adjustments to Professional Learning Plan
Update SIP Action Items
Coaching Cycle Supports
Adjustments to WIN Groups
Communication to Staff

Building-Wide Data Trends



01

Teacher Teams

Unit Checkpoints/Assessments
District Assessment Data
NWEA DIBELS PSAT
SBAC LAS Links SAT
Teacher Team Agendas
Lesson Planning, Adjustments, & Implementation
On-Track Data
Cycles of Improvement



02

SRBI Teams

WIN Data
Progress Monitoring Data
Academically At-Risk Data
DESSA Data



03

Supportive Environment Teams

Behavior & Suspension Data
Building Response Team Data
School Climate Committee Data
Child Study Team Data
Panorama Survey Data



04

Attendance Teams

Chronic Absenteeism
Attendance At-Risk Data



05

Equity Teams

Equity Team Agendas
District Assessment Data
NWEA DIBELS PSAT
SBAC LAS Links SAT

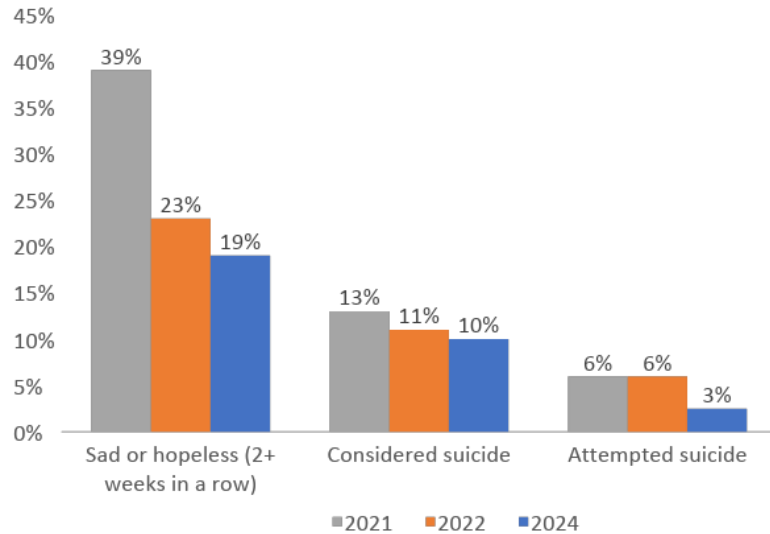
Instructional Leadership Team Rounds

- All K-8 Schools;
- SRBI Coordinator, Data Analysis, District Clinician;
- School Mental Health Professionals;
- NPS Dashboard- Academic, Behavioral, Attendance.

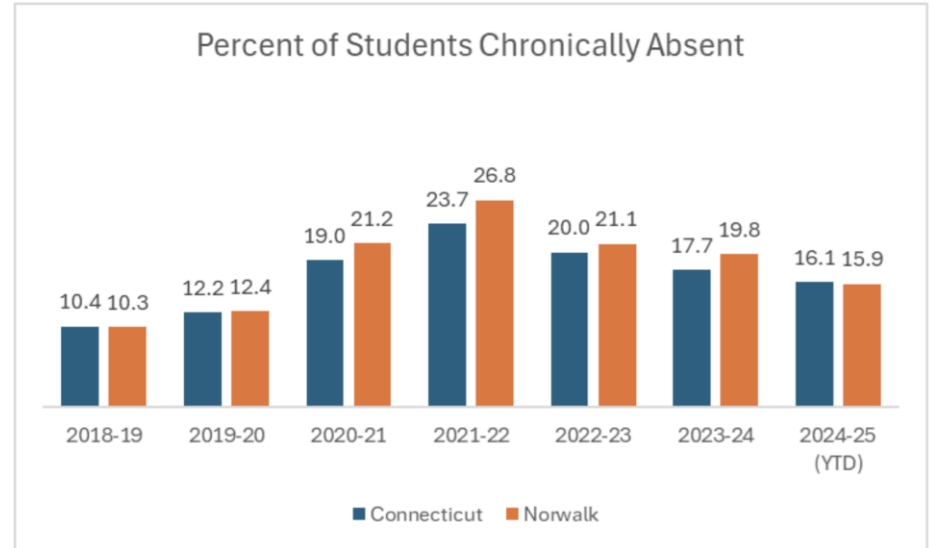
Impact

Depression & Suicidality in Norwalk Youth:

Trend from 2021 to 2024



Chronic Absenteeism



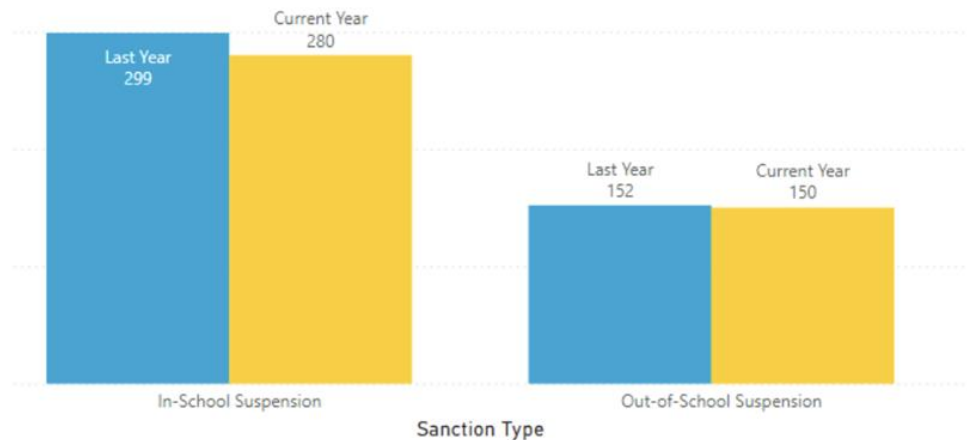
YTD is through October 2025 for CT and December 2025 for Norwalk

Impact

This year, there have been 472 behavioral incidents resulting in suspension or expulsion, a **5.72 percent decrease** from last year this time.

West Rocks Middle School has experienced a **53.4 percent decrease** in overall incidents compared to last year. They've cut fighting incidents from 24 to 7 and out-of-school suspension from 35 to 13.

Brien McMahon has experienced a **25 percent decrease** in overall incidents compared to last year.





Mid-Fairfield
Community Care Center
A Clifford Beers Community Health Partner



Family &
Children's
AGENCY



Community Partners

Norwalk School and Community Partnerships


Norwalk has been intentional in creating strong community partnerships with local mental health providers and other community providers to serve all of our stakeholders.

Community School-Based Services Partnerships: Mid-Fairfield Community Care, Norwalk CHC, Human Service Council, Triangle Community Center, Kids in Crisis, Positive Directions

Community District Crisis Partnerships: Mid Fairfield Community Care, Family and Children's Agency, City of Norwalk, Western Regional Crisis Team

Programs: CT Music Therapy; Norwalk Mentor Program, Community Mindfulness Project

Norwalk Public Schools Community Partnerships

 Schools								
NHS	X		X	X	X	X		
PTECH	X		X	X	X	X		
BMHS	X	X		X	X	X		
CGS	X	X		X	X	X		
PRSA	X	X				X	X	
WRMS	X		X	X		X		X
RMS	X		X			X		
NHMS	X		X			X	X	
CMS	X	X				X		
Brookside	X						X	
Cranbury	X						X	
Kendall	X						X	X
SONO	X							X
Jefferson			X					
Tracey	X							
Fox Run	X							
Silvermine	X							
Rowayton	X							
Marvin	X							
Naramake	X							
Wolfpit	X						X	

Norwalk Mental Health and Wellness Trainings

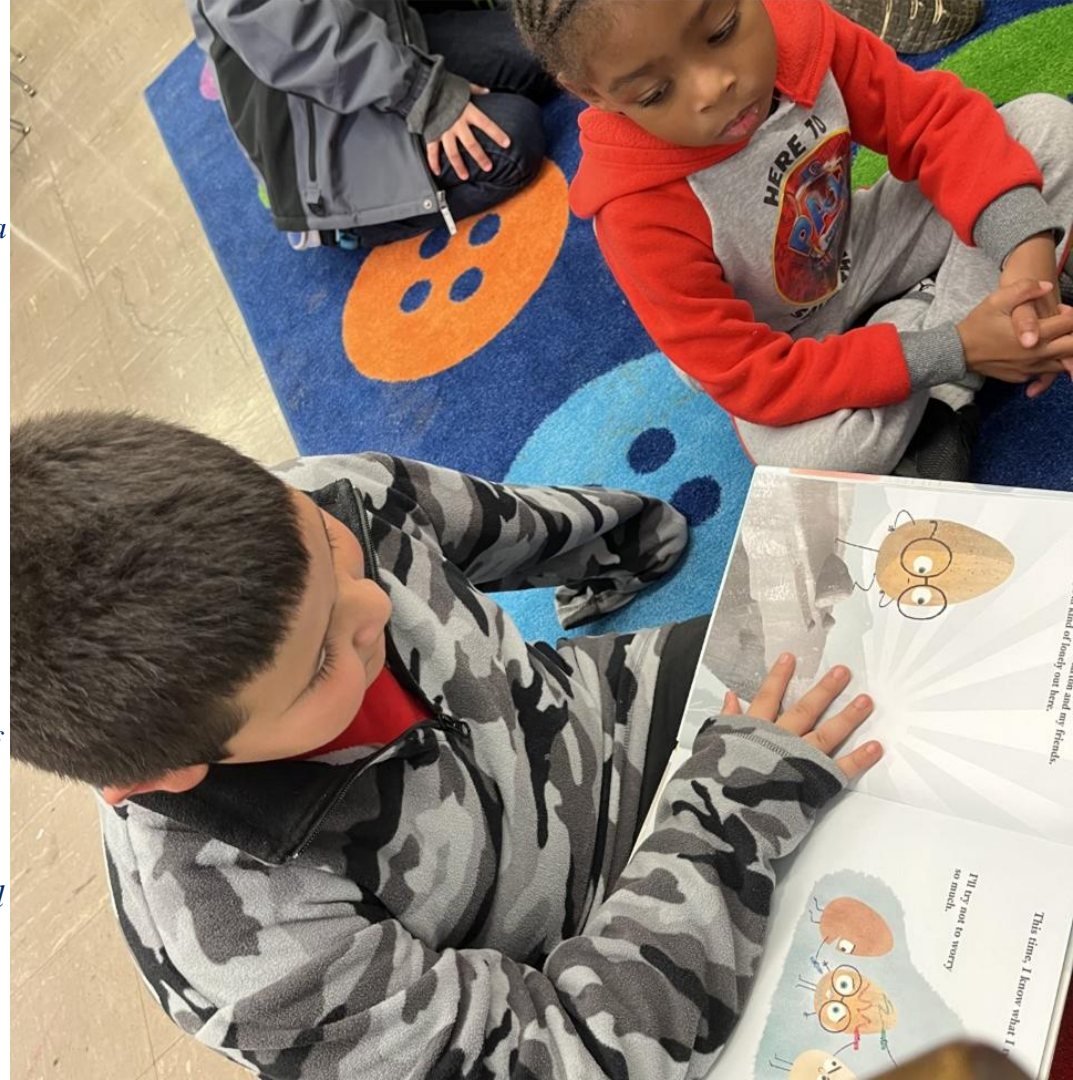


- ★ CSTAG Threat Assessment
- ★ Psychological First Aid
- ★ Risk Assessment/CALM/211
- ★ Self Care and Resilience
- ★ Adult Wellness/Mindfulness

Norwalk Helps

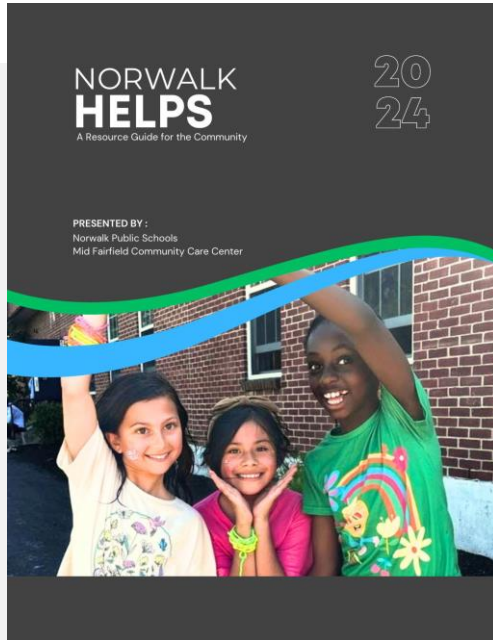
Mental Health includes all states of health, from wellness to illness. Important at every stage of life, mental health describes a person's emotional, psychological, and social well-being, which affects the way a person thinks, feels and behaves. Just like physical health, mental health lies on a continuum and continually shifts, changes and evolves during a lifetime.

We developed the Norwalk Helps Resource Guide to provide general guidance and a better understanding of mental health and community supports and services available to students, families, and educators in Norwalk Public Schools. The information contained in this guide is not exhaustive, but we hope that it will serve as a useful tool for parents and guardians who may have concerns about the mental health and wellness of their child(ren). None of the information in this guide should be construed as medical or psychiatric advice nor is it intended as a substitute for a trained mental health professional. Our intention is to alleviate confusion, reduce misunderstanding, and provide clear and simple answers to common questions about the available mental health resources and supports in our community.

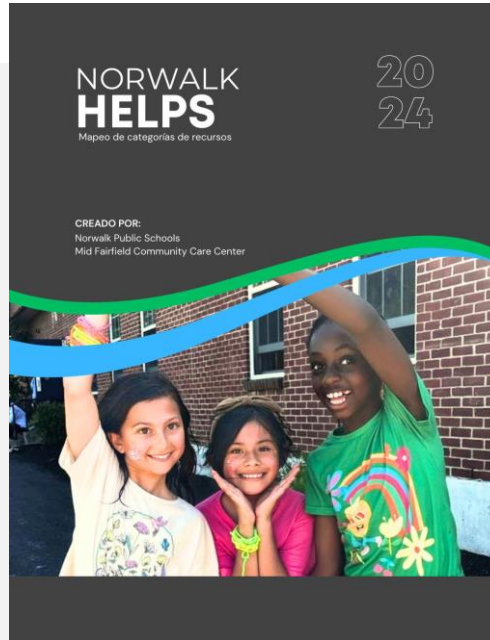


Resource Mapping

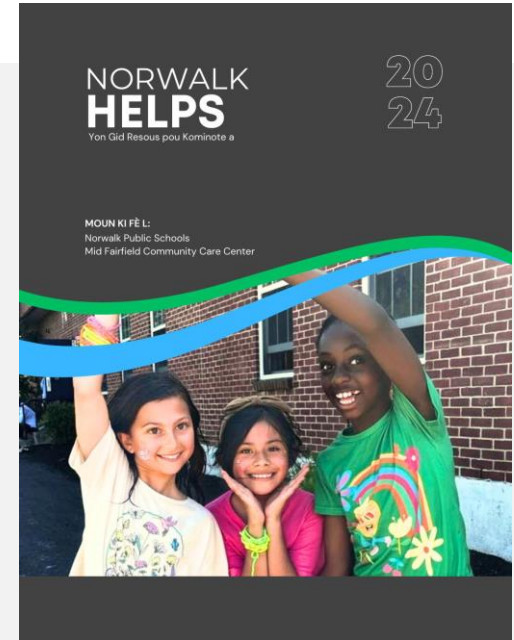
Active websites links for easy stakeholder access.
Provided in English, Haitian Creole and Spanish.



ENGLISH



SPANISH



HAITIAN CREOLE

Norwalk School and Community Partnerships



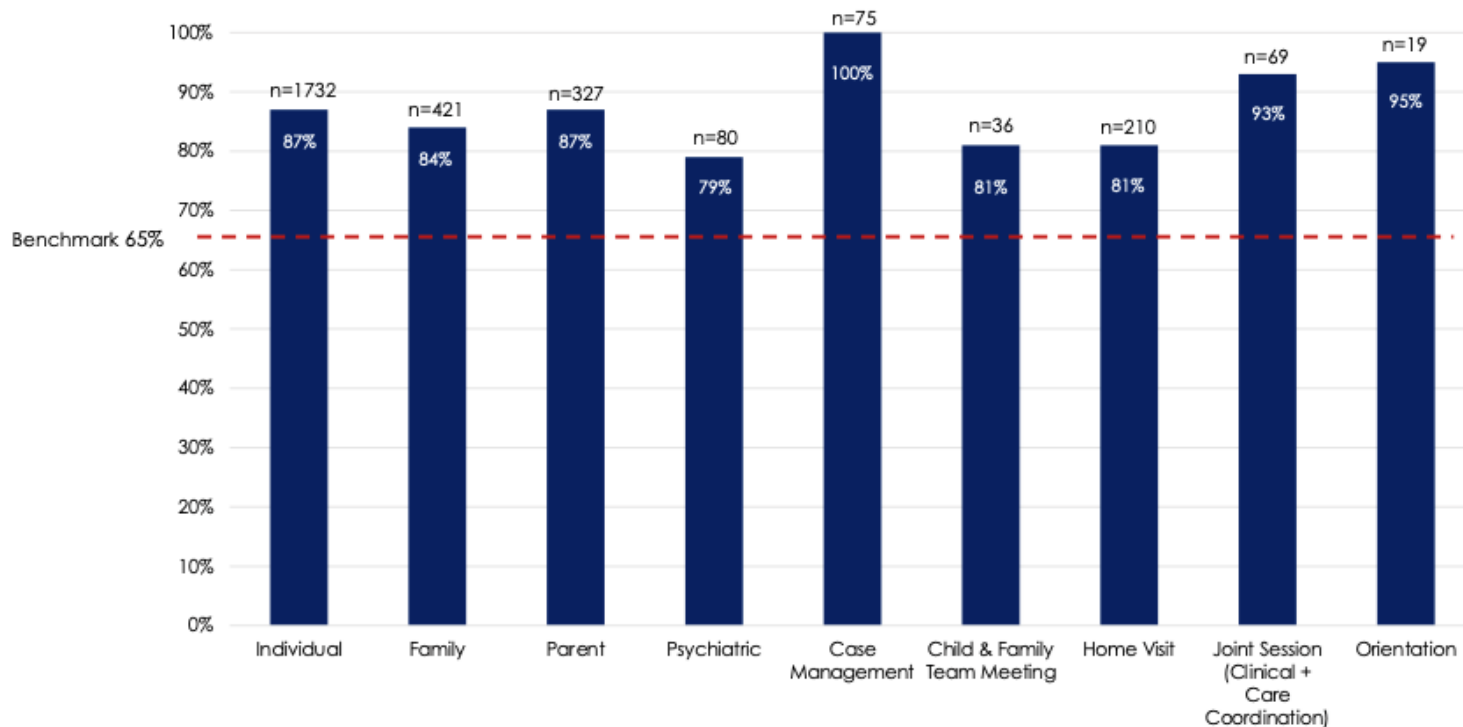
Mental Health Gap Analysis



Impact

Impact (July 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024)

Show Rates



Note: Excludes EDT, IOP, Bounce Back



- K - 8 Tier 1 supports
- Adult wellness
- Community school partnerships
- Relevant trainings
- District and school quarterly ILT Meetings
- Development of Social Emotional Behavioral MTSS System
- Mental Health and Wellness education for school leaders
- Piloting DESSA at High School



Scan Me





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Upcoming Attendance & Engagement Meetings

Talk Tuesdays for the 2024-25 School Year

2024-2025

- January 21
- February 4
- March 4
- March 18
- April 1
- April 29
- May 13
- May 27

Register for Talk Tuesdays





Keep in Touch!

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