



Telling your school's story

Netstat May 14th

Take a moment and introduce yourself in the chat - who are you, what school you are from and your role



Presenters

Matt Brown

Chief Turnaround Officer Waterbury
Public Schools

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Education Consultant

Turnaround Office CSDE

Iris.White@ct.gov

Outcomes for this session

- Analyse your school's story/stories
- Evaluate if that matches the story you want it to be
- Review samples of schools telling their story
- Create or strengthen your strategy for telling the story you want to tell about your school with impact over the long haul

Norms

All of us want to be a bit better
at our jobs today than we were
yesterday

Engage to the degree that you
can, you are here so use it for
what it is intended as best you can

Share the air and share the space

Be open to the possibility that
maybe you should rethink some
things

Be kind to yourself and others

Agenda

1. Define “Story” and Impact
2. Stories that don’t serve us
3. Case Study - HSC
4. More Examples- Derby Middle School, Clinton Avenue
5. Consider the story you want to build

What you do matters

Research confirms that there are no documented instances of failing schools turning around **without powerful leadership.**"

Wallace Foundation - Turning Around Lowest Performing Schools 2011

Define “Story”

The narrative(s) that exist in the world at large about your school. What people say in response to “What do you know about _____ (your school), I’m thinking of enrolling my child there.”

What weaves together to create that narrative of your school?

- **Isolated incidents**
- **Overall culture/climate**
- **Student performance - data, qualitative, representative**
- **Students and staff themselves, who they are, where they are**
- **Location**

Where the story about your school gets told

- Social Media
- Mass/Traditional Print Media
- Television Media
- Central Office Publications
- Central Office informal (gossip)
- State Performance Data
- District Performance Data
- School Website
- Communication to families
- School's marketing materials
- School halls, walls, classrooms
- Teachers at the gym, Starbucks, vacation
- Pretty much everywhere



Influence vs Control

We can't really control what families post on social media, what stories press ultimately chooses to cover, what happens beyond our school walls that impacts our families, students and building....

But for sure we can influence it.

If you aren't creating
and managing the
story/stories of your
school, who is?

Turnaround is a long process



Interesting related fact: Gallup and PDK Poll

“However, adults do differentiate between their local public schools and schools nationally. When asked to grade schools on a traditional A-F scale, the latest data from PDK’s annual education survey show a significant gap in adults’ perceptions. Forty-four percent (44%) rate their community’s schools an A or B, compared to just 19% who give the same rating to the nation’s schools. Grades are even higher among K-12 parents, with three-quarters (76%) giving their child’s school an A or B grade.”**

What's some of the impact of your school's story/stories?

- Recruitment and enrollment of students and families
- Recruitment and retaining of high quality staff
- Resource allocation formal and informal
- School wide culture and climate
- Teacher/Student self perception and aspiration
- More....

What's a version of the story of your school out in public that doesn't serve your school or your students?



WORLD

School Student Expelled for Sending Nazi Pic to Jewish Classmate

BY JACK DUTTON ON 4/20/21 AT 11:34 AM EDT

BUSINESS ▾ PERSONAL FINANCE ▾ TRAVEL ▾ CAR ▾

Home » Education » The 20 Worst High Schools in America in 2019

The 20 Worst High School:
2019

Dana Hanson 2 Years Ago

Duval teacher fired in sexual harassment case, another suspended after inappropriate relationships

EDUCATION

Glendale campus brawl stemmed from untrue rumors, school district says

 By Rob Hayes

El Paso high school teachers say students are cheating more amid COVID-19



Zero Out Of 44 Students Complete Freshman Year

by **MELISSA BAILEY** | Jun 28, 2013 3:31 pm

[\(41\) Comments](#) | [Commenting has been closed](#) | [E-mail the Author](#)

Posted to: [Schools](#), [School Reform](#)



Padlet - <https://padlet.com/matthewpaulbrown/hrk60s6kk5ujdce>

padlet

♡ REMAKE

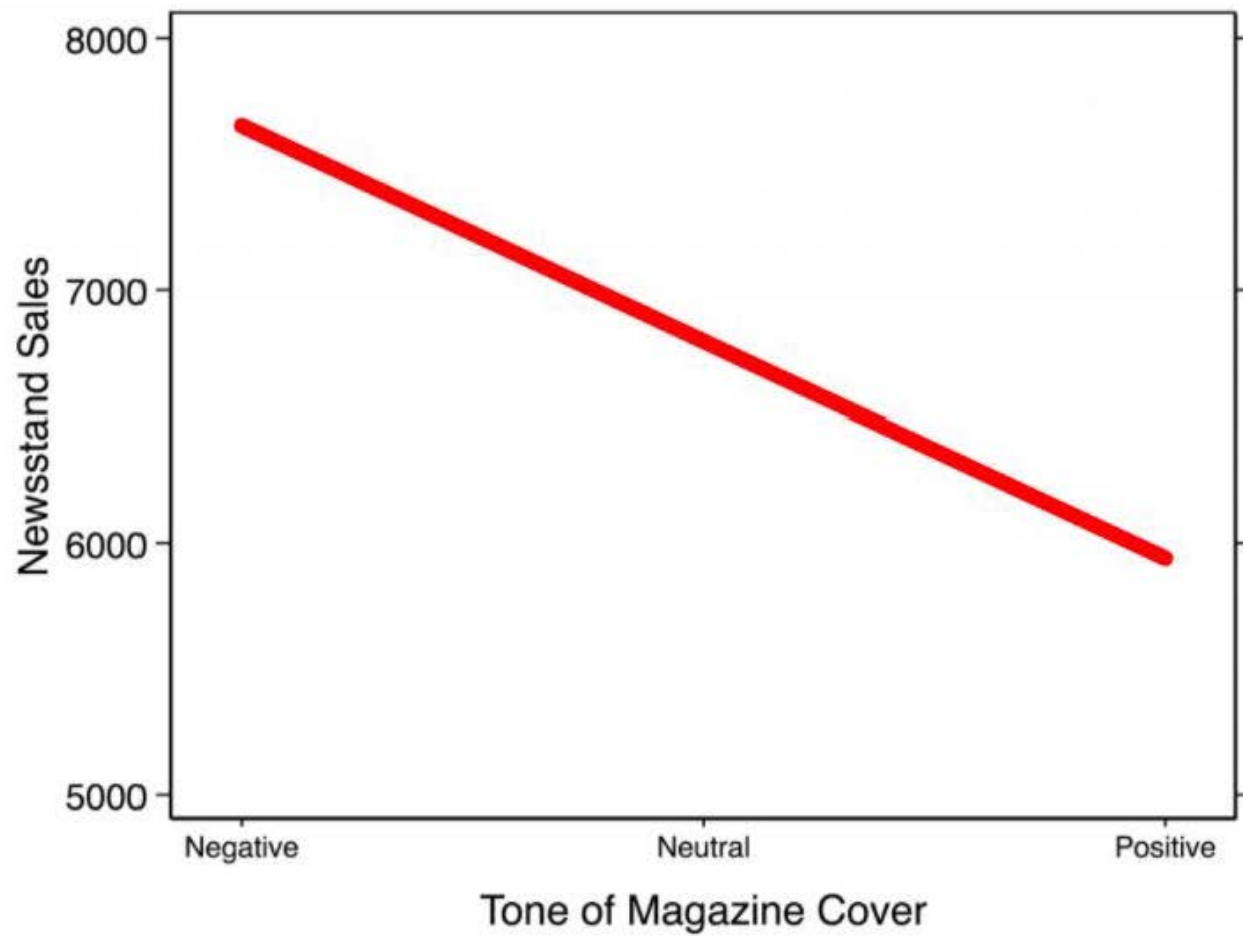
M Matt Brown • 4m

Story/stories about my school that do not serve students





Figure 1: The relationship between the tone of magazine covers and sales



Core Strategy

Strategic leaders tell the stories of their schools in ways that inspire, guide action, frame perception and help you encourage focus on “the work”.



Attention is the currency of leadership

Ronald Heifetz

If you aren't creating
and managing the
story/stories of your
school, who is?



Telling your school's story

- **Inspire**
- **Guide action**
- **Frame perception**
- **Focus on the work**

HSC - Case Study

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THE TUESDAY 3/3/15 OPEN HOUSE HAS BEEN POSTPONED UNTIL TUESDAY 3/10/15 AT 5:30 P.M. WE HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

HSC ALSJ IS NOW USING JUMPROPE TO PROVIDE MASTERY-BASED FEEDBACK ABOUT STUDENT PROGRESS! LOGIN USING YOUR STUDENT'S FIRST NAME, LAST NAME, AND NHPS ID NUMBER: [HTTPS://APP.JUMPRO.PE/PARENT/HSC](https://app.jumpro.pe/parent/hsc)

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT MASTERY-BASED GRADING, PLEASE VISIT [HTTP://WWW.HIGHSCHOOLINTHECOMMUNITY.ORG/MASTERY-BASED-LEARNING/](http://www.highschoolinthecommunity.org/mastery-based-learning/)

DON'T FORGET TO BOOKMARK [HTTP://WWW.HIGHSCHOOLINTHECOMMUNITY.ORG/CALENDAR/](http://www.highschoolinthecommunity.org/calendar/) TO KEEP UP WITH EVENTS AT HSC ALSJ!

FOUNDATION STUDENTS: FOR SCIENCE MASTERY SUPPORT, VISIT [WHY SCIENCE!](#)

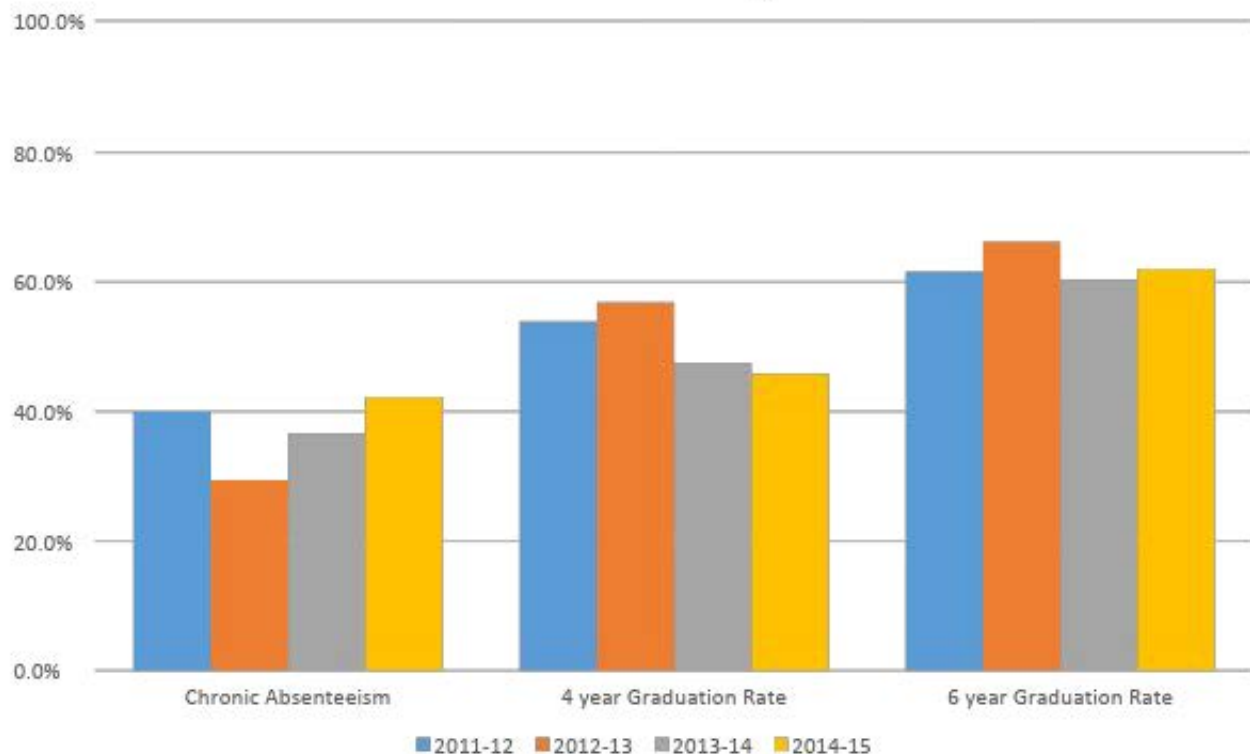
Some Details and Context

- 50 year old small school, one of first of its kind.
- Had already gone through one big phase of reform - year 4 of CN. (Hi Iris!)
- Unique relationship with Teachers' Union
- Already had a story well established and it wasn't a great one.

Background on High School in the Community (HSC)

- Entered Commissioners Network in 2012. HSC was one of the four original Commissioner's Network Schools.
- The city turned over management of the school to the local union branch, the New Haven Federation of Teachers (NHFT). In addition to new management, HSC tested out mastery based learning.
- From the beginning there were rough spots, chronic absenteeism continued to rise, declines in student performance and graduation rates.

HSC 2011-12 Through 2014-15



Background on High School in the Community (HSC)

- In June 2015, the New Haven Superintendent removed the entire leadership at HSC.
- In July 2015, the New Haven Board of Education approved Matt Brown as the new School Leader.

Uncertainty Laces HSC Seniors' Farewell

by ALIYYA SWABY | Jun 22, 2015 4:19 pm

[\(1\) Comment](#) | [Commenting has been closed](#) | [E-mail the Author](#)

Posted to: [Schools](#), [Wooster Square](#)



2015 Story of HSC

- 45% graduation rate
- 45% chronic absenteeism
- Declining enrollment
- High suspensions
- Innovation happened that was partially implemented, but frustrating for students/teachers
- Long history of respecting student voice and innovation
- Closure was a real option

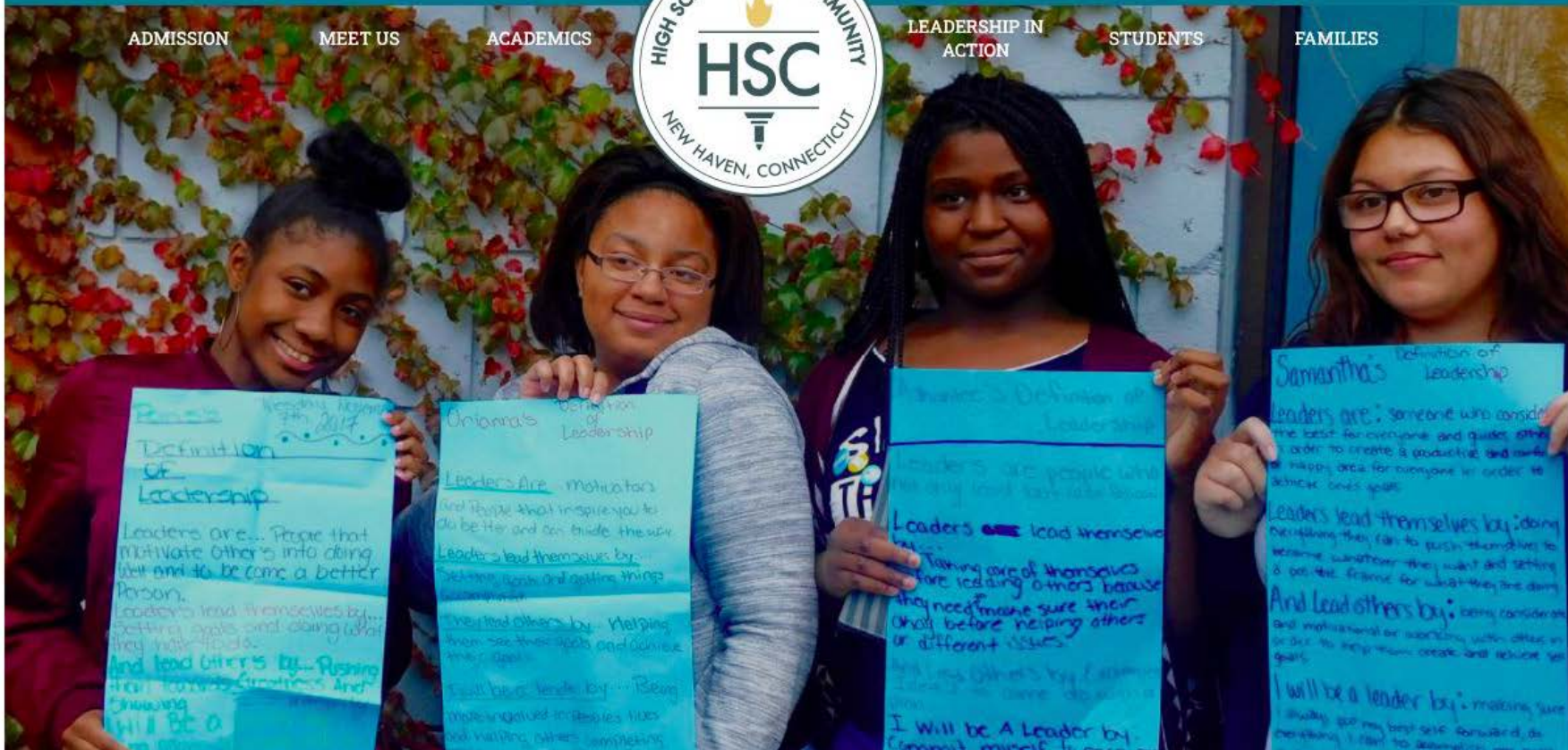
How does your school
get a new story?

How to tell the story?

- **Inspire:**
 - What are the assets? What can we build on (it can't be all bad)
- **Guide the Action:**
 - What do we do first? What matters most (so much to do). What are we measuring to give detail to this story?
- **Frame perception:**
 - Has to be about good things about kids. This is not for adults
- **Focus on the work:**
 - Telling the story should bring you back to “the work”.

How to tell the story?

- **Inspire:**
 - PBL school, students engage in real work that matters and make it public. Student voice, leadership.
- **Guide the Action:**
 - Students will graduate, and we'll start with 9th. We'll revamp our assessment system as well - use it but take the heat off.
- **Frame perception:**
 - We do some things really well. Kids love those things, so kids will speak for us.
- **Focus on the work:**
 - Student Led Conferences, Presentations of Learning, Portfolios get press, get press, get press



The small school for
students who want to
do big things

Tell it every chance we could get

HSC lets students lead parent-teacher conferences

Published 11:09 pm EDT, Sunday, May 1, 2016



Politics Health Care Budget/Economy Schools/Child Welfare Environment Washington Political Gu

Her life as a foster child leads to DCF board game

By: **ALLISON PARK | NEW HAVEN INDEPENDENT** | June 3, 2018

View as "Clean Read"



NEW HAVEN — As a foster child, Tyla Narcisse wanted the world to understand what she goes through — so she made a board game about it.

Narcisse, 15, has been jumping from home to home since the age of 4. She decided to tackle the larger issues facing foster children like herself and study the system as part of a social justice project at High School in The Community.



ALLISON PARK / NEW HAVEN INDEPENDENT

Tyla Narcisse's Monopoly-esque board game about being a DCF foster child.

“Court” Is In Session At HSC

by **MARKESHIA RICKS** | Oct 27, 2016 8:13 am

(1) Comment | **Commenting has been closed** | **E-mail the Author**

Posted to: **Legal Writes, Schools**



Keep telling it



Valley Independent Sentinel La Voz Hispana

Friday Was Fly Day At HSC

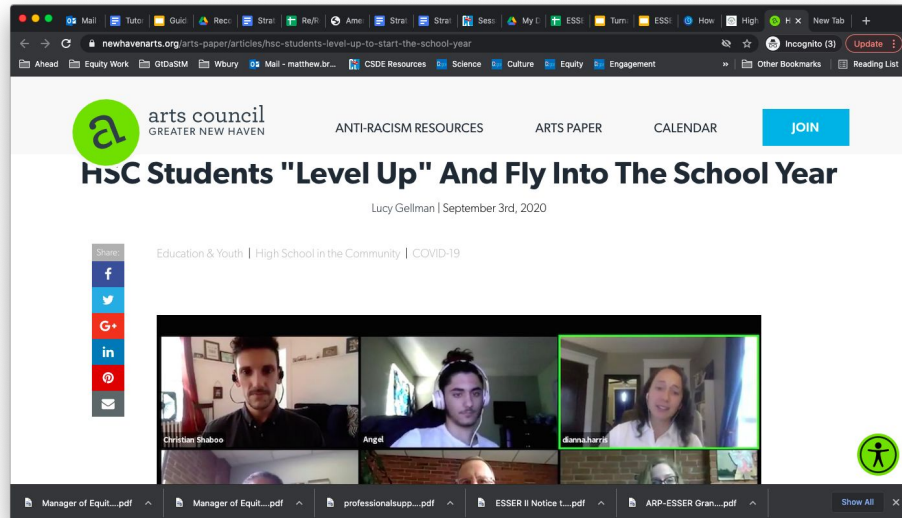
by MAYA MCFADDEN | Feb 20, 2020 12:24 pm

[\(3\) Comments](#) | [Post a Comment](#) | [E-mail the Author](#)

Posted to: [Schools](#)



What's Right With Schools: High school in New Haven creates program to reengage students distance learning



HSC Portfolio Resource Page

School Wide Portfolio Day Wednesday March 31, 2021

8:25-9:15 Portfolio Day Kick Off

9:15-9:30 Break

9:30-10:45 Portfolio Work Time

10:45-11:00 Group Wrap Up

Experimental School Rediscovered The Magic

by **CHRISTOPHER PEAK** | Jul 11, 2019 11:47 am

[\(9\) Comments](#) | [Commenting is closed](#) | [E-mail the Author](#)

Posted to: [Schools](#), [Wooster Square](#)



Don't stop telling it

In 4 years:

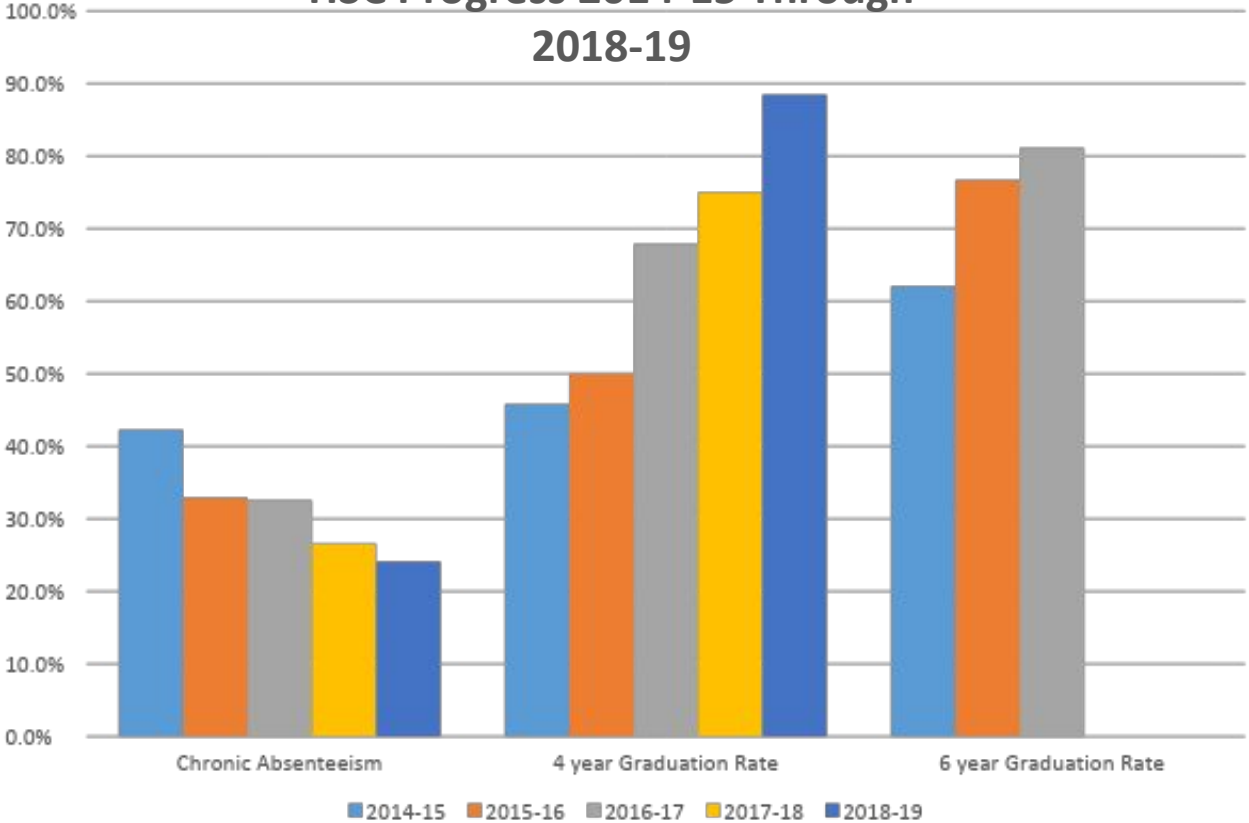
~90% Graduation Rate

CA reduced by 60%

Enrollment increased
by 25%

Different "Vibe" in
district

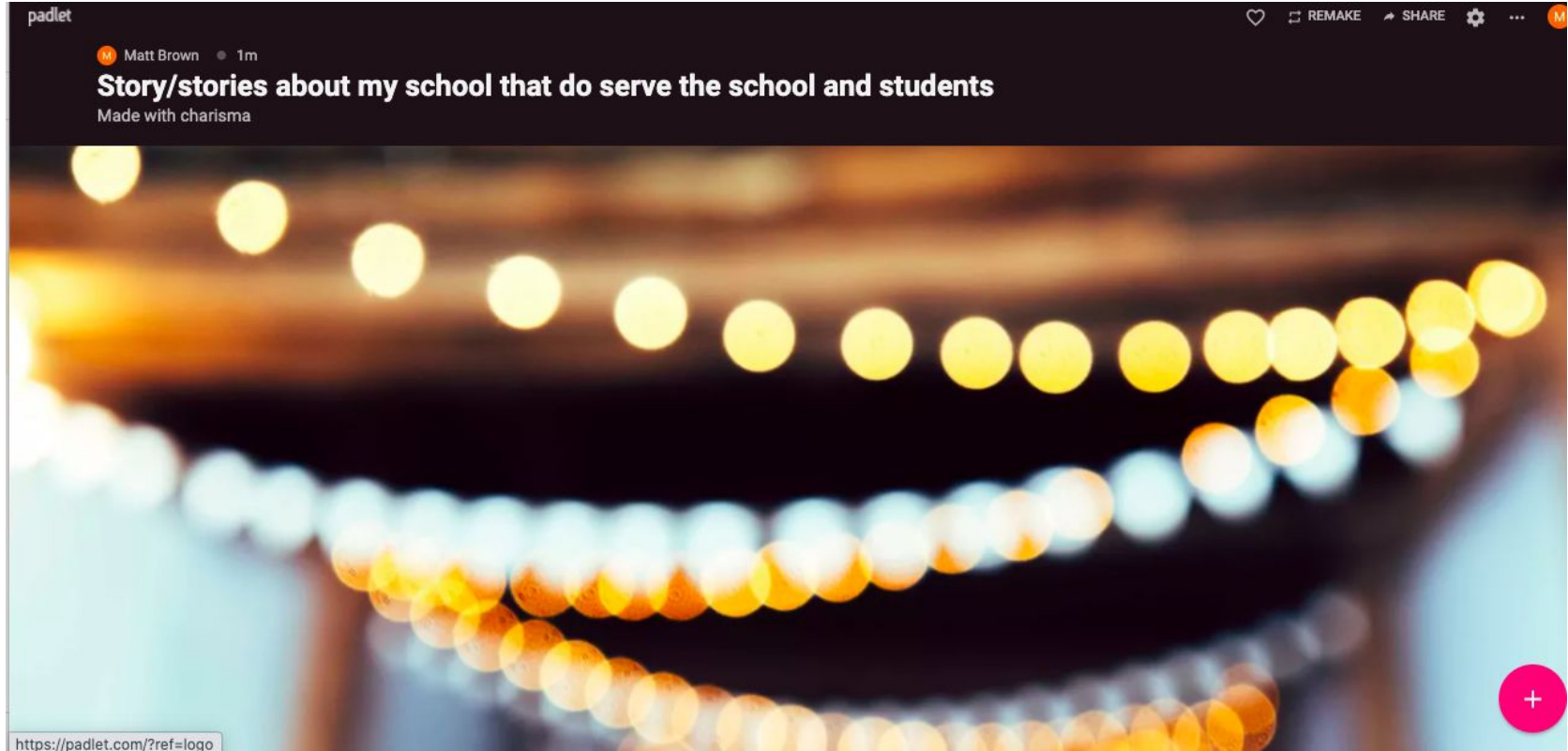
HSC Progress 2014-15 Through 2018-19



The work continues, 6
years after end of CN.
HSC is by no means
“there”. But we have a
much better story.

What's a version of the
story of your school
that does serve your
students?

Padlet <https://padlet.com/matthewpaulbrown/o7gah1iebluavfj1>





Derby Middle School, Derby



Derby Middle School
@DerbyMiddle_CT



Congratulations to Mrs. Sheridan our April DMS Rise Up Award winner! Thank you for all you do each and everyday to support DMS! [#WeAreDMS](#)
[#CTCommissionersNetwork](#)



Derby Middle School
@DerbyMiddle_CT



With the support of [@NBHS_nb](#) we raised \$1,356.27 to support [@YNHH](#) Children's Hospital to purchase bears for pediatric cardiology 🍷 patients who undergo surgery! We are so proud of you Jayden for leading the charge for such an amazing cause. [#WeAreDMS](#)
[#DMSontheRISE](#) [#RiseUp](#)

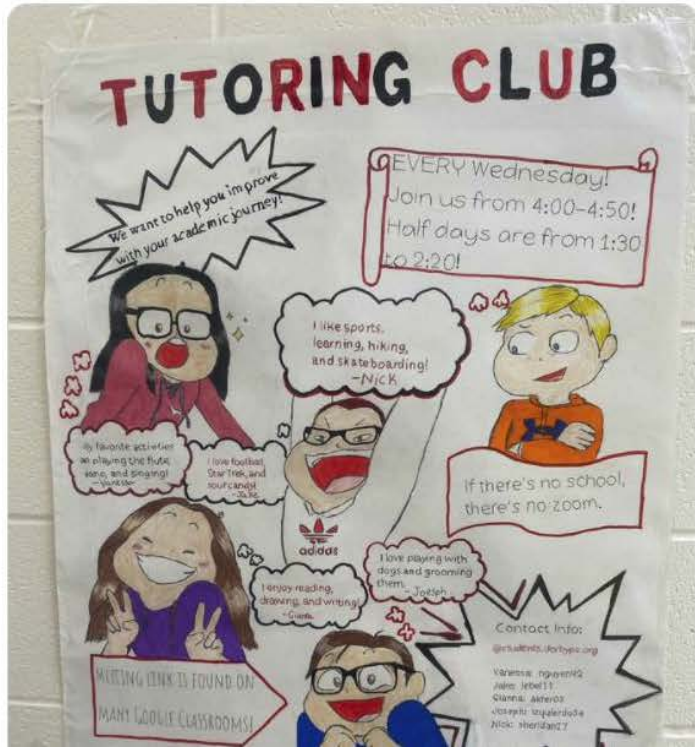


You Retweeted



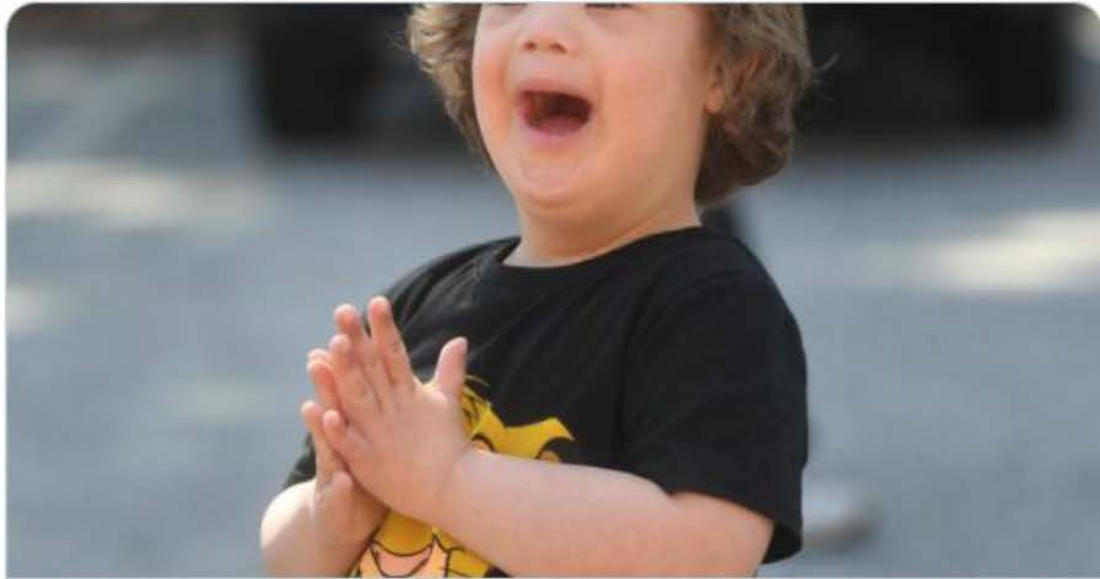
Señora Coku-Rakaj
@CokuRakaj

I love seeing our talented students put posters together for the Tutoring Club. Good job Gianna & Vanessa.
[@DerbyMiddle_CT](#) [#WeAreDMS](#) [#DMSontheRISE](#)
[#CTCommissionersNetwork](#)



Matt Conway
@derbypssuper

Derby students get custom bikes from CT charity -
[CTInsider.com](#)



Derby students with special needs get custom bikes from CT charity
Two Derby students were given specialized bikes Thursday courtesy of a charitable organization that donates to childrens causes.

Clinton Avenue School, New Haven

Media at Clinton Avenue School

Clinton Ave. Teacher Wins National Honor

by CHRISTOPHER PEAK | Oct 1, 2019 2:52 pm
 (4) Comments | Commenting has been closed | E-mail the Author
 Posted to: Hometown Heroes, Schools, Fair Haven

Clinton Avenue School New Haven, CT
 Published by Jamie Elizabeth | March 24

With the nice weather coming, our students are busy in our garden beds getting things ready for planting season!! 🍆🥕🌱

Clinton Ave. School Makes Time For Reading

by CHRISTOPHER PEAK | Sep 24, 2019 4:13 pm
 (5) Comments | Commenting has been closed | E-mail the Author
 Posted to: Schools, Fair Haven

January 18

mscoadyatcas

Feliz día de Reyes

dreamstime.com

5 Likes
January 6

January 23

Clinton Avenue School New Haven, CT
 Published by Jamie Elizabeth

Having a little 'reme fun at Clinton Avenue School! 🐾💙

Dr. Coady @MsCoady@CAS

Our 7/8th graders used @nearpod to brainstorm ideas before writing their letters to first responders in memory of 9/11. The letters turned out thoughtfully articulate, and mature! 🙌❤️
 #NeverForget911 #cougarpride #ctcommissionersnetwork

8:21 PM - 9/11/20 - Twitter for iPhone

Dr. Coady @MsCoady@CAS

Day 2 of Staff Appreciation Week! Cougar Pride, Motivation, and Room Service for Thursday! Yay! #ThankATeacher #TeacherAppreciationWeek #CougarPride #adultSEL 🙌❤️

8:14 PM - 5/4/21 - Twitter for iPhone

Dr. Coady @MsCoady@CAS

We had an amazing Staff Showcase PD today! Best practices for remote learning...ideas for engagement...for teachers, by teachers! Uplifting and motivating! #edchat #leadership #education #collaboration #greatschools #cougarpride 🙌❤️

Add another Tweet

Clinton Avenue School
 Home of the Cougars

ABOUT CAS | REMOTE LEARNING | CLASSROOMS | RESOURCES | STAFF DIRECTORY

Semana del 3-7 de mayo: apreciación del personal de la escuela Clinton!

Next week, May 3rd-7th is... Staff Appreciation Week At Clinton Avenue School!

Principal
Ms. Jamie Coady

Assistant Principal
Mrs. Patty Gamienben

What is the current story of your school?

How do you know?

What do you want it to be?

How does that reflect what your values are and what you want to measure, to talk about?

How can telling that story help you focus on the work?

How to tell the story?

- **Inspire:**
 - What are the assets? What can we build on (it can't be all bad)
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Strategic Questions

1. What is the story you want to tell?
2. Who is responsible for it?
3. How can you plan ahead and spread it around?
4. How can you leverage it to push “the work” of building a good school, even as it is in progress?
5. How do you ensure students and families are out there, telling your story for you?

Thank you