

PERFORMANCE MATTERS

News from the CSDE Performance Office



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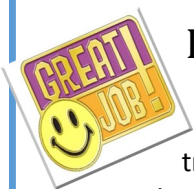
Connecticut's Performance Index Based on Scale Scores

A More Precise and Appropriate Measure for Aggregate Performance than "Percent Level 3 or 4"

[Connecticut's ESSA plan](#) was approved by the U.S. Department of Education on August 15, 2017. The school accountability model detailed in the plan is familiar to Connecticut educators since it is based on the Next Generation Accountability System that was first implemented in March 2016. The approved model includes an achievement index based on scale scores rather than a narrow focus on a particular cut score or achievement level (i.e. "proficient"). Connecticut elected to focus on scale scores rather than achievement levels as a way of including more information about student achievement in accountability reports while avoiding the unintended consequences of assigning too much importance to achievement levels.

The requirements of *No Child Left Behind* placed a premium on students meeting the "proficient" standard on state assessments. This binary approach of proficient vs. not proficient completely disregards any other information the assessment can provide about student achievement including how far away a student's score is from the proficient standard. Some students are well below the standard, some are near, and others are performing well above the standard. When an accountability system is built on binary decisions, public reporting provides an unnecessarily limited view of student achievement.

Connecticut's measures of academic achievement (i.e. the performance index) use the entire scale of the assessment rather than a single cut score. The calculation requires mapping every scale score to an index value, capturing information about performance within and across every achievement level. While achievement levels provide a starting point for discussing student performance, it is the scale score that is the most precise measure of student achievement. The index based on scale scores allows the accountability system to treat different scores within the same achievement level differently, meaning that the higher score within the same level is awarded more index points than the score at the lower end of the achievement level. In the case of Smarter Balanced



Data Collection **STALWART**



On the Educator Evaluation Data Collection (EEDC), districts submit aggregate data on the evaluations educators received the prior school year. Stalwart among the data managers of this collection is **Amity Goss** the Director of Instruction for the Old Saybrook Public Schools.

The EEDC contains a great deal of sensitive data that requires both accuracy and discretion. During her time working on this project, Amity has repeatedly shown herself to be a patient and dedicated data manager.

The Performance Office Team appreciates your efforts to provide timely and accurate data. Congratulations, Amity. You are a Data Collection Stalwart!

Connecticut's Performance Index Based on Scale Scores (cont.)

assessments, this approach also allows for differentiation above Level 3 whether the score is just above the Level 3 cut score or well into Level 4, the highest achievement level.

When accountability systems are focused solely on moving students past a single threshold score (e.g., Level 3 minimum score), students just below that point on the scale attract the most attention from their teachers at the expense of all other students well below and above that score. Using the entire scale for performance index calculations allows schools the freedom to support all students and provides recognition of improvement regardless of a student's starting point.

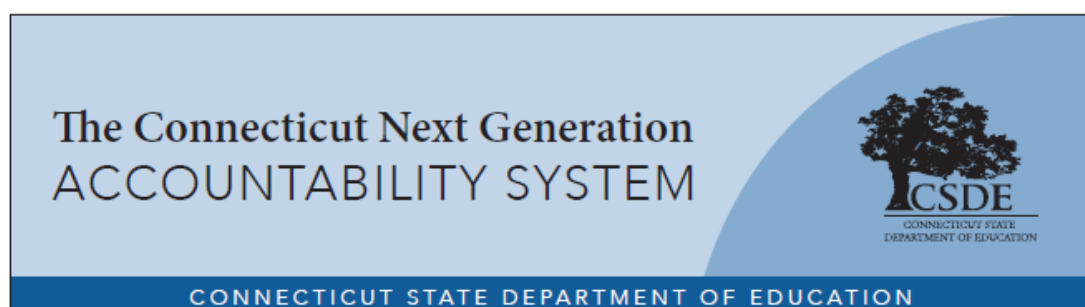
An exclusive focus on proficiency also distorts progress measures. In 2008, Dr. Andrew Ho of Harvard Graduate School of Education (HSGE) first wrote about the unintended consequences of proficiency and characterized the act of focusing on percent proficient as "viewing progress through a fun house mirror." To read a summary of Ho's work, see the "[When Proficient Isn't Good](#)" entry on the HSGE Useable Knowledge blog. The blog entry highlights the shortcomings of a singular focus on "proficient" including:

- Selection of the proficient cut score is an imperfect judgmental process;
- The location of the proficient cut score on the distribution of scores (e.g., 25th percentile, 50th percentile, 75th percentile) dramatically changes score comparisons across groups and years; and
- Changes in achievement gaps over time become uninterpretable.

Since Connecticut's performance index calculations require use of the full range of possible scale scores rather than a single point on the scale, it is a much more appropriate measure for evaluating achievement gaps and tracking improvement over time. Additionally, scale scores from all summative assessments are converted to the same range of index values, so the calculation supports aggregation of scores on different tests (e.g. Smarter Balanced and CTAA) across different grade levels. The resulting single performance index provides an indication of average achievement in a subject area for a specified group of students, whether it is for all students in a school or for a subgroup of students (e.g., High Needs students).

The performance index is a vast improvement over achievement measures of the past. The use of scale scores instead of "Percent Level 3 or 4" aligns well to the [recommendations](#) of numerous prominent educational researchers and experts who have advocated for a move away from an overreliance on "percent proficient" as a metric of school performance. The performance index coupled with the range of other indicators comprising the Next Generation Accountability System allows our state to report a more complete picture of overall district and school performance.

For more information about Connecticut's performance index, review the Performance Matters Forum [session materials](#) for "Understanding and Interpreting the Performance Index."



Advanced Placement Exam Results



According to results published by the College Board on September 26, 2017, Connecticut public school students have significantly increased their participation and performance on Advanced Placement (AP) exams. The number of students who took at least one AP exam in 2016-17 rose to 28,961, an increase of 4.9 percent from 2015-16. Those students took 53,106 exams, an increase of 5.1 percent from the prior year. Of the exams taken, 36,404 exams achieved a score of three, four, or five, also an increase of 3.6 percent from 2015-16. These improvements were evidenced among students from all racial/ethnic backgrounds. A [press release](#) issued by Governor Malloy details these improvements.

AP 2016-17 Results

	Percentage Increase from 2015-16 in the # of Test Takers	Percentage Increase from 2015-16 in the # of Exams Taken	Percentage Increase from 2015-16 in the # of Tests Scoring 3, 4, or 5
All Students	4.9	5.1	3.6
Asian	7.7	11.3	12.6
Black/African American	8.8	11.0	13.2
Hispanic/Latino	10.0	9.3	5.8
White	3.6	3.3	1.8

Indicators 5 and 6 of the [Next Generation Accountability System](#) measure student participation and success in advanced coursework. Indicator 5 is an access metrics that evaluates whether students in Grades 11 and 12 have participated in coursework in high school that prepares them for success in college and/or careers. Indicator 6 measures whether students in Grades 11 and 12 have attained benchmark scores on at least one of the most prevalent college/career readiness exams such as SAT, ACT, AP or IB.

To improve access and remove barriers for under-represented student populations the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) for the fourth year in a row paid the remainder of fees not covered by the College Board and the U.S. Department of Education for low-income students to take AP exams in spring of 2017. CSDE will continue to cover this cost.

For the past four years, the CSDE has issued letters to students who demonstrated the potential to succeed on AP coursework based on the results from the PSAT. The letters instruct these students to meet with their school counselors to discuss what course work is right for them. By taking challenging courses such as AP, dual enrollment, International Baccalaureate (IB), and/or honors courses, students attain important academic and financial benefits such as earning college credit, potentially skipping introductory courses and experiencing college-level work while in high school.

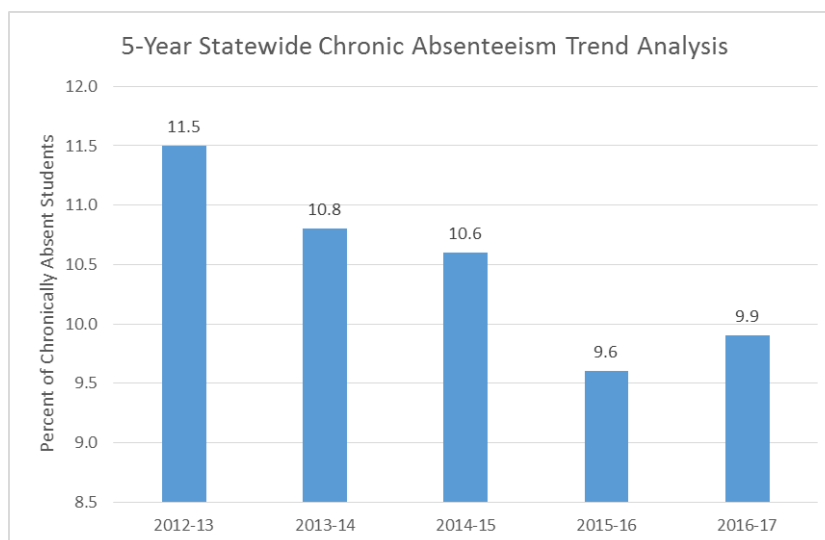
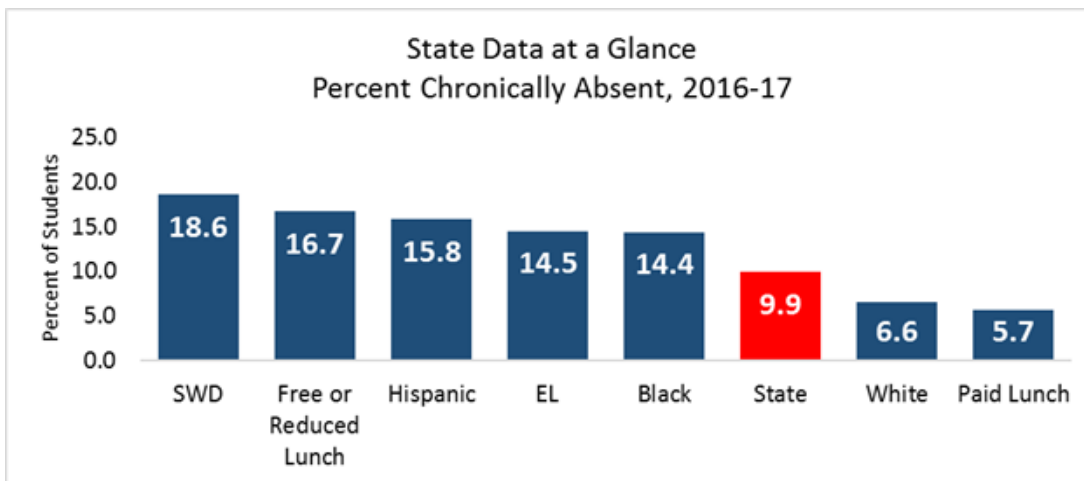
The **Course Enrollment by Subject Report** provides valuable information regarding enrollment trends in courses. It can be accessed on [EdSight](#). This report provides data on student enrollments in courses as reported by districts in the Teacher-Course-Student (TCS) system. Each year, districts report data on all students' course enrollments during the year. Included in that reporting is the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) course codes, known as School Courses for the Exchange of Data (SCED) Codes. The report gives users the ability to see trends in course enrollment by state, district and school. This is a useful tool for planning.

Profile and Performance Report Collection

The collection of 2016-17 Profile and Performance Report (PPR) narratives is underway. The Department collects these narrative responses through an online survey tool. Each district superintendent was emailed a district specific link to the survey along with the district’s password. The narrative instructions (including the narrative questions) are available here: <http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/ppr/instructions.pdf>. All narratives need to be submitted no later than October 25, 2017.

Chronic Absenteeism

The results are in and Connecticut is making notable strides at the district and school level to keep our students present and engaged in school. In 2016-17, a reported 9.9 percent of all public students in grades K-12 were found to be chronically absent. This translates to just over 51,400 students in our state missing at least 10 percent or more of their enrolled school days. While our statewide chronic absenteeism statistic is up just slightly from 9.6 percent in 2015-16, many districts have posted sizeable decreases in the numbers of students missing large number of days from school across many subgroups. The proof is in the pudding or should we say the data! All 2016-17 chronic absenteeism rates are now available on EdSight and will be included as Indicator 4 of the Next Generation Accountability System calculations for 2016-17! Need more information about chronic absenteeism? Please visit <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2678&Q=334924> or contact Marquelle.Middleton@ct.gov.



October 2017 PSIS Collection is Open!

The snapshot date for the October 2017 Public School Information System (PSIS) collection is September 29, 2017. This is due to the fact that October 1 falls on a weekend.

It is extremely important that all district personnel across different programs areas (e.g., homeless, English learners, magnet schools) work collaboratively with their PSIS contact to ensure that all student information is entered correctly in your local information systems and that the same is transmitted accurately to PSIS. To assist in the data verification process, district staff should use the many reports and rosters available in PSIS.



Here are some of the key reports we recommend:

- ELL Roster
- Special Education Roster
- Homeless Roster
- School Summary Report
- Gifted and Talented Roster
- Magnet Racial Survey by Town of Residence (If your district operates a Magnet School)
- Detail of Vocational Agriculture Students by Resident Town (If your district operates an Agricultural Science and Technology Education program)

The October 2017 collection must be certified by October 30, 2017. Therefore, please request these reports from your district PSIS Coordinator before the certification date to allow sufficient time for review and corrections. If you are not sure as to who is your district's PSIS coordinator, check out this [statewide list of PSIS contacts](#).

Four Connecticut Public Schools Awarded Prestigious National Blue Ribbon Distinction

On September 28, 2017, the U.S. Department of Education named the following Connecticut public schools as 2017 National Blue Ribbon Schools:

East Lyme High School in East Lyme
Oakdale School in Montville
Thomas W. Mahan School in Norwich
Morris Street School in Danbury

National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION SINCE 1982

All selected schools demonstrated outstanding overall achievement and were identified as Schools of Distinction as measured by Connecticut's Next Generation Accountability System. The National Blue Ribbon Program distinguishes schools in two categories — Exemplary High Performing and Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing. East Lyme High School and Oakdale School were identified in the High Performing category and Thomas W. Mahan and Morris Street School were recognized for their work toward closing Connecticut's achievement gap.

For the Montville, Norwich, and Danbury school districts, this is the first time they have had a National Blue Ribbon School identified in their districts.

A [press release](#) issued on September 28, 2017, by the Connecticut State Department of Education provides further details. For more information about the National Blue Ribbon Schools, please visit the [USED's National Blue Ribbon Schools Program webpage](#).