



For Immediate Release:

September 3, 2014

Contact: Kelly Donnelly 860.713.6525

State Board of Education takes action on multiple items

*Approves two Commissioner's Network plan revisions and places
Southern Connecticut State University on probation*

(Hartford, CT)—The State Board of Education (SBE) today approved two Commissioner's Network plan revisions for Dunbar School in Bridgeport and Walsh Elementary School in Waterbury.

"School turnaround work is difficult and requires a continuous commitment from teachers, students, parents, administrators and the surrounding community," Education Commissioner Stefan Pryor said. "Walsh and Dunbar have demonstrated the grit and determination to build systems designed to last and have successfully navigated unexpected challenges. The Department looks forward to an ever strengthening partnership with these districts and schools in improving outcomes for their students."

Dunbar's turnaround committee endeavored to build upon the positive progress made in Year 1 of the plan and focused on strengthening supports for students' social and emotional needs, including the addition of a new school counselor. Other improvements detailed in the revised plan include extending the school day and the addition of a new pre-Kindergarten program. To help with implementation efforts, the committee selected Cooperative Educational Services (CES) to hire and manage academic assistants for the school and to provide high-quality professional development and coaching for Dunbar teachers, among other responsibilities.

Waterbury's Walsh School used Year 1 in the Commissioner's Network as a planning year to identify a partner to help with implementation and to ready the school for transformative changes detailed in its revised school improvement plan. The district also selected a new principal to lead the school's turnaround. Years 2 and 3 will focus on fostering a stronger bond between students and teachers through smaller learning communities where teachers stay with the students across grade levels for three consecutive years. Students will benefit from extended learning time and teachers will receive more opportunities for high-quality professional development. Innovative Educational Programs (IEP), chosen at the local level through a competitive process, will assist in the implementation of the improvements.

In other action today, the SBE placed the Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU) School of Education on probation. After a mandated site visit conducted in March 2014, several critical areas for improvement were identified in five of six state-regulated standards.

Commissioner Pryor said, “We are encouraged by the new SCSU leaders’ resolve to correct identified deficiencies and we are optimistic that they will succeed in strengthening their critical preparation programs.”

Teacher preparation programs are accredited by the State Board of Education. Recommendations to the Commissioner regarding new and continuing approval of educator preparation programs are made by the CSDE Review Committee. This 12-member, decision-making body reviews the on-site visit report and considers the findings in making its recommendation.

For programs that also opt to seek national accreditation through the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), on-site visits are conducted by a visiting team consisting of state and national representatives. In the case of SCSU, the joint NCATE/state team found that the school met all six NCATE standards but identified several critical deficiencies under Connecticut standards.

SCSU’s probationary period will last three years during which time the school must submit reports to the Department every six months. In spring 2017, SCSU will be required to submit a report addressing the areas identified as in need of improvement and an on-site visit will be conducted to assess the corrections.

###

CONTACT: Kelly Donnelly
Director of Communications and Strategic Community Partnerships
Connecticut State Department of Education
Phone: 860-713-6525
Mobile: 860-983-1550
Email: Kelly.Donnelly@ct.gov