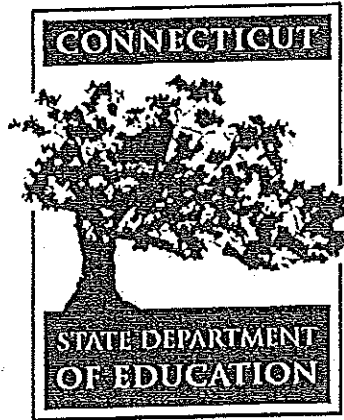Ansonia

Final Approved

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

BUREAU OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND IMPROVEMENT

ALLIANCE DISTRICT APPLICATION FOR STATE EDUCATION COST SHARING FUNDS
2012-13

Purpose: To provide state grants to eligible districts pursuant to Public Act 12-116

Application is due no later than 4:00 p.m. on August 15, 2012

Submission of applications by the early deadline of July 13, 2012 is encouraged

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

STEFAN PRYOR
COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION

Part I: Submission Instructions

A. Application Completion

1. Review and follow all directions carefully when completing this application.

2. Clearly label all attachments as specified in the application.

B. Application Deadline

Applications, irrespective of postmark or email date, must be received by 4:00 p.m. on or before Wednesday, August 15, 2012. All submissions must include one original and three (3) additional paper copies. An electronic copy should also and be emailed to Lol Fearon.

Applications will be considered on a rolling basis and feedback will be provided through an iterative process. Districts are encouraged to submit applications in by the early submission deadline of July 13, 2012 to allow time for feedback and potential resubmission.

PLEASE NOTE: All applications become the property of the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) and are subject to the rules of the Freedom of Information Act.

C. Mailing and Delivery Information

Please email electronic versions in .pdf format to Lol Fearon: lol.fearon@ct.gov.

Mailing Address:	Overnight Mailing and Hand Delivery Address:
Connecticut State Department of Education	Connecticut State Department of Education
Bureau of Accountability and Improvement	Bureau of Accountability and Improvement
P.O. Box 2219, Room 227	165 Capitol Avenue, Room 227
Hartford, CT 06145-2219	Hartford, CT 06106
Attention: Lol Fearon, Bureau Chief	Attention: Lol Fearon, Bureau Chief

D. Timeline

Process	Date
Information about Alliance Districts sent to LEAs	May 25, 2012
Connecticut State Board of Education approval of guidelines	June 6, 2012
Informational meeting with eligible districts	June 11, 2012
Submission of applications; feedback and approvals provided to applicants on rolling basis	June – August, 2012
Early submission deadline; preliminary submissions encouraged	July 13, 2012
Application final due date	August 15, 2012
Projected date for awarding funding - conditional upon approval of plans	September 2012
CSDE monitoring of plan implementation and preparation of year 2 applications	September 2012 – August 2013

E. Application Approval Notice

Approvals will be granted through the summer, with a goal of districts receiving approval by August 31, 2012, if feasible. The iterative process may require more time for some districts.

F. Questions

All questions regarding the Alliance application process should be directed to:

Lol Fearon
Bureau Chief
Bureau of Accountability and Improvement
Connecticut State Department of Education
Telephone: (860) 713-6705
Email: lol.fearon@ct.gov

Part II: Alliance District Overview

A. Introduction

Public Act 12-116 establishes a process for identifying 30 Alliance Districts – the districts with the lowest district performance index scores statewide – and allocates to these districts $39.5 million in increased Education Cost Sharing (ECS) funding in the upcoming fiscal year. The Alliance District program is intended to help districts raise student performance and close the achievement gap. Each district's receipt of its designated allocation is conditioned upon district submission, and CSDE approval, of an Alliance District Plan for the expenditure of this new increment of conditional funds in the context of the district's overall strategy to improve academic achievement.

Alliance District Plans are locally conceived, evidence-based reform plans that propose detailed initiatives for improving student achievement. Plans must propose reform activity over the entire five-year period of the Alliance District designation and include specific, multi-year objectives and performance targets. The State Department of Education will review each Plan on an annual basis, and approve plans that align with the goals of the program. Approval of plans in years two through five will be predicated upon progress towards the described performance targets, among other factors.

Proposals for the use of Alliance District funding will be considered in the context of the quality of the overall strategy for reform proposed in the Plan, as well as the degree of alignment between the proposed use of funds and the overall strategy.

B. Eligibility Requirements

Only districts listed in Appendix A are eligible to apply for Alliance District Education Cost Sharing funds.

C. Responsibilities of Approved Applicants

Each approved applicant must:
1. work cooperatively with the CSDE team;

2. provide any information that the CSDE requests in a timely manner; and

3. cooperate with the fiscal and programmatic compliance reviews that the CSDE will conduct.

D. Review of Applications

The Department will issue approvals using an iterative process and will provide technical assistance to districts whose plans are not immediately approved.

E. Application Procedure
The materials in this section provide a summary of the components of an Alliance District Plan and provide guidance regarding the overarching concepts introduced in the Alliance District application process. The application begins in Part III. The application is divided into three sections; all three sections are required.

Section I: Overall District Improvement Strategy
This section requires Alliance Districts to describe a long-term, district-wide strategy. Districts must also describe key individual reform initiatives in the context of their overall approach to improving student performance and narrowing the achievement gap.

Section II: Differentiated School Interventions

This section requires Alliance Districts to articulate a tiered approach to school intervention based upon relative school performance and needs, and to address obligations to intervene in low performing schools created by Connecticut's approved NCLB waiver.

Section III: Budget
This section requires districts to show that they have aligned Alliance District and other funding sources to the reform initiatives outlined in the above two sections. Districts should also describe how efficiencies identified by the District, and funds from other sources, are leveraged to maximize the impact of Alliance District dollars. Detailed budgetary information is required for year one initiatives. In addition, districts must show planned expenditures for Alliance District funds for each year of Alliance District designation. Forms have been included in a separate Excel document.

F. Use of Evidence and Data

Alliance District Plans must document student performance areas of greatest concern and include an evidence-based explanation of how the use of Alliance District funds will lead to improved student performance. Acceptable applications will demonstrate a strong connection between the actions proposed in the plan and improved student performance in identified areas of concern.

G. Substantial Majority Requirement

Alliance District funding is intended to initiate new reforms and expand existing programs of reform.

Districts must reserve the substantial majority of conditional funding for new reform efforts, or the expansion of existing reform efforts, that are directly linked to improving student achievement.

Districts may consult with the Bureau of Accountability and Improvement for additional guidance on this point.

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H. Menu of District Reform Initiatives

Below is a menu of options that is intended to guide the selection of reform programs:

- Ways to strengthen the foundational programs in reading to ensure reading mastery in kindergarten through grade three with a focus on standards and instruction, proper use of data, intervention strategies, current information for teachers, parental engagement, and professional development for teachers;
- Additional learning time, including extended school day or school year programming administered by school personnel or external partners;
- A talent strategy that includes, but is not limited to, teacher and school leader recruitment and assignment, career ladder policies that draw upon guidelines for a model teacher evaluation program adopted by the State Board of Education, pursuant to section 10-151b of the general statutes, and adopted by each local or regional board of education. Such talent strategy will include provisions that demonstrate increased ability to attract, retain, promote and bolster the performance of staff in accordance with performance evaluation findings and, in the case of new personnel, other indicators of effectiveness;
- Training for school leaders and other staff on new teacher evaluation models;
- Provisions for the cooperation and coordination with early childhood education providers to ensure alignment with district expectations for student entry into kindergarten, including funding for an existing local Head Start program;
- Provisions for the cooperation and coordination with other governmental and community programs to ensure that students receive adequate support and wraparound services, including community school models;
- Any other programs of reform, subject to approval by the Commissioner.

In addition to the plan components listed above, the Department encourages school districts to think creatively to combine conditional Alliance District funding with other resources, to leverage Alliance District dollars to identify and leverage efficiencies, to seek additional resources, and to find innovative ways to use the conditional funding to design their school reform programs.

I. Competitive Opportunities

Certain reform initiatives offer the opportunity for a district to partner with external institutions, which will facilitate the planning and implementation process with additional guidance and, in some cases, additional funding. Districts may choose to engage in a competitive process for participation in these external partnerships. Competitive opportunities operate on an expedited timeline. For guidance on these opportunities, see the supplementary materials or contact the Bureau of Accountability and Improvement to obtain materials.

Connecticut State Department of Education
Alliance District Application: 2012-13
COVER SHEET

Name of District: Ansonia Public Schools
Name of Grant Contact: Anthony J. Gasper, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent of Schools

Phone: 203-736-5095	Fax: 203-736-5077	Email: tgasper@ansonia.org

Address of Grant Contact: 42 Grove Street   Ansonia, CT 06401
Name of Superintendent: Carol Merlone
Signature of Superintendent:
Name of Board Chair: John Lawlor
Signature of Board Chair: Date:
Please indicate if plan approved by local board of education: ___   Date of Approval: _____   If not, please indicate date at which plan will be presented to local board of education: September 2012   Note: Due to the iterative process by which Alliance District Plans will be submitted, reviewed, returned, and re-submitted, seeking local board of education approval may be most appropriate toward the conclusion of the application process.   Districts must obtain board approval, but should submit completed plans regardless of whether approval has been obtained.

Part III: Application

Section I: Overall District Improvement Strategy

Districts are required to articulate a multi-year, district-wide strategy for improvement, the ultimate goal of which should be to improve student performance and to narrow the achievement gap.

A. Overall Strategy and Key Reform Initiatives: Narrative Questions

Please respond in brief narrative form to the following questions regarding your district's overall strategy and key reform initiatives.

1. What is your district's overall approach toward improving student performance and closing the achievement gap?

Ansonia Public Schools will use a multi-faceted and purposeful approach to improving student performance and reducing the achievement gap that is directly tied to our CMT/CAPT/DRA2 data sets. As a result of analyzing these data, our plan focuses on reading/literacy skills and improved high school instruction and learning across the disciplines.

Pre-Kindergarten – Grade 3 literacy will be addressed by:
- A purposeful and well supported evolution from our current Guided Reading methodologies to the Readers and Writers Workshop model across all K-3 classrooms as recommended by Calkins, Ehrenworth, Lehman and the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project.
- Implementation of a literacy anthology series coupled with improved classroom libraries which raise our level of rigor, focus, and connection to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) while facilitating reading across the content areas in all K-3 classrooms. The anthology will also support a greater instructional focus on writing instruction as is prioritized in the CCSS
- Implementation of more thorough and rigorous pre- and post- unit assessments which are tied to the CCSS through the use of Blue Ribbon online testing and resources which provide immediate feedback to teachers on needed interventions for students.
- A move (if permitted by CSDE) from the DRA2 and Dibels reading assessments to the TRC (mClass Reading 3D) assessment in order to improve teachers' and administrators' access to and use of data to drive instructional decisions at the classroom, team, school, and district levels
- Implementation of *wrap-around services* including community-based, family-focused literacy centers, offered at existing community resource centers and connected with local health service providers along with the expansion of existing pre-literacy coordinator services at the pre-k level
- Technology hardware (iPads required for use of Reading 3D), software (Reading 3D and Blue Ribbon), and infrastructure (WiFi access) to support the above

Improved high school instruction and learning across the disciplines will be addressed by:
- A *talent strategy* will result in significant and measurable improvement in teachers' implementation of research-proven pedagogy (Marzano, Tomlinson, Hattie) through the use of ongoing, embedded, and accountable professional development through in-house "master teachers" and external experts
- *Extended learning time* (years 2-5 of plan) for all freshman students and sophomore students in need of improvement – 10 additional school days. This extra time will serve two purposes: engender a stronger rapport and connection to school for students and teachers; an intense focus on instructional preparation for the learning to come. Students will take benchmark assessments and engage in the

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academic curriculum tied to the CCSS. Year 1 of the plan will include research and planning of this reform.
- The establishment of a freshman academy model in which students' day is structured in a way to bridge the gap between effective middle school and high school models. This academy model will facilitate team teaching in which teachers are more connected to and accountable for the academic growth of students and also facilitate changes in the school's master schedule to maximize the team-teaching approach. Also, in specifying a smaller number of teachers who are dedicated to improving the success of freshman and the facilitation of their transition from middle school, communication and articulation with the middle school will be strengthened.

Other initiatives projects that will contribute to the success of the above:
- The *talent strategy* will also include a program for in-house aspirant administrators, not only serving to improve the field of candidates for administrative openings, but also strengthening participants' understanding of pedagogy and organizational development
- Provide embedded training along with technology hardware and software to improve and support *administrators' ability to implement the new teacher-evaluation protocol*
- Bolster services provided at district and community-based *early childhood education* providers through greater support of literacy instruction and the NAEYC standards for accreditation

2. Describe the rationale for the selection of the district's prioritized reform initiatives, including how such selection reflects data on identified student needs and the use of evidence-based initiatives.

Put most simply, our CMT/CAPT data shows that grades 3 and 10 have shown the least growth, if any at all. Coupled with this lack of growth are concerning gaps between students receiving free/reduced-price meals and those paying full price. When analyzing the "proficient" level of achievement, the following findings come to light:

Grade 3 Reading:
- 5-year trend is flat at 50% proficient.
- Largest of all achievement gaps at 35 percentage points

Grade 10:
- Math: 5-year trend is down 1% with an achievement gap of 20 percentage points
- Reading: 5-year trend is down 9% with an achievement gap of 18 percentage points
- Science: 5-year trend is down 5% with an achievement gap of 11 percentage points
- Writing: 5-year trend is up 4% with an achievement gap of 5 percentage points

All of the reform initiatives referenced above are directly tied to the needs elucidated by these data.

3. List the multi-year, measurable performance targets that will be used to gauge student success. What metrics, including ways to monitor student outcomes and indicators of district and school personnel activity, will be put in place to track progress towards performance targets?

As part of the newly revised and ratified District Improvement Plan, the Ansonia Board of Education has adopted a sliding-scale, adaptive approach to setting rigorous goals for student achievement. A principal change was made in shifting from the "proficient" to the goal level on CMT/CAPT. The BOE then adopted a scale which defines expectations for all CMT/CAPT tests in all grades.

This scale holds all teachers in all tested grades accountable for improvement. The scale moves the school district away from a threshold or "good enough" approach of just getting students above the "Proficient" level and stresses the need for growth by all. In this way, our approach is similar to the SDE's newly adopted Performance Index approach.

Please see Attachment 1 for the scale and expectation of narrowing achievement gap.

At monthly meetings of the District Data Team, progress toward these outcomes will be monitored along with progress toward adult-action goals. Adult actions will be tallied and measured for their percent of completion. This data will be displayed graphically and also shared at bimonthly Administrative Council meetings.

4. How will reform initiatives interact/coordinate with other resources (e.g., Title I, Part A; Title II, Part A Teacher Quality; Title III, Part A English Language Acquisition funds; Priority School District funds; Summer School funds; philanthropic funds)?

Currently, Priority School District, Title 1, Title 2, Title 3 funds are used cumulatively to fund the following positions in support of PK-3 Literacy:
- Two instructional resource coaches
- The district's language arts coordinator
- Five kindergarten teachers
- Four reading intervention teachers
- Two ELL teachers

Summer School Grant monies are currently used to fund K-6 summer school for students in need of intervention according to DRA2 scores and for credit recovery programming at the high school level.

5. Please indicate how the District consulted with relevant stakeholders regarding the development of the Alliance District Plan by including a list of all stakeholders with which you have consulted and a brief description of the input received from each group.

This plan relies heavily upon our recently revised and ratified District Improvement Plan. The revision of the plan was done in two phases with participation as defined below:

Strategic Planning Phase Participants:
- Students
- Parents
- Community member
- Teachers / Teachers' union representatives
- Administrators / Administrators' union representatives
- Board of Education members
- Board of Aldermen members
- Board of Apportionment and Taxation members
- District-level administrators
- Superintendent of Schools

District Data Team Phase Participants:
- Teachers
- Community member

- CSDE representatives
- CAS executive coaches
- School and District-level administrators
- Superintendent of Schools

B. Key District Initiatives

Using the following chart, please provide a description of each key individual reform initiative – <u>both</u> <u>existing programs and those planned through the Alliance District process and other planning</u> <u>processes</u> – that the district will undertake in the next five years in service of its overall strategy. Districts should include a separate chart for each key initiative.

- **Overview**: Please describe the initiative briefly, including the purpose of the planned activities and their underlying rationale. Please indicate whether the initiative is drawn from the menu of reform options provided in this application.

  If proposing to expand an existing reform and the existing reform has, in the past, led to increases in student performance, please describe the extent to which the reform has improved student performance and include supporting data.

  If proposing to expand an existing reform and the existing reform has not led to increases in student achievement, please describe how the current proposal differs from previous reform efforts, and why it is likely to succeed where the previous effort did not.

- **Five Year Strategies and Implementation Steps**: List the steps the district will take over the next five years to implement the initiative.

- **Year One Implementation Steps Description**: Describe in greater detail the implementation steps that will occur in the 2012-13 school year.

- **Years of Implementation**: Indicate the anticipated length of the proposed initiative.

Key District Initiative

Improved Instructional and Assessment Practices in PK-3 Literacy

New or Existing Reform?   **X** New   ☐ Existing

Overview:

While other grade levels and content areas have shown growth in their scores over time, Grade 3 reading has not. The project outlined below takes a multi-faceted approach to addressing this through program enhancements, teacher development, parent involvement, technology upgrades, and community outreach.

Five Year Strategies and Implementation Steps:

- A purposeful and well supported evolution from our current Guided Reading methodologies to the Readers and Writers Workshop model across all K-3 classrooms as recommended by Calkins, Ehrenworth, Lehman and the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project.
- Implementation of a literacy anthology series coupled with improved classroom libraries which raise our level of rigor, focus, and connection to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) while facilitating reading across the content areas in all K-3 classrooms. The anthology will also support a greater instructional focus on writing instruction as is prioritized in the CCSS. The anthology publisher (MacMillan/McGraw-Hill, "Treasures") has specifically designed the anthology and its accompanying online resources around the CCSS. Currently, less than 50% of our classroom libraries contain high-interest reading for students at the proper Lexile level. During the 2011-2012 school year, a pilot was conducted comparing three literacy series from separate publishers. Treasures was chosen for its usability, online resources, sequential/developmental nature, and strong connectedness to the CCSS.
- Implementation of more thorough and rigorous pre- and post- unit assessments which are tied to the CCSS through the use of Blue Ribbon online testing and resources which provide immediate feedback to teachers on needed interventions for students. This immediate feedback will allow teachers and administrators to spot trends in individual, sub-group, and whole class growth.
- A move (if permitted by CSDE) from the DRA2 and Dibels reading assessments to the Text Reading Comprehension (TRC) assessment and Dibels Next assessment in order to improve teachers' and administrators' access to and use of data to drive instructional decisions at the classroom, team, school, and district levels. Because the TRC assessment provides classroom-, grade-, and school-level reporting, teachers, interventionists, and administrators will be more able to make timely decisions on needed reading intervention for students. As an aside, the district currently employs two technology-based intervention programs: Lexia for Tier 3 and Study Island for Tier 2.
- Implementation of wrap-around services including community-based, family-focused literacy centers, offered at existing community resource centers and connected with local health service providers along with the expansion of existing pre-literacy coordinator services at the pre-k level. The community resource centers at which these programs will be delivered are located in the sections of the city with the highest incidence of poverty. In Ansonia, the free/reduced-price lunch sub-group is the group with the highest correlation to poor performance on standardized tests.
- Technology hardware (iPads required for use of Reading 3D), software (Reading 3D and Blue Ribbon), and infrastructure (WiFi access) to support the above

Year 1 Implementation Steps Description:

- Implement a balanced strategy of training on Readers & Writers Workshop containing full-day, pull-out, and embedded teacher development strategies.
    - This will be a district-wide evolution from our current Guided Reading and small-group practices in order to enhance the nimbleness with which teachers can make instructional decisions.
    - School and district administrators will participate in this training to bolster their ability to support teachers and hold them accountable for faithful implementation.
    - Regularly convene administrators and teachers to track implementation and identify additional needs for support
- Update and upgrade the principal resources for literacy instruction.
    - Purchase classroom libraries of appropriate Lexile level to align with expectations found in CCSS
    - Purchase literacy anthology series to support appropriate Lexile level to align with expectations found in CCSS along with promoting more effective literacy instruction across all content areas throughout the learning day
    - Provide full-day and embedded training on effective use of these resources
    - Purchase and implement netbook carts to facilitate individualized pacing of learning and the utilization of web-based resources tied to the new anthology
- Purchase and implement a new web-based resource (Blue Ribbon) for the creation/revision of common formative and benchmark assessments in literacy. The district's Language Arts Coordinator will use this resource to ensure that all curriculum-based assessments meet the rigor and content of the CCSS.
- Implement and staff afterhours, community-based literacy, health and wellness centers
    - Certified teachers meet with families, parents, guardians to improve their knowledge of literacy instruction, the importance of reading at home, and home/school partnerships
    - Student attendees are provided with "literacy packs" containing developmentally appropriate reading materials, educational games, and other learning resources
    - Community health partners also attend the centers to provide education on access to health and wellness services in the community.
- Expand the role and scope of current pre-literacy coordinator services to the community at the pre-k level
    - Current role of pre-literacy coordinator is enhanced and expanded to include home visitations, interaction with the above-mentioned literacy, health and wellness centers, and community-based pre-kindergarten providers
    - Coordinator is accountable for assuring alignment of pedagogy and curriculum with APS curriculum and instructional priorities

Years of Implementation:

- Year 2
  - Continue Readers/Writers Workshop training
  - Continue training on new classroom libraries and anthologies
  - Continue use of web-based assessment resource
  - Continue literacy, health and wellness centers
  - Continue pre-literacy coordinator
  - Begin move from DRA and Dibels to TRC assessment
  - Implement additional technology hardware and infrastructure to facilitate the TRC.

- Year 3
  - Continue Readers/Writers Workshop training
  - Continue use of web-based assessment resource
  - Continue literacy, health and wellness centers
  - Continue pre-literacy coordinator
  - Complete move from DRA and Dibels to TRC assessment
  - Implement additional technology hardware and infrastructure to facilitate the TRC and SBAC.

- Year 4
  - Conduct update training on Readers/Writers Workshop
  - Conduct update training on classroom libraries and anthologies
  - Continue use of web-based assessment resource
  - Continue literacy, health and wellness centers
  - Continue pre-literacy coordinator
  - Implement additional technology hardware and infrastructure to facilitate the TRC and SBAC.

- Year 5
  - Conduct update training on Readers/Writers Workshop
  - Continue use of web-based assessment resource
  - Continue literacy, health and wellness centers
  - Continue pre-literacy coordinator

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Key District Initiative
Talent Strategy and Extended Learning Time for Ansonia High School *(Review School)*

New or Existing Reform?　　**X** New　　☐ Existing

Overview:

While many other grade levels have shown steady growth across multiple CMT tests, grade 10 has not. This plan seeks to support high school teachers with and hold them accountable for the implementation of research-supported instructional strategies that are aligned with the district improvement plan. In the second phase of the plan, structural/organizational changes will be made to increase and improve the learning time for grades 9 and 10 students.

Five Year Strategies and Implementation Steps:

- A *talent strategy* will result in significant and measurable improvement in teachers' implementation of research-proven pedagogy through the use of ongoing, embedded, and accountable professional development through in-house "master teachers" and external experts. Improved instructional practices that are more differentiated to student need will positively impact student learning and motivation. Rather than hiring external consultants for the bulk of this work, the district has chosen to feature in-house talent. This will make the initiative more likely to succeed via trust and rapport already established between master teachers and other teaching staff. The professional development provided by the master teachers will be informed by data gleaned from the administration's implementation of SDE's SEED evaluation program.
- *Extended learning time* (years 2-5 of this plan) for all freshman students and sophomore students in need of improvement – 10 additional school days. This extra time will serve two purposes: engender a stronger rapport and connection to school for students and teachers; an intense focus on instructional preparation for the learning to come. Students will take benchmark assessments and engage in the academic curriculum tied to the CCSS.
- The establishment of a freshman academy model in which students' day is structured in a way to bridge the gap between effective middle school and high school models. This academy model will facilitate team teaching in which teachers are more connected to and accountable for the academic growth of students and also facilitate changes in the school's master schedule to maximize the team-teaching approach. Also, in specifying a smaller number of teachers who are dedicated to improving the success of freshman and the facilitation of their transition from middle school, communication and articulation with the middle school will be strengthened.

Year 1 Implementation Steps Description:

- Recruit, ~~interview~~<u>hire</u>, and train three "master teachers" who will serve as embedded supports for all AHS faculty.
    - Master teachers will co-plan, model, coach, and debrief effective lessons with their colleagues. All AHS teachers will be required to take part in these supports but mode of support will be individualized for each. <u>AHS administrators will use experience and data from the implementation of SDE's SEED model to guide and prioritize this work.</u>
    - Master teachers will receive in-depth training and development on the effective implementation of Effective Teaching Strategies as defined by Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock, differentiated instruction as defined by Carol Ann Tomlinson, tenets of effective instruction and teacher observation as defined <u>in the SDEs SEED model</u>, engaging students with relevant tasks, and the CCSS.
    - Contract with an external expert to facilitate the training, development, and work of these three master teachers
    - <u>Provide master teachers with technology software and hardware to facilitate their work.</u>
    - <u>Use their knowledge of teachers' growth to informally contribute to administrators' implementation of the SDE's SEED model of teacher evaluation and support.</u>
- Collaboratively plan and train for the implementation of extended learning time in year 2 of this plan
- Collaboratively plan and train for the implementation of freshman academy in year 2 of this plan

Years of Implementation:

- Year 2
    - Continue master teacher implementation
    - Implement extended learning time for grade 9-10 students
    - Establish freshman academy model
- Year 3
    - Continue master teacher implementation
    - Continue extended learning time for grade 9-10 students
    - Continue freshman academy model
- Year 4
    - Continue master teacher implementation
    - Continue extended learning time for grade 9-10 students
    - Continue freshman academy model
- Year 5
    - Continue master teacher implementation
    - Continue extended learning time for grade 9-10 students
    - Continue freshman academy model

Key District Initiative

Connected Supporting ~~Initiatives~~Projects

New or Existing Reform?	**X** New	☐ Existing

Overview:

These ~~initiatives~~ projects and implementation steps represent much smaller areas of adult action but are, none the less, in direct support of the previously mentioned initiatives in support of PK-3 literacy and high school talent and extended learning time.

Five Year Strategies and Implementation Steps:

- Implement an aspirant administrator academy consisting of after-school symposia addressing common and contemporary issues in educational leadership
- Improve quality and effectiveness of administrators' feedback, support, and evaluation of teachers through formal and embedded training connected to the work of Kim Marshall and the CSDE recommended evaluation protocol.
- Support new, upstart, community-based early-childhood learning center through the provision of external experts and embedded support.

Year 1 Implementation Steps Description:

- Implement an aspirant administrator academy consisting of at least 8 monthly after-school symposia addressing common and contemporary issues in educational leadership
    - Invite all APS certified staff currently studying for 092 certification
    - Invite all APS certified staff who currently hold 092 certificates but do not yet work in this capacity
    - Featured speakers will be both internal experienced administrators and external experts
- Improve quality and effectiveness of administrators' feedback, support, and evaluation of teachers.
    - Provide formal training and embedded support to administrators on the effective implementation of classroom observations connected to the research of Kim Marshall.
    - Provide expert support to administrators to assure calibration of observation findings across all observers
    - Provide administrators with technology hardware and software to facilitate this work
    - Provide thorough training for all administrators on the CSDE recommended evaluation protocol
- Support new, community-based early-childhood learning center.
    - The Ansonia Community YMCA will be receiving funding for 17 new early-childhood slots. This organization has not been a provider of such services before. An external expert will be contracted to facilitate the development of their program in alignment with APS early-childhood and kindergarten curricula and NAEYC standards for accreditation.

Years of Implementation:

- Year 2
  - Continue aspirant administrator academy
  - Continue administrator training in effective teacher evaluation and calibration
  - Continue support of community-based early learning center
- Year 3
  - Continue aspirant administrator academy
  - Continue administrator training in effective teacher evaluation and calibration
  - Continue support of community-based early learning center
- Year 4
  - Continue aspirant administrator academy
  - Continue administrator training in effective teacher evaluation and calibration
  - Continue support of community-based early learning center
- Year 5
  - Continue aspirant administrator academy
  - Continue administrator training in effective teacher evaluation and calibration
  - Continue support of community-based early learning center

Section II: Differentiated School Interventions

Connecticut's Approved NCLB Waiver and Requirement of Tiered Approach to School Achievement

Connecticut's recently approved application for a waiver from certain provisions of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) created a modified set of obligations for school districts to intervene in their schools on a tiered, differentiated basis.

To facilitate Alliance Districts' ability to create a strategy consistent with their obligations under both Connecticut's NCLB waiver and the Alliance District conditional funding process, the CSDE is providing information in this subsection on the specific obligations created by the waiver.

Alliance District Plans must propose differentiated interventions for schools. <u>Districts have the option of funding these interventions using their allocations of Alliance District funds, but it is not required that Alliance District funding be used for this purpose.</u>

Districts must tier their schools and explain overall strategies for improving student achievement within each tier.

Districts must also provide specific reform plans for low performing schools in three phases as described below.

1. **Phase I: Interventions in Focus Schools – 2012-13**
   As a condition of Connecticut's NCLB waiver, districts are required to develop and implement interventions in certain low performing schools. Pursuant to the waiver, schools with certain low performing subgroups will be identified as Focus Schools. District-specific lists of Focus Schools have been provided in a separate document. Plans must be in place and operational at Focus Schools in the 2012-13 school year. For a list of recommended initiatives, see Part II, Subsection H. Districts must provide evidence that they have engaged in a process of strategic redesign and targeted intervention, and that they will monitor student progress and revise their plans on the basis of data gathered from the monitoring process for the duration of the Alliance District designation.

2. **Phase II and III: Low Performing Schools – 2013-14 and 2014-15**
   Low performing schools that are not Focus Schools or Turnaround Schools must receive targeted interventions in the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years. District-specific lists of these low performing schools have been provided in a separate document. Districts must select a subset of these schools (at least half) to begin interventions in 2013-14. If, in the judgment of the district, interventions can feasibly be implemented in all low performing schools in 2013-14, then districts may intervene in all low-performing schools in 2013-14. Any remaining low performing schools must receive interventions in 2014-15. In this part of the application, districts must provide an explanation of the process they will engage in during the 2012-13 school year to support these Phase II schools as they diagnose and plan for the interventions that will be implemented in the following year. This section of the application does not require

a plan for the school-specific interventions themselves, as these will be developed over the course of the next year.

3. Differentiated School Intervention Timeline

Stages of School Improvement	Date
Phase I Interventions: Focus Schools (2012-13)	
Districts create redesign plans for interventions in Focus Schools	June –Aug. 2012
Districts begin to implement interventions/redesigns in Focus Schools	Sept. 2012
Phase II Interventions: Other low performing schools (2013-14)	
Districts conduct needs assessments in at least half of other low performing schools	Sept. – Dec. 2012
Districts create redesign plans for interventions in at least half of other low performing schools	Jan. – June 2013
Districts implement interventions in at least half of other low performing schools	Sept. 2013
Phase III Interventions: Other low performing schools (2014-15)	
Districts conduct needs assessments/ analyses in other low performing schools	Sept. – Dec. 2013
Districts create redesign plans for interventions in remaining low performing schools	Jan. – June 2014
Districts implement interventions in other low performing schools	Sept. 2014

Districts may consult with the Bureau of Accountability and Improvement for additional guidance on this process.

A. Tiered Approach to School Improvement

Please address how your district has designed a tiered intervention system for schools based on their needs. This section relates to all schools in the district, and asks you to think strategically about how to best meet the needs of schools performing at different levels. This may involve removing requirements that place an undue burden on schools that are performing well or showing substantial progress. This section does not require an individualized description of your interventions in specific schools, but instead asks for your overall strategy to improve performance for students in different tiers of schools. In the space below, describe the process used to tier schools and the approach that your district will take to support each tier of schools.

If the CSDE identified any of the district's schools as Turnaround, Focus, or Review, these schools must be included in the "Schools that require most significant support and oversight" category. The district is, however, welcome to include more schools in this tier. If the CSDE did not identify any of the district's schools as Turnaround, Focus, or Review, then the district may use its own judgment to determine whether any schools should be classified in this tier.

Even if a district's schools have similar performance as measured by the SPI, we encourage the district to use other factors – potentially including graduation rates, growth, progress over time, and subgroup performance – to tier schools and develop differentiated strategies for support and intervention.

Tier	List of Schools in Tier	Classification Criteria for schools in Tier	District Approach to Supporting Schools in Tier
Schools that require the least support and oversight/should be given the most freedom: These schools should be identified because of their high performance and/or progress over time.	None		Leadership: Instruction/Teaching: Effective Use of Time: Curriculum: Use of Data: School Environment: Family and Community:
Schools that require moderate support and oversight: These schools should be identified because they are not yet high performing but do not require interventions as intensive as lower tier schools.	Mead School (K-6) Prendergast School (K-6) Ansonia Middle School (7-8)	SPI CMT CMT Ach. Gap Local assessment data Adult action data re. our District Improvement Plan	Leadership: Aspirant Administrators Academy Training and embedded support on teacher observation / evaluation Instruction/Teaching: Implementation of Readers/Writers Workshop New literacy anthology series and classroom libraries Effective Use of Time: Support for move from 90-minute (sometimes interrupted) literacy block to

			120 minutes uninterrupted
			Curriculum: Implementation support for newly revised curricula aligned to CCSS Continued revision and development of curricula aligned to CCSS
			Use of Data: Continued provision of Ansonia Assessment Analytics in support of data team model Added technology software and hardware will facilitate a changeover to computer-based adaptive testing
			School Environment: Continued support for implementation of PBIS
			Family and Community: Wrap-around services for literacy and health
Schools that require most significant support and oversight: If your district contains Focus, Turnaround, or Review schools, these schools have been provided to you by the CSDE (as measured by the School Performance Index and 4-year graduation rates).	Ansonia High School	SPI CAPT CAPT Ach. Gap Local assessment data Adult action data re. our District Improvement Plan	Leadership: Aspirant Administrators Academy Training and embedded support on teacher observation / evaluation Instruction/Teaching: Implementation of master teacher model, providing embedded support to all teachers 9-12 Effective Use of Time: Expanded learning time for all grade 9 students and grade 10 students in need Curriculum:

			Implementation support for newly revised curricula aligned to CCSS Continued revision and development of curricula aligned to CCSS
			Use of Data: Continued provision of Ansonia Assessment Analytics in support of data team model Added technology software and hardware will facilitate a changeover to computer-based adaptive testing
			School Environment: Continued support for implementation of PBIS
			Family and Community: Wrap-around services for literacy and health
			Districts with Focus and/or other Category Four or Five schools please disregard this cell. Instead, fill out Phase I and Phase II specific forms below.

B. Interventions in Low Performing Schools

1. Phase 1 – Focus Schools (2012-13 School Year)

For each Focus School in your district, create a school redesign plan using the template below. For any additional Focus Schools, please copy/paste this template in the following pages.

Focus School:	Grades Served:	# of Students:

Diagnosis

    a. What are the areas of greatest need in the school? (subjects, grade levels, subgroups of students)
Please note that this should be informed by assessment data and qualitative assessments.

    b. What are the reasons for low performance in this school? (Please provide evidence)

Performance Targets[1]

    a. How will the district measure the success of the intervention?

    b. How will the district monitor school progress?

Areas of School Redesign

What actions will the district and school take to ensure:

    a. That strong school leadership, including an effective principal, and a system that positions school leaders for success, is in place?

    b. That teachers are effective and able to deliver high-quality instruction?

    c. That time is being used effectively, and, if not, that a plan will be implemented to redesign the school day, week, or year to include additional time for student learning and teacher collaboration?

    d. That a strong instructional program is in place, one which is based on student needs and

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[1] Note that, in August 2012, the CSDE will provide each school with individualized performance targets for student achievement and graduation rates for the "all students" group and each subgroup. In this section, you should describe other measurable indicators of success – these may include attendance, discipline incidences, assessments other than the state assessment, or any other intermediate metrics that demonstrate success.

ensures that the instructional program is research-based, rigorous, and aligned with Common Core State Standards?

e. That data is used to inform instruction and for continuous improvement, and that time is provided for collaboration on the use of data?

f. That a school environment exists which addresses school safety and discipline and also addresses other non-academic factors that impact student achievement, such as students' social, emotional, and health needs?

g. That ongoing mechanisms are in place which provide for family and community engagement?

Funding

a. How much funding will be made available for the interventions in this school?

b. What sources of funding will you use for this purpose (funding sources may include, but are not limited to, Alliance District funding, Title 1 funds that were previously reserved for Supplemental Education Services (SES) or Public School Choice, Priority School District funds)?

2. Phase II: Subset of other low performing schools (2013-14 School Year)

Please provide an explanation of the process your district will engage in during the 2013-14 school year to support schools as they diagnose and plan for the interventions that will be implemented in the following year. This section does not require a plan for the school-specific interventions themselves, as these will be developed over the course of the next year.

Selection of Schools

- Please list the subset of low performing schools that will be part of the Phase II cohort.

  Ansonia High School

Data Examination

- How will your district support Phase II schools as they examine data to select areas of focus for improvement?

  - Provide high-quality pre-, mid-, and post-unit assessments in English and mathematics to facilitate the data team process.
  - Provide high-quality benchmark assessments to be used in English and mathematics three times per year
  - Provide an efficient software platform to speed the input and analysis of formative assessment data and its use in the data team process
  - Provide consultant support to assist in the direction of the alternative learning program and mentorship for the newly appointed school administrators

Diagnosis

- What assessment tool will your district use to conduct needs assessments that address the following areas: quality of leadership, quality of instruction, curriculum, use of data, use of time, school climate, and partnerships with parents and the community? (Please attach tool to this application or describe the process the district will take to provide such tool over the course of the year.)

  The district and school will collaboratively and separately use the accreditation standards for the New England Association of Schools and Colleges to assess the school's progress in these areas. Each of the mentioned areas has a standard, indicators, and what-to-look-for's that discretely describe research-supported methodology. All of these observables bear a strong research basis for improving student learning and improving their school experience in general. Bibliography of works cited in the creation of these standards available at www.neasc.org

  By using both a self-study and external expert models of assessment, validity of results of the assessment is more likely.

  See attachment 2

- Which person(s) will be responsible for conducting the needs assessments?

  The school principal will be responsible for the internal audit and the assistant superintendent will contract with an outside expert to ensure an unbiased report.

Goal Setting

- How will you provide support for schools in the goal-setting process?

  The assistant superintendent has experience at both the school and regional level in the

NEASC accreditation process. The first and most important part of this process is a self-assessment and planning. The assistant superintendent will be available to train and support high school administration and staff in this process.

Intervention Selection

- What are the criteria you will use to select appropriate interventions for low performing schools?
    - Is there national/international research to support the effectiveness of the intervention?
    - Does the intervention directly address the need elucidated by data?
    - Does the school/district have the capacity/resources to faithfully implement the intervention?
    - Does the intervention directly address a standard, indicator, and what-to-look-for contained in the assessment tool?
- How will you ensure that schools select appropriate interventions that are likely to lead to increased student performance?

    Only interventions that align with the assessment tool (NEASC standards) and the criteria mentioned above will be accepted by the superintendent.

Planning for Implementation

- How will you support schools in the development of comprehensive implementation plans?

    Bi-monthly Administrative Council meetings will center on tracking fidelity of implementation, needed support, and needed resources for the successful implementation of these plans.

Monitoring

- How will you monitor schools to ensure that interventions are implemented?

    Bi-monthly Administrative Council meetings will center on tracking fidelity of implementation, needed support, and needed resources for the successful implementation of these plans. The Council will collaboratively and accountably report on teacher implementation of new assessments, development of instructional practices aligned with the CCSS, progress toward reformatting the freshman year at AHS, efficacy and fidelity of implementation of the new literacy anthology and the readers' and writers' workshop model.

- How will you monitor schools to ensure that interventions lead to increases in student achievement?

    Bi-monthly Administrative Council meetings will be used to collaboratively review local, formative assessment data from common formative assessments, benchmarks, DRA2 (TRC) and Dibels. Our Ansonia Assessment Analytics will be used to facilitate this process. This software generates classroom-, school-, and district-level reports showing student growth by whole group and sub-groups. It is possible to compare individuals, classrooms, grades, and schools.

Timeline

- Please provide a timeline that ensures that all Phase 2 schools have complete School Redesign Plans by June 2013.
    - September – October 2012: Establish research team for extended learning time and freshman academy structure
    - October – November 2012: Conduct research and visitations of schools successfully

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implementing these models
- December 2012 – January 2013: Ensure that master scheduling process integrates freshman academy structure
- February – April 2013: Formal plans are designed and disseminated for freshman academy and extended learning time. Faculty members are selected for both initiatives.
- May – June 2013: Faculty are trained for freshman academy structure and extended learning time

Section III: Budget (See accompanying budget materials)

1. **Key Initiative Budget Summary:** Please use the table attached in additional materials to provide a high-level budget that summarizes the funding the district will allocate to each key initiative described in Section B. For each initiative, provide the existing resources and, if applicable, the Alliance District funding that will be allocated to the initiative.

2. **Key Initiative Budgets for Alliance District Funding (for new key initiatives and the expansion of existing key initiatives):** For each key initiative that will be launched or expanded with Alliance District funding, please provide a line-by-line budget that details the uses of the Alliance District funding for 2012-2013, as well as the use of other funds and the leveraging of efficiencies. Also indicate the total Alliance District funding the district anticipates allocating to the initiative in years two through five. Provide a separate budget for each initiative. Note that the total of the key initiative budgets should, in total, equal a substantial majority of the Alliance District Funding allocated to the district.

3. **Budget for Alliance District Funding for Other Purposes**
   a. If you propose using any Alliance District funds for purposes other than for initiating or expanding reform initiatives, please provide a line by line budget for 2012-2013.

   b. In the event that your budget proposes using any Alliance District funds for purposes other than new reforms, or the expansion of existing reforms, please attach operating budget for 2012-2013. Also provide a one page summary explaining the need for such expenditures. Please note that any expenditure of Alliance District funds not allocated for the initiation or expansion of reform initiatives must be justified in this summary. (*Districts may submit operating budget for 2012-13 in electronic format only*)

Note: The total of the budgets provided in Parts 2 and 3 should, in sum, equal the total Alliance District funding allocated to the district (see Appendix A for this amount).

4. **Total Alliance District Funding Budget:** Provide an ED114 budget that includes all Alliance District funding expenditures. The total of this ED114 budget should equal the sum of the budgets provided in Parts 2 and 3 and should, in sum, equal the total Alliance District funding allocated to the district (see Appendix A for this amount).

List of Appendices:

Appendix A – List of Eligible Districts and Amount of ECS Funds

Appendix B – Legislation

Appendix C – Statement of Assurances

Appendix A: List of Alliance Districts and 2012-13 Alliance District Funding

Ansonia	539,715
Bloomfield	204,550
Bridgeport	4,404,227
Bristol	1,390,182
Danbury	1,696,559
Derby	280,532
East Hartford	1,714,744
East Haven	489,867
East Windsor	168,335
Hamden	882,986
Hartford	4,808,111
Killingly	380,134
Manchester	1,343,579
Meriden	1,777,411
Middletown	796,637
Naugatuck	635,149
New Britain	2,654,335
New Haven	3,841,903
New London	809,001
Norwalk	577,476
Norwich	1,024,982
Putnam	179,863
Stamford	920,233
Vernon	671,611
Waterbury	4,395,509
West Haven	1,381,848
Winchester	207,371
Windham	763,857
Windsor	306,985
Windsor Locks	252,306

Appendix B: Alliance District statutory references from PA 12-116 An Act Concerning Educational Reform

Sec. 34. (NEW) (Effective July 1, 2012) (a) As used in this section and section 10-262i of the general statutes, as amended by this act:

(1) "Alliance district" means a school district that is in a town that is among the towns with the lowest district performance indices.

(2) "District performance index" means the sum of the district subject performance indices for mathematics, reading, writing and science.

(3) "District subject performance index for mathematics" means thirty per cent multiplied by the sum of the mastery test data of record, as defined in section 10-262f of the general statutes, for a district for mathematics weighted as follows: (A) Zero for the percentage of students scoring below basic, (B) twenty-five per cent for the percentage of students scoring at basic, (C) fifty per cent for the percentage of students scoring at proficient, (D) seventy-five per cent for the percentage of students scoring at goal, and (E) one hundred per cent for the percentage of students scoring at advanced.

(4) "District subject performance index for reading" means thirty per cent multiplied by the sum of the mastery test data of record, as defined in section 10-262f of the general statutes, for a district for reading weighted as follows: (A) Zero for the percentage of students scoring below basic, (B) twenty-five per cent for the percentage of students scoring at basic, (C) fifty per cent for the percentage of students scoring at proficient, (D) seventy-five per cent for the percentage of students scoring at goal, and (E) one hundred per cent for the percentage of students scoring at advanced.

(5) "District subject performance index for writing" means thirty per cent multiplied by the sum of the mastery test data of record, as defined in section 10-262f of the general statutes, for a district for writing weighted as follows: (A) Zero for the percentage of students scoring below basic, (B) twenty-five per cent for the percentage of students scoring at basic, (C) fifty per cent for the percentage of students scoring at proficient, (D) seventy-five per cent for the percentage of students scoring at goal, and (E) one hundred per cent for the percentage of students scoring at advanced.

(6) "District subject performance index for science" means ten per cent multiplied by the sum of the mastery test data of record, as defined in section 10-262f of the general statutes, for a district for science weighted as follows: (A) Zero for the percentage of students scoring below basic, (B) twenty-five per cent for the percentage of students scoring at basic, (C) fifty per cent for the percentage of students scoring at proficient, (D) seventy-five per cent for the percentage of students scoring at goal, and (E) one hundred per cent for the percentage of students scoring at advanced.

(7) "Educational reform district" means a school district that is in a town that is among the ten lowest district performance indices when all towns are ranked highest to lowest in district performance indices scores.

(b) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2013, the Commissioner of Education shall designate thirty school districts as alliance districts. Any school district designated as an alliance district shall be so designated for a period of five years. On or before June 30, 2016, the Department of Education shall determine if there are any additional alliance districts.

(c) (1) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2013, and each fiscal year thereafter, the Comptroller shall withhold from a town designated as an alliance district any increase in funds received over the amount the town received for the prior fiscal year pursuant to section 10-262h of the general statutes, as amended by this act. The Comptroller shall transfer such funds to the Commissioner of Education.

(2) Upon receipt of an application pursuant to subsection (d) of this section, the Commissioner of Education may award such funds to the local or regional board of education for an alliance district on the condition that such funds shall be expended in accordance with the plan described in subsection (d) of this section and any

guidelines developed by the State Board of Education for such funds. Such funds shall be used to improve student achievement in such alliance district and to offset any other local education costs approved by the commissioner.

(d) The local or regional board of education for a town designated as an alliance district may apply to the Commissioner of Education, at such time and in such manner as the commissioner prescribes, to receive any increase in funds received over the amount the town received for the prior fiscal year pursuant to section 10-262h of the general statutes, as amended by this act. Applications pursuant to this subsection shall include objectives and performance targets and a plan that may include, but not be limited to, the following: (1) A tiered system of interventions for the schools under the jurisdiction of such board based on the needs of such schools, (2) ways to strengthen the foundational programs in reading to ensure reading mastery in kindergarten to grade three, inclusive, with a focus on standards and instruction, proper use of data, intervention strategies, current information for teachers, parental engagement, and teacher professional development, (3) additional learning time, including extended school day or school year programming administered by school personnel or external partners, (4) a talent strategy that includes, but is not limited to, teacher and school leader recruitment and assignment, career ladder policies that draw upon guidelines for a model teacher evaluation program adopted by the State Board of Education, pursuant to section 10-151b of the general statutes, as amended by this act, and adopted by each local or regional board of education. Such talent strategy may include provisions that demonstrate increased ability to attract, retain, promote and bolster the performance of staff in accordance with performance evaluation findings and, in the case of new personnel, other indicators of effectiveness, (5) training for school leaders and other staff on new teacher evaluation models, (6) provisions for the cooperation and coordination with early childhood education providers to ensure alignment with district expectations for student entry into kindergarten, including funding for an existing local Head Start program, (7) provisions for the cooperation and coordination with other governmental and community programs to ensure that students receive adequate support and wraparound services, including community school models, and (8) any additional categories or goals as determined by the commissioner. Such plan shall demonstrate collaboration with key stakeholders, as identified by the commissioner, with the goal of achieving efficiencies and the alignment of intent and practice of current programs with conditional programs identified in this subsection. The commissioner may require changes in any plan submitted by a local or regional board of education before the commissioner approves an application under this subsection.

(e) The State Board of Education may develop guidelines and criteria for the administration of such funds under this section.

(f) The commissioner may withhold such funds if the local or regional board of education fails to comply with the provisions of this section. The commissioner may renew such funding if the local or regional board of education provides evidence that the school district of such board is achieving the objectives and performance targets approved by the commissioner stated in the plan submitted under this section.

(g) Any local or regional board of education receiving funding under this section shall submit an annual expenditure report to the commissioner on such form and in such manner as requested by the commissioner. The commissioner shall determine if (A) the local or regional board of education shall repay any funds not expended in accordance with the approved application, or (B) such funding should be reduced in a subsequent fiscal year up to an amount equal to the amount that the commissioner determines is out of compliance with the provisions of this subsection.

(h) Any balance remaining for each local or regional board of education at the end of any fiscal year shall be carried forward for such local or regional board of education for the next fiscal year.

STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
STANDARD STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES
GRANT PROGRAMS

PROJECT TITLE: ALLIANCE DISTRICT APPLICATION FOR STATE EDUCATION COST SHARING FUNDS 2012-13

_____

_____

THE APPLICANT: **Carol Merlone,**   HEREBY ASSURES THAT:
                          Superintendent of Schools

_____

(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)
1) References in this section to "contract" shall mean this grant agreement and references to "contractor" shall mean the Grantee.

For the purposes of this section, "Commission" means the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities.

For the purposes of this section "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 section 32-9n; and "good faith" means that degree of diligence which a reasonable person would exercise in the performance of legal duties and obligations. "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.

2) (a) 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, mental retardation 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. 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, mental retardation, 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; (b) 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; (c) 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 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; (d) the contractor agrees to comply with each provision of this section and sections 46a-68e and 46a-68f and with each regulation or relevant order issued by said Commission pursuant to sections 46a-56, 46a-68e and 46a-68f; (e) 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 section 46a-56.

3) 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.

4) The contractor shall develop and maintain adequate documentation, in a manner prescribed by the Commission, of its good faith efforts.

5) The contractor shall include the provisions of section (2) above 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 section 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.

6) The contractor agrees to comply with the regulations referred to in this section as the term of this contract and any amendments thereto as they exist on the date of the contract and as they may be adopted or amended from time to time during the term of this contract and any amendments thereto.

7) (a) 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 of the state of Connecticut, and that employees are treated when employed without regard to their sexual orientation; (b) 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; (c) the contractor agrees to comply with each provision of this section and with each regulation or relevant order issued by said Commission pursuant to section 46a-56; (d) 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 section 46a-56.

8) The contractor shall include the provisions of section (7) above 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 section 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)*   Carol Merlone

Title: *(typed)*   Superintendent of Schools

Date: July 11, 2012

Attachment 1:
Tier-1 Goals for Student Achievement:

The number of students achieving goal level will increase at a rate of at least *(see below)* percentage points per year while narrowing the gap between students receiving free/reduced-price lunch and those paying full price.

This table describes the amount of improvement that is expected in each state test and each grade level based on the previous year's achievement. This use of data allows our goals to automatically adjust and evolve each year based on the previous year's successes or struggles.

% At Goal	Points of growth expected next year	% At Goal	Points of growth expected next year	% At Goal	Points of growth expected next year
100	0.0	66	3.0	32	8.0
99	0.0	65	3.0	31	8.0
98	0.0	64	3.0	30	8.5
97	0.0	63	3.0	29	8.5
96	0.0	62	3.5	28	9.0
95	0.5	61	3.5	27	9.0
94	0.5	60	3.5	26	9.0
93	0.5	59	3.5	25	9.5
92	0.5	58	4.0	24	9.5
91	0.5	57	4.0	23	10.0
90	0.5	56	4.0	22	10.0
89	0.5	55	4.5	21	10.0
88	0.5	54	4.5	20	10.5
87	1.0	53	4.5	19	10.5
86	1.0	52	4.5	18	11.0
85	1.0	51	5.0	17	11.0
84	1.0	50	5.0	16	11.5
83	1.0	49	5.0	15	11.5
82	1.0	48	5.5	14	11.5
81	1.5	47	5.5	13	12.0
80	1.5	46	5.5	12	12.0
79	1.5	45	6.0	11	12.5
78	1.5	44	6.0	10	12.5
77	1.5	43	6.0	9	13.0
76	2.0	42	6.5	8	13.0
75	2.0	41	6.5	7	13.5
74	2.0	40	6.5	6	13.5
73	2.0	39	7.0	5	14.0
72	2.0	38	7.0	4	14.0
71	2.5	37	7.0	3	14.5
70	2.5	36	7.5	2	14.5
69	2.5	35	7.5	1	15.0
68	2.5	34	7.5	0	15.0
67	2.5	33	8.0		

NEASC

Standards for Accreditation 2011 and Later

Table of Contents

Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

Overview:
Effective schools identify core values and beliefs about learning that function as explicit foundational commitments to students and the community. Decision-making remains focused on and aligned with these critical commitments. Core values and beliefs manifest themselves in research-based, school-wide 21st century learning expectations. Every component of the school is driven by the core values and beliefs and supports all students' achievement of the school's learning expectations.

1) The school community engages in a dynamic, collaborative and inclusive process informed by current research-based best practices to identify and commit to its core values and beliefs about learning.

What to Look for:

- a record is available of the process used by the stakeholders to identify and commit to core values and beliefs about learning, including dates of more than one meeting and names of participants with designation of role in school (e.g., 11th grade student; science teacher; parent of freshman; principal)

- dates of the initial approval by the faculty, students, parents, and other stakeholders as well as the school board are noted

- evidence of the current research-based best practices used to inform the process is available along with a brief narrative of the process and activities involved

- the core values and beliefs about learning can be easily identified in the school's narrative (by underlining or italicizing them, e.g., a belief by all that "students learn best when they can apply their learning and can make connections with topics in other subjects" *or* the belief that "teachers can best improve instruction for all students when they are reflective and collaborative")

- students, faculty, parents, when chosen arbitrarily can state in general terms what the school's core values and beliefs about learning are and indicate how these values and beliefs about learning impact them

- the document which includes the core values and beliefs about learning is published in documents, on the website, and is readily available

2) The school has challenging and measurable 21st century learning expectations for all students which address academic, social and civic competencies, and are defined by school-wide analytic rubrics that identify targeted high levels of achievement.

What to Look for:

- The school's approved statement of core values and beliefs about learning includes a list of learning expectations which are or can easily be labeled by academic, civic, or social competencies

- The school's learning expectations are challenging

- The school's learning expectations prepare students for the remainder of the 21st century

- The school has at least one analytic rubric for each learning expectation (Including, academic, civic, and social) that can be used with all students (or school-wide) (e.g. each rubric has specific criteria listed under various levels of achievement so that students, parents, and teachers, are very clear about what the student must do to be successful on each of the learning expectations)

- Each analytic rubric has the desired level of achievement clearly marked or targeted (e.g., "meeting the expectation")

- The school's learning expectations are consistent with its core values and beliefs about learning (e.g., if the school has a social competency of "collaborative worker", do the school's core values and beliefs about learning make explicit teachers are expected to be collaborative also)

- The school's analytic rubrics use the same terminology so students are not confused about different expectations or levels of achievement (e.g., categories might be: "does not meet expectation", "approaching expectation", "meeting the expectation," and "meeting the expectation with distinction"

Please see the *Guide to Developing and Implementing Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations* also on this website

3) The school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations are actively reflected in the culture of the school, drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment in every classroom, and guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations.

What to Look For:

- Examples of ways that the culture of the school reflects the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations; e.g., if the school's core values include promoting a sense of internationalism in students, one might see a variety of programs which expose students to various cultures, possible foreign language requirements for all students; extended learning and travel programs; involvement of businesses that are global in nature

- Examples of specific changes made to the (a) curriculum, (b) instruction, and (c) assessment in response to the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations, e.g., curriculum: if the school's core values include promoting a sense of internationalism in students, then changes would be make to the curriculum, especially to courses that *all students* take to include topics about global studies and internationalism; instruction: if a belief about learning is that students learn from other students, then instructional strategies would include opportunities for students to learn from each other; assessment: if the beliefs about learning include the idea that students should have more than one chance to be assessed on a learning expectation, then teachers' grading practices would reflect this belief, and students would not be penalized for receiving a low score early in the semester, if the student eventually masters the learning expectations.

- Specific changes to or adaptations of school policies, procedures, and decisions resulting from examination of the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations: a school community holds a variety of meetings to discuss grouping practices and takes step to reduce the number of levels of courses in order to ensure that all students are exposed to challenging curriculum; on the same topic, a school creates common assessment for like-courses so that all students are held to a high level of expectation; a school; a school reviews its cell-phone policy to incorporate the use of cell-phones and smart phones for learning

- A list of resource allocations that have been made in response to supporting the school's core values, beliefs about learning, and its 21st century learning expectations, e.g., a school reports specific increases in professional development funding to help teachers learn how to review data and to begin the work of disaggregating data; a school reports additional funding to develop new curriculum and to provide materials, supplies, and staffing for a new course designed specifically for one of the school's learning expectations.

- Visitors will see signs of the culture of the school, e.g.:

  - Academic learning is valued

  - The school is truly a community of learners or a democratic school or an inclusive school

  - The adults respect students; students respect adults; students respect students; there are no obvious cliques at odds with each other; teachers talk about teaching and learning when they are out of the classroom; departments are not segregated; cross-disciplinary discussion occur, are valued, and are made easy by configuration; support staff are treated as integral members of the school community;

there are no obviously disenfranchised students; decisions are made on the basis of what is best for all students

4) The school regularly reviews and revises its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources, as well as district and school community priorities.

What to Look for:

- the school leadership has a process and timeline for the regular review and revision of its core values, beliefs, and the learning expectations

- school leaders and faculty can cite readings/research to ensure they are cognizant of 21st century learning skills

- periodic forums are held to share information about 21st century skills and learning, including the solicitation of feedback from the local business community

- the school examines data about students' achievement of school-wide learning expectations, student performance on standardized tests, and student work as part of a review of targeted school-wide learning priorities

- there are data teams, or PLC's, or other designated groups who meet regularly to analyze results of standardized tests, assessment of student achievement of the school's learning expectations, especially disaggregated data to determine achievement gaps

- evidence of changes made or discussion of the learning expectations, based upon the review of data sources

- as part of the work of PLC's faculty regularly discusses research on learning to include an assessment of the implications of such research on the school's beliefs about learning;

- the faculty incorporates discussion of district and community priorities into its discussion of the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations

- the school's learning expectations align with the district's learning goals

Curriculum

Overview:
The written and taught curriculum is designed to result in all students achieving the school's 21st century expectations for student learning. The written curriculum is the framework within which a school aligns and personalizes the school's 21st century learning expectations. The curriculum includes a purposefully designed set of course offerings, co-curricular programs, and other learning opportunities. The curriculum reflects the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. The curriculum is collaboratively developed, implemented, reviewed, and revised based on analysis of student performance and current research.

1) The curriculum is purposefully designed to ensure that all students practice and achieve each of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

What to Look For:

- each curriculum area has assumed responsibility for teaching one or more of the 21st century learning expectations

- a core curriculum is required of all students that addresses all of the century learning expectations

- the design of the curriculum ensure that each student has multiple learning experiences to ensure he/she achieves the learning expectations

- when appropriate, alternative paths/programs and time options are available to those students who need significant additional support or time to meet expectations (e.g., on-line learning, summer programs, extra courses, evening courses, Saturday programs)

- ancillary support mechanisms are in place to help all students achieve the expectations (e.g., teachers schedule extra help sessions; learning centers, writing centers are open to provide support; tutoring is available)

- data will be used regarding the school's learning expectations when the school makes decisions to add or delete courses or units from the curriculum

2) The curriculum is written in a common format that includes:
- units of study with essential questions, concepts, content, and skills
- the school's 21st century learning expectations
- instructional strategies
- assessment practices that include the use of school-wide analytic and course specific rubrics.

What to Look For:

- the school uses a curriculum template for all courses which includes essential questions, concepts, content, and skills

- the school uses a curriculum template for all courses which includes the schools 21t century learning expectations

- the school uses a curriculum template for all courses which includes instructional strategies

- the school uses a curriculum template for all courses which includes assessment practices that include the use of school-wide analytic and course specific rubrics

3) The curriculum emphasizes depth of understanding and application of knowledge through:
- inquiry and problem-solving
- higher order thinking
- cross-disciplinary learning
- authentic learning opportunities both in and out of school
- informed and ethical use of technology.

What to Look For:

- Is the curriculum intellectually challenging and does it provide opportunities for students to authentically apply knowledge and skills?

- All courses, regardless of level, provide students with rigorous and challenging learn experiences which require them to apply, analyze, synthesize, compare/contrast, and evaluate

- The Program of Studies clearly offers challenging coursework for all students (i.e., there are no courses that "water down" the curriculum for certain "less able" students)

- Intellectual rigor is evident in the quality of student work reflecting higher order thinking and problem solving techniques

- Students are regularly called upon to demonstrate their growing body of knowledge, skills, ideas, and concepts and to apply them to real life situations

  o writing is done for audiences beyond the classroom {e.g., businessmen, Congress; proposals developed for local agencies (students in a marine biology class engage in a community water quality project, spend time in the field, and write a report for the community)}

  o students prepare *portfolios* of their work to be shared periodically with parents and a panel of outside judges

  o project work replaces much teacher-directed learning and leads to formal public presentations to audiences of parents, community people, university-based educator, scientific organizations

  o students apply a fundamental understanding of the ethical/legal issues surrounding the access and use of media (such as music files, etc.); students apply a fundamental understanding of the ethical/legal issues surrounding the access and use of information to a given project

  o the school is able to describe structures that are in place to ensure all of the above: supervision practices; peer review; review of student work; results of assessments

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4) There is clear alignment between the written and taught curriculum.

<u>What to Look For:</u>

- a school will be able to describe the structures in place which ensures that the *written* curriculum is *taught,* e.g., curriculum coordinators supervise teachers and provide assistance to new teachers

- assessment that are referenced in curriculum documents would be used regularly by all teachers teaching the same course

- common assessments for a course would be used and regularly re viewed to pinpoint gaps in the curriculum

- a visitor to the school who has the opportunity to visit a number of sections of the same course over a reasonable period of time would observe the curriculum being taught in each course as the same curriculum described in the curriculum documents

- teachers of the same course would meet regularly to share ideas about delivering the curriculum

5) Effective curricular coordination and vertical articulation exist between and among all academic areas within the school as well as with sending schools in the district.

What to Look For:

- the school will have a written curriculum review cycle, which includes time devoted to the development, review, and evaluation of the curriculum

- faculty members will spend time in collaboration activities (e.g., PLC's, critical friends groups, common planning time, et. al.) within content areas, across content areas, and with sending schools for the purpose of articulation of the curriculum

- district curriculum guides will provide a continuum of student learning expectations and curriculum guides K-12

- curriculum is aligned across disciplines and within disciplines (e.g., tenth grade English teachers are not asking students to read a novel the students read in grade 8))

- regular formal meetings of curriculum leaders/teachers are held between sending schools and the high school to ensure seamless curriculum articulation

- meetings of school instructional leaders (e.g., department heads or curriculum leaders) and teachers occur regularly to ensure that all student learning expectations are addressed consistently throughout the school (e.g., student writing is reviewed to determine whether writing expectations are being met by the curriculum across all subject areas)

- the library/media center's resources, programs and services are coordinated with and supportive of the curriculum

- all faculty members and student support service personnel (e.g., guidance counselors, special educators, and library media specialists) are involved in the development, evaluation, and revision of curriculum

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6) Staffing levels, instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, facilities, and the resources of the library/media center are sufficient to fully implement the curriculum, including the co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities.

<u>What to Look For:</u>

- the school's class sizes, both school-wide and by academic area, are sufficient to implement the curriculum (individual teacher loads and class sizes are reasonable)

- the school's expenditures over the most recent three year period for instructional materials, technology, equipment, supplies, and library-media resources are sufficient to implement the curriculum

- all areas of the facility support the delivery of the curriculum (e.g. science labs, art rooms, technology areas) are sufficient in number and in working order to conduct the experiences necessary to implement the curriculum (laboratories in science, etc,)

- laboratories in the school are up-to-date, in working order; classrooms are large enough to do project-based learning, and computer rooms or other technology centers are available to accommodate classes

- sufficient staffing means that classroom teaching loads are within reason; staffing should be sufficient to enable the school to teach all parts of the curriculum (e.g., lab sciences, art, music, technology)

- sufficient classrooms are available to fully support the school's program of studies

- the library/media center's resources adequately support the curriculum with supplemental material as well as computers to support research

- funding is sufficient to support co-curricular programs and other learning opportunities (e.g., virtual programs, music, drama, athletic and other leadership opportunities, etc.)

- technology, including computers, wiring infrastructure, etc., is sufficient

7) The district provides the school's professional staff with sufficient personnel, time, and financial resources for ongoing and collaborative development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum using assessment results and current research.

<u>**What to Look For:**</u>

- the district provides leadership for curriculum coordination and articulation

- expenditures over a three-year period for curriculum development, evaluation, and revision show sufficient funding

- teachers and administrators can cite research (books, professional development, articles, etc.) they have used to inform their thinking during the development, evaluation and revision of curriculum

- teachers review assessment data which specifically measure student performance of the 21st century learning expectations and use the results of the review to inform their decisions regarding curriculum revisions

- teachers have time to meet regularly with curriculum leaders to review the success of their curriculum and instructional practices in meeting the learning expectations as well as subject specific outcomes

Instruction

The quality of instruction is the single most important factor in students' achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations. Instruction is responsive to student needs, deliberate in its design and delivery, and grounded in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. Instruction is supported by research in best practices. Teachers are reflective and collaborative about their instructional strategies and collaborative with their colleagues to improve student learning.

1) Teachers' instructional practices are continuously examined to ensure consistency with the school's core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations.

What to Look for:

- teachers are clearly familiar with the school's beliefs about learning and often reference them when making decision about which instructional strategies to employ

- teaching practices in all classes consistently and overtly support the core values and beliefs about learning (e.g., if the school has identified independent learning and active engagement, then all teachers use practices which engage students and cause students to be able to work without direct teacher instruction and they would be acting as coaches)

- teachers might engage in peer observation and reflection in order to examine their practices against the school's 21st century learning expectations as well as the school's beliefs about learning

- teaching practices would be regularly examined against the school's learning expectations in order to ensure teachers are modeling the expectations for students (e.g., use of technology, collaboration, reflection)

2) Teachers' instructional practices support the achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations by:

- **personalizing instruction**
- **engaging students in cross disciplinary learning**
- **engaging students as active and self-directed learners**
- **emphasizing inquiry, problem solving, and higher order thinking**
- **applying knowledge and skills to authentic tasks**
- **engaging students in self-assessment and reflection**
- **integrating technology.**

<u>What to Look for:</u>

- personalizing instruction
    - teachers meet regularly with individuals or small groups of students to address individual learning needs
    - teachers select and employ the appropriate instructional approaches to address various learning styles
    - teachers call home to talk with parents/families to enlist support
    - teachers show respect, positive rapport in day-to-day conversations with students
    - teachers act as advisors/mentors (See Standard 5, Indicator 3)

- engaging students in cross disciplinary learning
    - students are involved in thematic studies that helps them study topics that transcend more than one content area and make connections across the content areas
    - teachers regularly help students to see how a given topic/lesson extends across the content areas
    - school-wide instruction is planned around a theme
    - see Standard 2: Curriculum for related topics

- engaging students as active and self-directed learners
    - students take on an active role in learning and are not sitting passively at their desks
    - students are engaged in hand's-on, project-based learning and discovery lessons
    - teachers are actively facilitating lessons and acting as coaches by asking students to do independent research, work in cooperative groups, apply knowledge to real-world

- emphasizing inquiry, problem solving, and higher order thinking
    - teachers focus students on key themes, concepts, and essential questions
    - teachers spend sufficient time on a unit/theme/topic/essential question to allow students to understand the concepts or information in depth
    - teachers emphasize skills that extend beyond acquisition of knowledge and skills on Bloom's Taxonomy
    - teachers regularly ask students to apply knowledge, to analyze what t hey have learned, to synthesize concepts, to compare/contrast, and to evaluate

- applying knowledge and skills to authentic tasks
    - teachers ask students to write for audiences beyond the classroom
    - teachers ask students to share portfolios with parents and critical friends

- teachers ask students to engage in meaningful project work that leads to formal presentations, often involving audiences beyond the school
- students participate in internships and school-to-career opportunities

- engaging students in self-assessment and reflection
  - teachers routinely ask students to reflect on their work and to self-critique (e.g., through the use of portfolios and with the application of rubrics)
  - teachers clarify for students that assessment is part of the learning process, not simply an evaluation at the end of an activity, relating assessment to the school's core values, if applicable
  - teachers routinely and regularly ask students to reflect on their own work, to write about how they would make improvements or changes, to critique their own work as well as their peers

- integrating technology
  - teachers use appropriate technology to enhance instruction
  - all teachers have had professional development which provides them with knowledge to employ technology as a means of involving students in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher-order thinking
  - all teachers are expected to use technology to enhance learning
  - teachers routinely involve students in using appropriate technology to extend learning (e.g., students know how to use presentation software such as PowerPoint; they would be seen using presentation software to draw conclusions about what their discovery process taught them and to illustrate the newly-drawn concepts to classmates)

3) Teachers adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student by:
   - **using formative assessment, especially during instructional time**
   - **strategically differentiating**
   - **purposefully organizing group learning activities**
   - **providing additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom.**

What to Look for:

Teachers adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student by:

- Using formative assessment, especially during instructional time
  - teachers regularly assess each student's learning throughout the lesson by employing a variety of assessments (e.g.," write out the steps you have used so far to complete this problem"; "share with your partner the next steps you will take to do this lab and be prepared to share the steps with the whole class")
  - teachers make clear to students that the purpose of these assessments is improvement, not a final "grade"
  - feedback is specific and immediate to help students improve

- strategically differentiating
  - teachers regularly analyze formative assessments and other information collected about individual students and devise and employ instructional strategies to specifically help individual students learn the concept/skills

- purposefully organizing group learning activities
  - teachers plan group learning activities designed to engage students in in-depth learning and to assist students in collaborating

- providing additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom
  - teachers provide extra-help sessions for students who need additional time to learn
  - teachers pair strategically pair students for maximum learning

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4) Teachers, individually and collaboratively, improve their instructional practices by:
- using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments
- examining student work
- using feedback from a variety of sources, including students, other teachers, supervisors, and parents
- examining current research
- engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practice.

<u>What to Look for:</u>
- using student achievement data from a variety of formative and summative assessments
  - teachers have regular, formal time to meet to review assessment data through professional learning communities, critical friends' groups, faculty/department meeting time purposefully designed for the review of assessments
  - teachers examine local assessment data -- including assessments which employ the school-wide rubrics, common-assessment data, individual teacher assessment data -- and modify their teaching practices based on what they have learned from this examination of data
- examining student work
  - teachers regularly meet within their content area and across content areas to look at student work, e.g., writing samples, projects, etc.
- using feedback from a variety of sources, including students, other teachers, supervisors, and parents
  - teachers regularly gather feedback from parents and make adjustments in their instruction, if appropriate
  - teachers regularly gather feedback from students and make adjustments in their instruction, if appropriate
  - department meetings regularly devote time for teachers to share and discuss instructional improvement
  - the use of feedback is accepted as an important part of instructional improvement and it permeates the culture of the school
- examining current research
  - the entire faculty reads a journal article, or a book on current research and best practices and engages in discussion
  - the school's professional library provides books, journals, links to websites, on teaching pedagogy
  - teachers have formal time for the review and discussion of research and best practices
  - decisions in the school are reflective of this review of current research

- engaging in professional discourse focused on instructional practice
  - teachers have formal time to discuss research and best practices related to instruction
  - school leadership communicates an expectation that improving instruction is important and professional discourse contributes to that improvement

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5) Teachers, as adult learners and reflective practitioners, maintain expertise in their content area and in content-specific instructional practices.

What to Look for:

- Teachers regularly read content-specific literature designed to help them use strategies specific to their subject
- Teachers regularly reflect on their reading of current literature and best practices, their conversations with colleagues, feedback provided by administrators, parents, and students
- Teachers attend conferences and programs to improve their learning
- Teachers maintain journals or portfolios which evidence their own work and self-reflection

Assessment of and for Learning

Overview:
Assessment informs students and stakeholders of progress and growth toward meeting the school's 21st century learning expectations. Assessment results are shared and discussed on a regular basis to improve student learning. Assessment results inform teachers about student achievement in order to adjust curriculum and instruction.

1) The professional staff continuously employs a formal process, based on school-wide rubrics, to assess whole-school and individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.

What to Look for:

- there is a formal, ongoing process, based on the school-wide analytic rubrics, that has been developed and fully implemented to assess both whole-school and individual student progress in achieving each of the school's 21st century learning expectations
- individual student performance is evaluated and analyzed based on the school-wide analytic rubrics that clearly designate the range and levels of success in achieving the school's 21st century leaning expectations

2) The school's professional staff communicates:

- individual student progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to students and their families
- the school's progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations to the school community.

What to Look for:

- the school has identified benchmark dates/times throughout the school year when it communicates in writing to all students and their families related to individual student progress in achieving each of the 21st century learning expectations
- the school communicated to the larger school community the whole school's progress in achieving each of its 21st century leaning expectations

3) Professional staff collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement.

- the professional staff collects, disaggregates, and analyzes, a range and variety of data, including both formative and summative assessments, to identify inequities In student achievement
- the professional staff regularly uses the data to inform changes/modification in curriculum design and instructional practices to resolve these inequities on a regular basis, including analysis at the conclusion of a unit of study, in the review of common assessments given during mid-year of final exams; student portfolios and end of semester or yearly performance projects

4) Prior to each unit of study, teachers communicate to students the school's applicable 21st century learning expectations and related unit-specific learning goals to be assessed.

- teachers articulate what students are expected to know and be able to demonstrate
- teachers explain which of the school's 21st century skills and expectations as well as content-based understandings and applications of knowledge that are required
- teachers identify in all types of assignments using classroom and electronic postings, oral assignments, and major projects the specific 21st century learning expectations and/or course-specific expectations

5) Prior to summative assessments, teachers provide students with the corresponding rubrics.

- teachers provide students with the school-wide analytic and/or course-specific rubrics that will be used to assess their learning

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6) In each unit of study, teachers employ a range of assessment strategies, including formative and summative assessments.

What to Look for:

- teachers understand and use a range of formative and summative assessment strategies
- teachers regularly use formative assessments by explaining what students are expected to learn and what learning activities will be used, providing exemplars for assignments/projects, by assessing learning on a day-to-day basis through observation, conversations with students on an individual basis or in small groups, reviewing student progress-to-date, and encouraging student reworking of assignments and self-assessment
- teachers appropriately use summative assessments such as state test results, district benchmark, end-of-unit chapter tests, end-of-term or semester exams, and scores used for accountability purposes such as AYP

7) Teachers collaborate regularly in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments.

What to Look for:

- the school has designated formal time for teachers, department leaders, and building administrators to collaborate regularly about assessment practices
- the professional staff reviews summative assessment data/results and makes modifications based on student learning in curriculum and instructional practices throughout the school year
- the professional staff reviews formative assessment results and makes modifications to curriculum and instructional practices throughout the school year
- the professional staff focuses increased attention on common assessment both within common courses and across curricular areas (common writing assignments, student exhibitions and portfolios, and major projects)
- all grade ten English teachers look at a sample of student essays to determine if the current writing rubric is appropriate
- the school maintains an appropriate balance between formative and summative assessments to ensure that daily, ongoing student learning is assessed

8) Teachers provide specific, timely, and corrective feedback to ensure students revise and improve their work.

What to Look for:

- teachers use formative assessment practices to monitor and assess in the short-term students' work and provide students with immediate opportunities to revise/resubmit their work before their work is formally assessed
- teachers review results of summative assessments and provide feedback to students prior to moving on to a new unit of study

9) Teachers regularly use formative assessment to inform and adapt their instruction for the purpose of improving student learning.

What to Look for:

- teacher collaboration occurs on a regular basis for the expressed purpose of using formative assessment results to determine appropriate, necessary changes in instructional practices such as, lower than anticipated results on the school's analytic rubrics for writing suggests that students need some differentiated instruction, or additional opportunities to revise their writing following individual feedback to students

10) Teachers and administrators, individually and collaboratively, examine a range of evidence of student learning for the purpose of revising curriculum and improving instructional practice, including all of the following:

- student work
- common course and common grade-level assessments
- individual and school-wide progress in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations
- standardized assessments
- data from sending schools, receiving schools, and post-secondary institutions
- survey data from current students and alumni.

What to Look for:

- teachers shall meet collaboratively to discuss and share student work and the results of student assessments for the purposes of revising the curriculum and improving instructional strategies

School Culture and Leadership

Overview:
The school culture is equitable and inclusive, and it embodies the school's foundational core values and beliefs about student learning. It is characterized by reflective, collaborative, and constructive dialogue about research-based practices that support high expectations for the learning of all students. The leadership of the school fosters a safe, positive culture by promoting learning, cultivating shared leadership, and engaging all members of the school community in efforts to improve teaching and learning.

1) The school community consciously and continuously builds a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all.

What to Look for:

- student, parent, and teacher handbooks reflect high expectations for all students and communicate high expectations for all

- discipline and attendance policies illustrate student responsibility and high expectations for all as well as a supportive culture

- comparative annual data on disciplinary actions and incidences of vandalism reflect downward trends

- the school focuses efforts on and can cite specific programs or activities that are related to improving school climate (e.g., tolerance and diversity programs)

- the school can cite specific programs to document that students feel a sense of pride and ownership in their school, e.g. participation numbers for school or community clean-up days, wide-scale participation in academic programs, portfolio nights, science fairs, as well as athletic and performing arts programs

- conversations with students reveal that students believe much is expected of them in terms of learning, goal-setting, behavior, respect for others, and participation in school and community

2) The school is equitable, inclusive, and fosters heterogeneity where every student over the course of the high school experience is enrolled in a minimum of one heterogeneously grouped core course (English/language arts, social studies, math, science, or world languages).

<u>What to Look for:</u>

- in accordance with current educational research, efforts to group students more heterogeneously and to eliminate tracking of students are evident
- student transcripts will include information related to the number of heterogeneously grouped courses each student has taken over the course of the high school experience in core academic courses (English Language Arts, social studies, math, science, world languages)
- a school's Program of Studies will identify which courses are heterogeneously grouped
- student grouping patterns ensure that all students, regardless of ability level, have challenging learning experiences which enable them to achieve the school's learning expectations
- committees which are responsible for making decisions related to future grouping practices use current research and practice in making those decisions
- inclusion models and other special education strategies have been investigated to ensure that all students, including those with learning disabilities, have equal access to the same curriculum and are assisted in achieving school-wide expectations
- there is diversity of enrollment in all courses so that students considered to be part of a minority population are not homogeneously grouped

3) There is a formal, on-going program through which each student has an adult in the school, in addition to the school counselor, who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.

<u>What to Look for:</u>

- to foster personalization and reduce the sense of anonymity felt by many high school students, the school has a *formal* program which provides regular contact to connect each student with an adult member of the school community in addition to the school counselor

- each student is assigned an advisor/advocate/mentor (in addition to the school counselor) who is charged with supporting every aspect of the student's educational experience (e.g., advocates meet regularly with their students, generally in groups of ten or so, throughout the year and often will be assigned to work with the same students for all four years; advocates routinely call parents to keep them informed about the progress of their students in meeting all learning expectations; advocates serve as the prime facilitator of a personal learning plan for each student; and advocates develop a rapport with students so that students feel comfortable in seeking their assistance

- advocates are generally teachers and other professional members of the staff (e.g., the principal, guidance counselors, nurse, curriculum leaders), but secretaries, custodians, and other staff members can act as advocates (i.e., to enhance their roles as members of the school community who are concerned about students and to reduce the ratio of students to adult advocates)

- the school provides additional opportunities for adult members of the school comm8nity to get to know students well (e.g., adults collaborate with students on school-related projects; adults serve as mentors for senior projects; teams of teachers work with the same group of students)

4) In order to improve student learning through professional development, the principal and professional staff:

- engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning
- use resources outside of the school to maintain currency with best practices
- dedicate formal time to implement professional development
- apply the skills, practices, and ideas gained in order to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

What to Look for:

- a collaborative spirit of reflection and inquiry exists within the faculty evidenced by ongoing conversations, both formal (e.g., within departments and across departments, professional learning communities, critical friends groups, data teams, common planning time, meetings of teams, peer-coaching sessions, study groups, etc.) and informal (e.g., at lunch tables, over coffee in the faculty room, in the hallways between classes, etc.)

- teachers routinely engage in conversations about learning expectations, consistent grading standards, quality of student work, instructional practices, and curriculum revision

- teachers have available professional readings and routinely discuss current research and best practice

- a faculty reads the same professional book and has a book-club style discussion of its merits

- teachers seek each other out for discussion about topics related to teaching and learning

- school leaders promote discussion of student learning and well-being by sharing literature on best practices, providing regular opportunities for professional development, providing meeting time for teachers

- teachers visit other schools to observe programs of interest

- teachers attend conferences and programs which enhance their teaching strategies in specific content areas

5) School leaders regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning.

<u>What to Look for:</u>

- the supervision/evaluation process is thoughtfully designed and plays an integral role in instructional improvement (i.e., the process is not a perfunctory set of classroom visits and observation reports); it is based upon research into effective approaches for improving teacher practice

- school leaders have had training in research-based supervision and evaluation processes as well as whole school practices

- the process used is clearly linked to the improvement of student learning and meeting the needs of all students

- data is gathered which demonstrates that instructional improvement results from the supervision/evaluation process

- supervisors/evaluators (including any peer mentors) are well-trained in the particular model being used

6) The organization of time supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students.

<u>What to Look for:</u>

- thoughtful review of the master schedule occurs at least every five years, if not annually, to ensure that it best supports the school's core values and beliefs about learning

- variations to traditional six, seven, and eight period schedules of 45-55 minute periods have been considered to allow longer blocks of instructional time to promote student engagement, in-depth exploration of topics, project-based learning

- the schedule supports implementation of effective instructional practices (e.g., collaborative learning, team-teaching, etc.)

- the schedule supports alternative assessments (e.g., performances, authentic applications, debates, field experiences)

- the schedule allows for the flexible use of time

- there is formal time set aside on a regular basis for teachers to collaborate (e.g., in PLC groups) and with the use of a protocol for discussion, for the review of student work, for data analysis

- alternatives to departmental content-based structures are considered if they can better address the goals of interdisciplinary curriculum design and teaching or other school-wide learning expectations

- the organization of the school's curriculum supports the schools core values and beliefs about learning

- the size of the school supports and enhances student personalization; when appropriate, smaller learning communities (e.g., teams, clusters, houses, pathways, academies) are implemented as a means of breaking the larger school into more personalized units

- students who can be better served in school programs that meet in the afternoon, evening, summer, or during a longer school year or who need additional practices to achieve learning expectations are provided these opportunities

7) Student load and class size enable teachers to meet the learning needs of individual students.

What to Look for:

- student loads enable teachers to meet the needs of individual students, to provide sufficient personalization, and to ensure student achievement of the school-wide expectations

- class size policies and actual class size numbers ensure that sufficient personalization and individual attention can be provided to develop creative options that will alleviate the problem (e.g., schedule changes, course integration, resource reallocation, team-teaching, teacher aides, etc.)

- when class sizes and student loads are excessive, efforts are made to develop creative options that will alleviate the problem (e.g., schedule changes, course integration, resource reallocation, team-teaching, teacher aides, etc.)

- class sizes allow each student to learn in a safe atmosphere where students can frequently participate and take risks

8) The principal, working with other building leaders, provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs, and learning expectations.

What to Look for:

- the principal is a visible force in the building, modeling and "living" the school's core values and beliefs about learning

- important decisions made by the principal are made in consultation with other building leaders, reflect the school's core values and beliefs about learning, support every student's learning, and are perceived as consistent and fair

- the primary focus of the principal's time is on teaching and learning (e.g., formal and informal conversations with teachers and students are about teaching and learning; faculty meetings are focused on teaching and learning with agendas and discussions that promote improved teaching and learning; the principal spends time in classrooms watching teachers teach and students learn; school leadership team meeting agendas are focused on teaching and learning goals and priorities)

- the principal shows students that their learning is paramount (e.g., academic success is highlighted more frequently than athletic success; students are interviewed for their perspective on the quality of teaching they are receiving; the principal asks random groups of students to share their portfolios for review)

- when major issues arise in the school, the principal addresses the faculty and students to express concern and to ensure that communication is direct and consistent

- the principal ensures that a safe and orderly environment exists and takes necessary steps to deal with conflicts, student threats, outside forces that may jeopardize the health and welfare of students

- the principal provides opportunities for other leaders in the school to assist in promoting examples listed earlier in this section

- stakeholders can cite examples of communications, activities, decision of the principal's instructional leadership that relate to the school's core values and beliefs about learning

- teachers and students are very clear about the school's core values and beliefs

9) Teachers, students, and parents are involved in meaningful and defined roles in decision-making that promote responsibility and ownership.

<u>What to Look for:</u>

- the principal models accessibility and openness to feedback from students, faculty, staff members, and parents

- the principal offers regular coffee hours, lunch time chats, and other forums to allow the voice of all constituents to be heard

- formal mechanisms are in place to provide decision-making roles for students, teachers, and parents (e.g., faculty councils, steering committees, community councils, school improvement teams)

- surveys, questionnaires, focus groups, and other vehicles are used regularly to collect data/feedback from all constituents which become part of the decision-making process

- parents, students, and staff members serve on committees that advise the principal and make decisions that improve teaching and learning

- when group decisions are made, the faculty as a whole, joins on board to support a decision

10) Teachers exercise initiative and leadership essential to the improvement of the school and to increase students' engagement in learning.

What to Look for:

- teachers and administrators, other than the principal, serve on and are actively engaged in leading committees that review and revise curriculum, assessment strategies, instructional practices, and school organization practices

- teachers and administrators, other than the principal, take the initiative to maintain currency through professional development, collaboration, research

- teachers and administrators, other than the principal, act as curriculum coordinators, department leaders, instructional coordinators, team leaders, and in other formal roles that support school improvement

- teachers and administrators, or then the principal, regularly recommend new initiatives or ideas that are implemented and will improve the overall climate and life of the school

- teachers and administrators are more often found offering solutions to concerns rather than lamenting the facts of problems the school might face

11)   The school board, superintendent, and principal are collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's 21st century learning expectations.

<u>**What to Look for:**</u>

- minutes and video-tapes of school board meetings illustrate cooperation and collaboration, good listening and speaking skills, between members of the school board, the superintendent and school leaders

12)   The school board and superintendent provide the principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school.

<u>**What to Look for:**</u>

- the formal job description of the principal defines clearly the responsibilities related to teaching and learning and ensuring the school community's core values and beliefs about learning are upheld

- interviews with the principal, faculty, parents, the superintendent, and school board indicate the principal has been given authority by the superintendent and school to make important decisions about the school

- district leaders and the school board seek the wisdom of the principal around important policy decisions and with regard to budget formulation

- the principal supports teaching and learning needs and provides focus on the school's learning expectations so that all students can achieve them

School Resources for Learning

Overview:

Student learning and well-being are dependent upon adequate and appropriate support. The school is responsible for providing an effective range of coordinated programs and services. These resources enhance and improve student learning and well-being and support the school's core values and beliefs. Student support services enable each student to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations.

1) The school has timely, coordinated, and directive intervention strategies for all students, including identified and at-risk students, that support each student's achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations.

What to Look for:

- all support services personnel engage in practices consistent with the school's core, values, and beliefs about its 21st century skills
- educational practices like inclusion allow all students to be placed in mainstream classes to ensure equal access to the curriculum
- the course catalog indicates that coursework involves inquiry, higher level thinking, and problem solving and is available to all students
- Students develop graduation plans that ensure they achieve the expectations; counselors encourage students to participate in activities related to social and civic expectations, such as community service)
- classroom teachers view support services personnel as integral to the success of students in meeting learning expectations and regularly seek out their support and advice

2) The school provides information to families, especially to those most in need, about available student support services.

What to Look for:

- there is a clear system in place to communicate the various types of available student support services to parents/guardians, such as through monthly newsletters, open houses, and evening presentations
- regular forums for parents and staff are held to provide information about social/emotional issues facing their children/students and strategies that are effective in addressing these issues
- efforts are made jointly between the school and community agencies to publicize and make accessible such services as suicide hotlines, birth control and pregnancy support, drug and alcohol prevention, eating disorder support, etc.

3) Support services staff use technology to deliver an effective range of coordinated services for each student.

What to Look for:

- technology resources, particularly computer hardware/software, and other electronic media are widely available and used by student support services professional staff in providing comprehensive guidance, health, special education, and health services
- technology resources particularly computer hardware/software and other electronic resources are used for developing and maintaining grade reports, transcripts, special education and 504 plans, and student health records

4) School counseling services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff (see Guideline on Counselor/Counselee Caseload) who:

What to Look for:

- deliver a written, developmental program
    - the guidance curriculum supports the school's core values, beliefs, and expectations about learning
- meet regularly with students to provide personal, academic, career, and college counseling
    - all students have access to comprehensive counseling services which include personal, academic, career, and college counseling
    - all guidance counselors meet at least once a year individually with their assigned students
- engage in individual and group meetings with all students
    - the school provides both individual counseling as well as group counseling to support students in dealing with such issues as divorce, pregnancy, family alcoholism, sexual or physical abuse, death of family members
    - special programs are brought into the school to promote student well-being such as health fairs, speakers on eating disorders, a play on date rape
    - counselors run group meetings to discuss specific academic, social or emotional issues. Discussions include topics such as: future college or career choices, issues related to having a deceased parent, difficulty relating and communicating with peers
- deliver collaborative outreach and referral to community and mental health agencies and social service providers
    - school personnel have established a collaborative outreach with appropriate mental health agencies, social service providers and other community agencies
    - community agencies collaboratively engage in supporting the school's efforts to address the social, emotional, and physical needs of students (e.g., drug and alcohol counseling programs establish partnerships with the school for both prevention and intervention efforts; the police department provides a youth officer to work directly with the school; a student assistance counselor, funded jointly by the school and local agencies, works within the school)
- use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school improve community, to improve services and ensure each student's achievement of the schools' 21st learning expectations
    - regular feedback from students, parents, and teachers is collected as one basis for evaluating and improving the various student support services
    - support services personnel continually make improvements to their programs and services throughout the year based on feedback and self-assessments

- counselors and the supervisors/administrators of the counseling program meet on at least a yearly basis to review the services provided and to make needed program revisions
- the school has established clear evaluation standards for the counseling services and programs that are related to the school's 21 st learning expectations, and the school assesses the success of these programs in promoting student learning

5) The school's health services have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff (See Guideline on Health Services) who:

- emergency response plans are written, known by everyone in the building, and are able to be activated in a moment's notice
- student health records are available to health service providers and kept in locked and confidential files

What to Look for:

- provide preventative health services and direct intervention services
- preventative and intervention services are available throughout the school day
- use an appropriate referral process
- a process is in place for teachers, staff members, and administrators to make appropriate referrals
- conduct ongoing student health assessments
- regular student health assessments are performed at school and all important medical information is maintained
- use ongoing, relevant assessment data, including feedback from the school community, to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations
- regular feedback from students, parents, and teachers is collected as one basis for evaluating and improving the delivery of health services
- health services personnel continually make improvements to their programs and services throughout the year based on feedback and self-assessments
- health services personnel and the supervisors/administrators of the program meet on at least a yearly basis to review the services provided and to make needed program revisions
- the school has established clear evaluation standards for each of the health services and programs that are related to the school-wide expectations, and the school assesses the success of these programs in promoting student learning

6) Library/media services are integrated into curriculum and instructional practices and have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff (see Guideline on School Librarian/Media Specialist) who:

What to Look for:

- are actively engaged in the implementation of the school's curriculum

- library programs and materials are aligned with the curriculum
- teachers are involved in making decisions about the selection of materials for the library/media center so that the resources available best meet their curricular and instructional needs
- teachers regularly use library/media services and the media center to support instruction
- library/media services personnel are knowledgeable about and provide support in meeting the school's core values and beliefs for student learning
- the core values and beliefs, about 21 st century learning expectations document is used to inform decisions about library programs and materials
- library/media services personnel are instructors of the library information literacy curriculum
- library/media services personnel are regularly involved in team meetings, department meetings, etc. where they become informed about curriculum and participate in evaluating and revising the curriculum based upon the feedback they hear and the experiences they share with students
- library/media services personnel work with classroom teachers to ensure students have access to resources which support the curriculum
- teachers regularly bring their students to the library/information center or enable student access to information resources by other means (e.g., Internet) in support of the curriculum
- provide a wide range of materials, technologies, and other information services in support of the school's curriculum
  - the print collection supports all areas of the curriculum
  - technology resources (particularly computer hardware/software) and other electronic media are widely available and integral to teaching in all classrooms
  - non-print resources (e.g., CD ROM's, DVD's,) are available and are regularly integrated into the curriculum
  - materials selected reflect the racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body and are of interest to students
  - resources are available to meet all students' learning needs (e.g., books at various reading levels, books on tape, etc.)
- ensure that the facility is available and staffed for students and teachers before, during, and after school
  - sufficient staffing is provided to allow the library/media center to be open before, during, and after school; information about such access is prominently and clearly publicized to members of the school community
  - there is sufficient space and technology available to accommodate simultaneous use of the library/media center by groups and by individuals
- are responsive to students' interests and needs in order to support independent learning
  - students are welcomed in the library/information center at any time during the day when they are not scheduled to be in a particular classroom or when they have been sent to the center by a faculty member
  - library/media services personnel encourage students to participate in independent inquiry by assisting them in utilizing resources and technology housed in the library/media center

- conduct ongoing assessment, using relevant data including feedback from the school community to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations
  - regular feedback from students, parents, and teachers is collected as one basis for evaluating and improving library/media services
  - library/media services personnel continually make improvements to their programs and services throughout the year based on feedback and self-assessments
  - library/media personnel and the supervisors/administrators of these programs meet on at least a yearly basis to review the services provided and to make needed program revisions
  - the school has established clear evaluation standards for the library/media services and programs that are related to the school's 21 st century learning expectations, and the school assesses the success of these programs in promoting student learning

7) Support services for identified students, including special education, Section 504 of the ADA, and English language learners, have an adequate number of certified/licensed personnel and support staff who:

<u>What to Look for:</u>

- collaborate with all teachers, counselors, targeted services, and other support staff in order to achieve the school's 21st century learning expectations
- provide inclusive learning opportunities for all students
- perform ongoing assessment, using relevant data including feedback from the school community to improve services and ensure each student achieves the school's 21st century learning expectations
- special education teachers provide support to mainstream teachers by meeting with them on a regular basis teachers are provided with training on how to utilize support services to benefit students (e.g., how to refer a student for testing, counseling, etc.)

Community Resources for Learning

Overview:
The achievement of the school's 21st century learning expectations requires active community, governing board, and parent advocacy. Through dependable and adequate funding, the community provides the personnel, resources, and facilities to support the delivery of curriculum, instruction, programs, and services.

1) The community and the district's governing body provide dependable funding for:

- a wide range of school programs and services
- sufficient professional and support staff
- on-going professional development and curriculum revision
- a full range of technology support
- sufficient equipment
- sufficient instructional materials and supplies

What to Look for:

- the school assesses a full-range of budget priorities annually which take into account the school's educational programs and services, staffing levels, curriculum processes, professional development, instructional materials and supplies, technology, and equipment
- the school uses data about student 21st century learning expectations to make budgetary decisions
- annual budget planning solicits feedback from parents and other community members in the early stages in order to determine school needs and to generate broad-based community support
- the budget planning process focuses on balancing the need for adequate program and services support with that of fiscal responsibility
- broad-based communication efforts are made to generate awareness of budget needs, of meetings being held to present the budget, and of the process to be used to vote on the budget
- the school and district administrators and the district's governing body provide authoritative and proactive leadership in preparing, presenting, and generating support for passage of the budget
- similar leadership and proactive planning are provided in determining the need for and the passage of necessary bond issues and/or capital expenditures
- as the result of the actions above, annual budgets are generally passed with substantial support of the community

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2) The school develops, plans and funds programs:
- to ensure the maintenance and repair of building and school plant
- to properly maintain, catalogue, and replace equipment
- to keep the school clean on a daily basis

<u>What to Look for:</u>

- the school provides the equipment necessary to meet instructional and facility needs
- the annual operating budget is adequate to fund the routine maintenance and upkeep of the school building and plant
- clear responsibilities for the maintenance and monitoring of equipment are designated to appropriate personnel (e.g. maintenance director, head custodian for maintenance equipment; audio-visual coordinator for projectors, etc.; technology coordinator for computers, scanners, etc.)
- regular maintenance and replacement schedules and cataloguing systems are in place for all furniture and equipment, both instructional and administrative according to a district plan
- a manager/supervisor of facilities and maintenance oversees the planning and supervision of the maintenance program including the purchasing of adequate supplies, materials, and equipment and the hiring, training, and management of personnel
- a formal plan/schedule is in place for the regular maintenance and repair of facilities and equipment and for the ongoing cleaning of the facility
- adequate personnel are in place to ensure that equipment and facilities are well-maintained
- sufficient funds are provided for the necessary personnel, supplies, materials, and equipment to ensure adequate site and facility maintenance and cleanliness
- members of the school community express satisfaction with the maintenance and cleanliness of the facility

3) The community funds and the school implements a long-range e plan that addresses:
- programs and services
- enrollment changes and staffing needs
- facility needs
- technology
- capital improvements

<u>What to Look for:</u>

- adequate long-range plans to address programs, staffing, and facility needs as well as capital improvements
- a strategic long-range plan designed jointly by the school board, administrators, and teachers with involvement by parents, students, and community members delineates future needs in the areas noted above for a five year period
- the long-range plan identifies chronological steps to be used to address these needs
- the school uses data to inform regular, thoughtful program planning

- a formal record-keeping system tracks yearly school enrollment with breakdowns by course and department (or other organizational structure) as well as staffing allocations to provide the data necessary for appropriate planning
- necessary bond proposals and other mechanisms needed to raise and provide revenue for capital projects are prepared and presented in a timely and efficient manner
- a formal multi-year technology plan that addresses the needs, costs, and strategic purchasing of technology including computers, software, LCD's SmartBoards, Promethean Boards, has been developed, is being implemented, and is reviewed and revised on an annual, if not more frequent basis

4) Faculty and building administrators are actively involved in the development and implementation of the budget

What to Look for:

Do faculty and building administrators have a strong voice in the budgetary process including its development and implementation?

- a formal process is in place for soliciting feedback from teachers and other staff members about budget needs (e.g., department request processes, site-based budget committees, faculty governing councils or steering committees)
- school instructional leaders (e.g., department heads, deans of faculty, academic coordinators) as well as the principal and other administrators are called upon to make budget requests and to develop the budget
- instructional leaders and administrators are called upon to speak publicly on behalf of the school budget and to justify requested expenditures
- school instructional leaders and administrators are delegated the responsibility for allocating and spending the major proportion of monies designated for teaching and learning purposes
- school instructional leaders and administrators are given current, up-to-date information on the status of budget allocations throughout the school year

5) The school site and plant shall support the delivery of high quality school programs and services.

What to Look for:

Are the school site and plant sufficient to enhance all aspects of the educational program?

- Adequate and appropriate space is provided to ensure full implementation of the educational program (e.g., science labs, media/information center, sufficient number of classrooms, performing arts areas, cafeteria, and storage areas, etc.)
- Adequate space is provided for the school administration and for student support services (e.g., administrative offices and private conference areas, private conference rooms for special education and

guidance personnel, sound-proofed offices for guidance counselors and social workers, appropriate nursing space which provide student privacy and confidentiality, etc.)

- the school site provides adequate space for outdoor physical education classes and athletic activities; for safe and secure parking for teachers, parents, students, and guests; for fire drills; and for the general entrance, egress, and outdoor recreation of students
- the school plant/facility is able to adequately support all school programs unless suitable alternative space has been provided
- the school plant/facility ensures the health, well-being and safety of all occupants

6) The school maintains documentation that the physical plant and facilities meet all applicable federal and state laws and are in compliance with local fire, health, and safety regulations.

<u>What to Look for:</u>

Does the school maintain up-to-date documentation to ensure the school plant and facilities are well-maintained and provide an environment that is healthy and safe for all occupants and meet all applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations?

- the plant and facility provides documentation to ensure meet that all applicable federal and state laws and are monitored by the administration (including the storage of chemicals, lists of all chemicals housed in the facility, the maintenance of fire alarms, and fire extinguishers, etc.)
- ventilation, temperature control, and air quality are regularly checked and meet all local and state health requirements throughout the facility
- the entire facility is handicapped accessible
- when the plant and/or other facilities are not in compliance with applicable laws and regulations, the school makes immediate plans to address the problems including necessary repairs and modifications or the use of temporary alternative facilities
- adequate supplies, materials, equipment, and personnel are provided to ensure that the site and plant are safe, healthy, clean, and well-maintained
- comments and complaints about school maintenance as it relates to issues of health or safety are regularly solicited from teachers, students, et al. and are acted upon in a timely manner
- the facility is clean and equipment is well-maintained; any school equipment that is found to be unsafe is immediately removed and repaired
- requests for repairs are addressed in a timely manner
- custodial staff and the outdoor maintenance crew are sufficient in number to meet all local fire, health, and safety regulations with regular checks conducted yearly and proper documentation maintained

7) All professional staff actively engage parents and families as partners in each student's education and reach out specifically to those families who have been less connected with the school.

What to Look for:

Are students and their families actively engaged as partners in the students' education as well as encouraged to participate in school programs and activities?

- teachers and administrators engage in outreach efforts to engage parents in the scholastic lives of their sons and daughters (e.g., frequent parent forums and seminars, invitations to open houses and parent coffees, parent support groups, calls to the home by teachers, etc.) and to attend co-curricular activities and other events their students participate
- teachers and administrators work collaboratively with parent and community organizations to increase meaningful outreach strategies to parents who are less connected with the school
- parents are regularly contacted and involved in conferences regarding the learning needs of their children
- site-based councils or other forms of school governance encourage parent involvement and input
- parents are involved as tutors, lecturers, and aides within the school
- parents are invited to programs which showcase student work, to roundtable presentations of student portfolios, etc.
- students participate in parent/teacher conferences which deal with their learning needs and progress
- parents are informed about all programs and services available to their students

8) The school develops productive parent, business/community/and higher education partnerships that support student learning.

What to Look for:

Are productive parent, business, community, and higher education partnerships in place that support student learning and enable students to see the real-world applications of what they are learning?

- the school has created formal business and industry partnerships which are consistent with its core values and beliefs about learning and which provide students with opportunities for job shadowing, mentoring, internships, apprenticeships, school-to-career, and summer employment
- parents regularly serve as partners on committees which support the school's educational program and services
- local business and industry leaders play an integral role in planning and implementing school-to-career programs
- partnerships with local adolescent/community groups support and supplement the regular school program (e.g., local community education sites are available; the YMCA supports a homework helper program; etc.)
- local colleges and the school are engaged in conversations about how the high school can improve curriculum and instruction in order to better prepare students to succeed in college
- high school students are able to take courses at local colleges and universities

- local college partnerships are established to support professional development programs at the high school level for faculty members through training opportunities, granting of credit for in-service experiences, etc.
- partnerships with teacher education programs have been established to engage student teachers and interns in the high school as added instructional support
- students are encouraged to participate in real-world activities that link classroom knowledge with authentic application
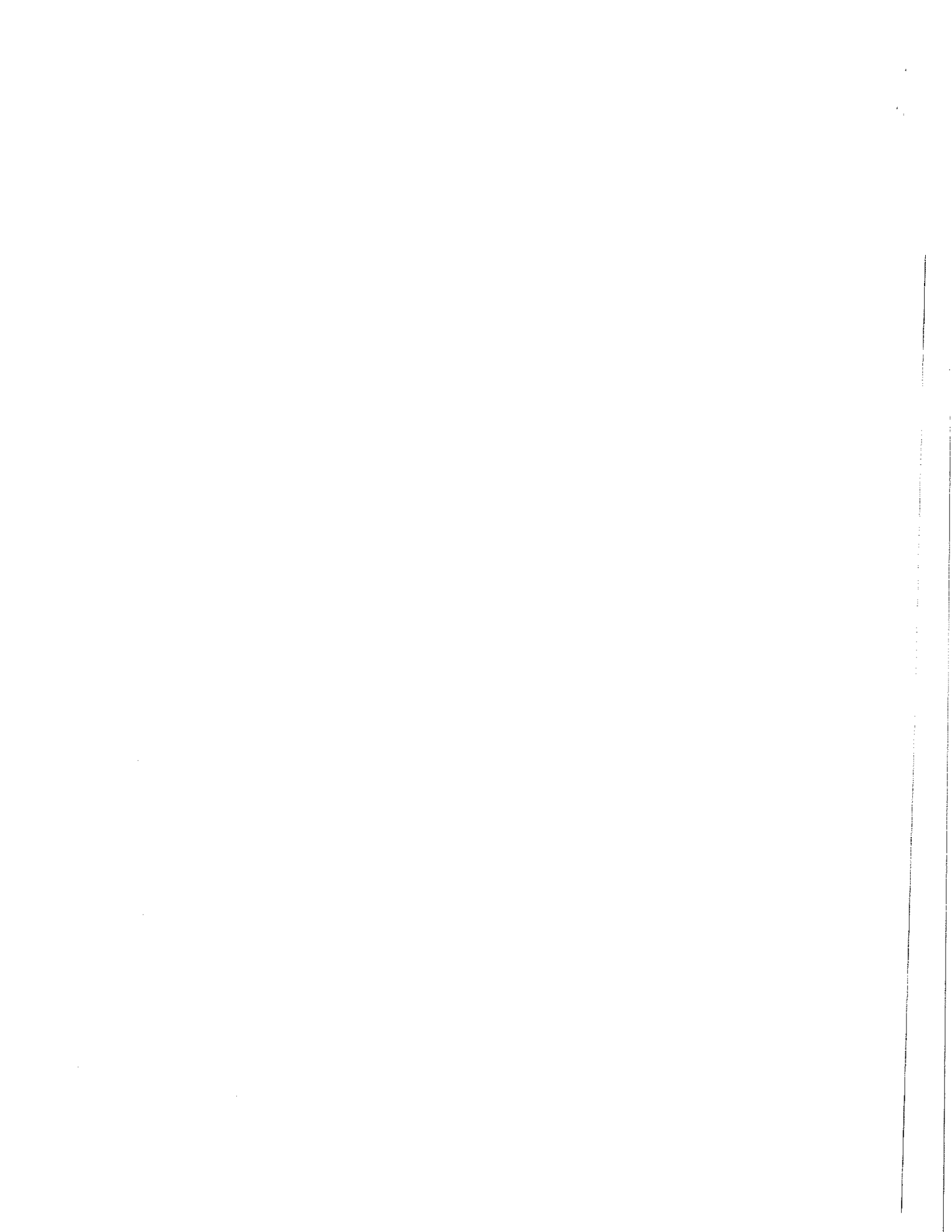
Ansonia

Addendum to _____ Year 1 Alliance District Application

By adding my signature to this document, I am making the following commitments on behalf of my school district and incorporating such commitments as part of this district's Alliance District application to the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE).

- **Low-Performing Schools Interventions:** In accordance with federal timelines and requirements, the district will work with the CSDE to craft and implement school redesign plans, subject to CSDE approval, for its Focus Schools in the fall semester of 2012-13, and to address its Review Schools in the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years. This work will require the following steps for Focus and Review Schools: the district will attend CSDE training sessions; schools will undergo instructional and operational audits to understand the root causes of low student achievement and assess the schools' needs to address these issues; the district will work with the CSDE to develop school redesign plans; and the district will implement the proposed interventions upon receiving CSDE approval. Funds allocated for this purpose will be held until the interventions are approved.

- **Evaluation-Informed Professional Development:** In light of the new statutory requirement that districts transition from the current CEU system to a job-embedded, evaluation-informed professional development model by the 2013-14 school year, the district will begin preparation for this transition during the current school year. The district will attend CSDE training sessions related to this subject.

- **New school accountability system:** The district will work with the CSDE to ensure a successful transition to the new school accountability system described in Connecticut's approved ESEA waiver application. The district's student performance goals will be set in accordance with the waiver's prescribed targets.

- **Common Core:** The district will work with the CSDE to ensure the successful implementation in the district of Common Core State Standards and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium's assessments.

- **Strategic Planning and Preparation of Year 2 Alliance Application:** The district will participate in a substantial planning process, in partnership with the CSDE, to prepare its Year 2 application. The district will be prepared to modify the current five year implementation plan described in its Year 1 application.

- **Monitoring:** The district will work with the CSDE to develop structures, measures, and procedures for the ongoing monitoring of reform initiatives included in Alliance District Plans. On the basis of such data, monitoring systems will track, on an interim and annual basis, fidelity of plan implementation, anticipated improvement in adult practices, and progress towards achievement of student outcomes.

- **Training session attendance:** The district will deploy central office staff to attend periodic CSDE training and support sessions related to Alliance District implementation.

Signed,

Superintendent of Schools