



EDUCATION REFORM UPDATE Alliance District Application Approvals

Public Act 12-116, An Act Concerning Educational Reform, created the Alliance District program with the goal of providing new resources to the districts in greatest need – provided they embrace key reforms to position their students for success. To achieve this, the law 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. Each district's receipt of its designated allocation is conditioned upon district submission, and Connecticut State Department of Education approval, of an Alliance District Plan for the expenditure of the new increment of conditional funds in the context of the district's overall strategy to improve academic achievement.

September 24, 2012

HARTFORD, CT - Connecticut Commissioner of Education Stefan Pryor today announced that the second cohort of Alliance District applications have been finalized, as school district plans from Bristol, Vernon, and Windsor were approved by the Department of Education. Each of the three districts is now eligible to receive additional Education Cost Sharing (ECS) funding based on their locally-conceived, evidence-based reform plans that propose initiatives to dramatically increase student achievement.

Bristol: \$1,390,182

- Expanding an already successful early childhood education program, Bristol has coordinated Alliance District funding with another component of the Governor's education reform bill. The district will add teachers to support new non-fee preschool slots they were awarded under new legislation, increasing support for children at a crucial educational period in their lives. Bristol has also intensified its focus on developing high-quality data analysis tools, in this case, by refining a screening instrument to ensure that the still-limited number of non-fee preschool slots go to children who need them most.
- Acknowledging the paramount importance of literacy in driving achievement across all content areas, Bristol will dedicate a majority of its Alliance District funding to providing supports for students not achieving Goal and challenging students who are. Bristol will target student and adult action in this area by adding new teachers, employing and developing literacy coaches who will train and mentor teachers, and by devoting 20 hours a week of an assistant principal's time at two new K-8 schools to ensure that school leadership has sufficient capacity to align faculty to the increased emphasis on literacy instruction.

Vernon: \$ \$671,611

- Vernon plans to implement the standards-based Common Core curriculum to strengthen classroom instruction and develop Common Core aligned assessments to inform teacher practice.
- Vernon will build capacity to address student needs through intensive, collaborative, job-embedded professional learning by: increasing the number of district-level coaches and focusing their support on K-3 literacy and numeracy, and implementing the state's teacher evaluation and support system.
- Responding with a sense of urgency to the achievement gap, Vernon is devoting a substantial portion of its Alliance District funding to strengthening interventions for students in need of improvement by: implementing additional reading interventions according to need, adding before and after school reading interventions, and ensuring that high-school students have multiple avenues to recover lost credit.

Windsor: \$ \$306,985

- Windsor plans to consolidate, coordinate, and streamline its data-collection and utilization system in order to provide meaningful and actionable data to teachers and school leaders. A district data coordinator will be hired to optimize data collection and spearhead professional development for teachers and administrators to ensure that each adult in the district will be able to respond effectively to data.
- Windsor will also start a Leadership Development Academy. Through the Academy, the local Board of Education, existing school and district leaders, and the leaders of the future, will receive professional development, mentoring, and coaching in instructional leadership and school administration.

Application Process

- All 30 designated Alliance Districts submitted applications in August
- The iterative process involves rounds of dialogue between the Department and districts to ensure proposals fulfill program guidelines and goals
- Districts have been asked to revise, expand, focus, and/or clarify components of their proposed plans
- Districts were asked to consult local stakeholders, including the local bargaining unit, and submit plans to their boards of education

Approved Alliance District Plans

- Cohort one (approved September 6, 2012): Ansonia, Naugatuck, and Windsor Locks
- Cohort two (approved September 24, 2012): Bristol, Vernon, Windsor

Alliance Districts Currently in Feedback/Revision Process

- 24 Alliance Districts are revising Alliance plans based on Department feedback: Bloomfield, Bridgeport, Danbury, Derby, East Hartford, East Haven, East Windsor, Hamden, Hartford, Killingly, Manchester, Meriden, Middletown, New Britain, New Haven, New London, Norwalk, Norwich, Putnam, Stamford, Waterbury, West Haven, Winchester, and Windham

Alliance Districts, Year 2

- A short timeframe necessitated expedited reviews and approvals for the 2012-2013 school year; a more rigorous process is planned for Year 2

- The Department of Education has requested that districts commit to working on several priority areas as process shifts to Year 2, including:
 - School intervention and redesign
 - Evaluation-informed professional development
 - Transition to new accountability system described in Connecticut’s approved NCLB waiver
 - Preparation for the Common Core
 - Strategic planning
 - Monitoring of Alliance plan implementation

Alliance Plan Summaries

Bristol

Initiative	Alliance \$	Other \$	Total \$
NEW AND EXPANSION: Increasing participation in high quality NEAYC certified preschool by at-risk learners; refine preschool screening instrument; maintain close contact with parents; maintain active conversations with the Bristol School Readiness Council and Early Childhood Alliance.	\$212,188	\$602,500	\$814,688
NEW: Provide literacy and mathematics support to students not achieving Goal and challenge students exceeding benchmarks. This will be accomplished by expanding the Reader’s and Writer’s workshop models with significant training of teachers and administrators through Lesley University. Administrative staff will be directed to spend time on this goal through training, job embedded coaching, and modeling. There will also be a tiered response for intervention and challenge.	\$1,177,994	\$2,431,262	\$3,609,256
EXPANSION: Analyze disaggregated data to identify areas of strength and weakness among subgroups. Due to significant redistricting, data needs to be merged and compiled in a way it can be used for tiered instructional opportunities.	\$0	\$142,000	\$142,000
EXPANSION: Improve school climate: train all staff and students in Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) program, establish Safe School Climate committees and establish Bully-Free zones at all facilities.	\$0	\$78,550	\$78,550
EXPANSION: Increase number of students who graduate high school prepared for post-secondary education: expand the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program; increase AP course offerings; increase offerings through Tunxis Community College’s “College & Career Pathways” program; implement Student Success Plans; integrate student goal setting into middle school wellness program; increase engagement of subgroups of	\$0	\$85,405	\$85,405

high school students who have history of not graduating; revise and implement guidance program in grades 6-12 with focus on goal setting and becoming college ready.			
NEW: Professional Learning as Inquiry model: this program is in place in half of Bristol's schools and will be carried out in the remaining schools. Teachers identify a roadblock to student learning, research potential solutions, and make group decisions about how to change instructional practices to yield higher performance. UConn professors have helped guide this work in the past.	\$0	\$0	\$0
NEW: Training teachers and administrators in new evaluation model	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTAL	\$1,390,182	\$3,339,717	\$4,729,899

Vernon

Initiative	Alliance \$	Other \$	Total \$
NEW & EXISTING: Strengthen classroom instruction: strengthen clarity and coherence around the implementation and assessment of a guaranteed and viable standard-based common core curriculum; promote the regular collection and analysis of student achievement data to inform instruction at the classroom, school, and district levels; develop and nurture a widely shared vision of what good teaching is; provide on-site, intensive, collaborative and job-embedded professional learning. The school would like to hire Teacher-Coaches.	\$181,611	\$160,000	\$341,611
NEW & EXISTING: Strengthen the social/emotional domain of the SRBI framework. In the 2011-2012 academic year, there were 1,323 incidents reported (does not include those that were not serious enough to report or to include in this application). Current use of PBIS in all seven schools indicates there is growth needed.	\$180,000	\$243,000	\$423,000
NEW & EXISTING: Strengthen SRBI Tier 2 and 3 interventions – must work hard to eliminate gaps at lower grades, but also aggressively intervene with students throughout their schooling.	\$250,000	\$420,700	\$670,700
NEW & EXISTING: Increase family engagement in schools. Have developed structures to include families in decision making as well as to increase engagement in the schools. Schools are at varying levels of implementation with different degrees of success. The school climate survey was completed by a very small number of families. Will review school compacts, develop the Community School at Maple Street, explore feasibility of offering childcare on early release days to families, and reinstate truancy/residency counselor to monitor attendance.	\$60,000	\$180,000	\$240,000
\$671,611 AD Funds available	\$671,611	\$1,003,700	\$1,675,311

Windsor

Initiative	Alliance \$	Other \$	Total \$
Holistic Accountability Framework: Add a leadership learning consultant, attend Board goal-setting workshops; provide initial training/retraining for district data team meeting; and develop district report card.	\$0	\$17,500	\$17,500
Robust Data Systems to Inform Practice: Add administrative position to coordinate district data systems; implement NWEA MAP assessments; implement Milepost software; and implement Edline learning management system.	\$57,000	\$147,000	\$204,000
Establish Windsor Leadership Development Academy: Implement leadership and learning center contract; contract with consultants to provide job-embedded professional development/coaching to building principals and teachers; develop program which grants teachers reimbursement for professional development programs and/or courses.	\$76,000	\$58,300	\$134,000
School Climate: Designate staff from Oliver Ellsworth and Poquonock to attend PBIS Year 1 training, designate staff from Clover Street, JFK, Oliver Ellsworth and Poquonock to attend PBIS Year 2 training, and designate school staff from all schools to attend PBIS Year 3 training.	\$27,000	\$29,000	\$56,000
At-Risk Program: Recruit and hire program leader; develop grant process to support community efforts to assist at-risk students working collaboratively with schools, develop grant process to support community efforts to assist at-risk students working collaboratively with schools; plan internships and job shadow experiences for high school students; and provide youth development activities.	\$122,000	\$0	\$122,000
Curriculum Development: Contract with consultants to support curriculum development; begin curriculum development process; and provide ongoing workshops to support Tier I implementation.	\$24,000	\$79,845	\$103,845
Carry Over for Unanticipated Costs	\$985.00	\$0	\$985.00
	\$306,985	\$331,645	\$638,630