



# Turnaround Office Newsletter



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**I. Message from the Chief Turnaround Officer**

Dear Colleagues,

I want to thank those of you who were able to attend our Alliance District convening last month. Over the past few weeks since coming on board, I have had the opportunity to come out to some of your districts and visit with superintendents and principals of the Commissioner’s Network schools. I plan to continue making these visits and discussing both my vision for the future of the Turnaround Office as well as listening to the challenges that you as on-the-ground leaders are facing. These conversations are a helpful tool in shaping the supports that we can and will provide.

Our Turnaround Office staff has been hard at work crafting the upcoming NetStat conference to be held on Friday November 13, 2015. Our hope is that you will find it to be both informational and timely. Going forward we want to give you opportunities to learn best practices from each other so your feedback is crucial to informing future agendas.

The Alliance District monitoring window is coming up. I will be joining some of our consultants as they meet with you for these monitoring meetings. Please continue the most important work of educating our children.

Best regards,  
*Desi Nesmith*  
 Chief Turnaround Officer

**II. Important Dates in 2015**

- November 6:** Alliance District Data Tracker Submission
- November 13:** NetStat Session
- November 16 - December 4:** Network/AD Monitoring Meetings
- November 24:** SRBI Symposium
- January 27:** Alliance District Convening
- January 29:** Second AD School Buildings Grant Application Deadline



Click below to access the Turnaround Office Calendars



### III. Alliance District Convening

A special thank you to all district leaders, school leaders, and partners that participated in the Alliance District convening on October 8, 2015. Seven breakout sessions focused on enhancing students and staff through education, empowerment, and enlightenment. Alliance District leaders calibrated with colleagues and attendees provided thoughtful feedback about the convening. To view the materials from the Convening which are posted on the CSDE Web site, please [click here](#). If you have ideas regarding presenters, topics, and/or workshop sessions that you would like to see at future Alliance District Convenings, please contact Kelly Mero in the Turnaround Office at 860-713-6739 or [kelly.mero@ct.gov](mailto:kelly.mero@ct.gov).

### IV. SRBI Symposium

The Fall 2015 SRBI Symposium III will be held on Tuesday, November 24, 2015 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Crowne Plaza, Cromwell. The keynote speaker will be Rob Travaglini, Receiver for Winchester Public Schools. A variety of elementary and secondary breakout sessions will include: Effective Teaching Strategies to Maximize Instructional Time, Executive Functioning Skills and Its Effect on Student Performance, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in Planning and Implementing Interventions, Writing Strategies Across the Tiers, and SRBI + Math: Adding It Up. To register for this event, please [click here](#).



### V. Alliance District and Network School Data Submission

At this point, all Alliance Districts and Network schools have received unique links from their Turnaround Office point of contact allowing access to their district's online tracker and toolkit. **By November 6, 2015**, please submit data and progress updates for your districts and Network schools via your district's online tracker. Additionally, during your fall monitoring meeting, please be sure to have a projector available to project your district and school's data and progress updates. If you have any questions regarding this process, please reach out to your Turnaround Office point of contact.

### VI. Finance and Grants



Priority School District 2015-16 Summer School/School Accountability and Extended School Hours grant applications have been reviewed. District funds will be accessible shortly or districts will be notified regarding any needs for additional information. As a reminder, both grants carry a grant period of July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016.

A reminder that the second of three deadlines for the "General Improvements to Alliance Districts' School Buildings" grant application, administered through Department of Administrative Services (DAS), is January 29, 2016. These grants are offered for building deferred maintenance and updating projects which would not otherwise qualify for school construction grants. For questions, please contact Michelle Dixon at DAS at (860) 713-6490.

### IV. November NetStat Session

NetStat will be held on Friday, November 13, 2015 at the Four Points Sheraton in Meriden. The first session will be an introduction to the new Connecticut English Language Proficiency (CELP) Standards. Other sessions include the New Accountability System, A Deeper Dive into the New CELP Standards, Tools of the Trade for the Smarter Balanced Assessment, and Closing the Achievement Gap at Bloomfield High School. If possible, please bring a team of four, including an ELL teacher or administrator. To register for the November 13, 2015 NetStat Session, please [click here](#).

## VII. Strategies to Reduce Chronic Absenteeism

### Key Insights about Engaging Parents in Ending Chronic Absence Webinar

A new webinar sponsored by The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading shares recent research conducted by the Ad Council to better understand how to support parents around attendance and how to change parental perceptions about attendance.

The webinar will review four lessons learned from the research:

- Parents universally want what's best for their kids.
- Parents aren't connecting the dots between early attendance and later outcomes.
- Parents aren't connecting the dots between day-to-day absences and year-end totals.
- Schools Inadvertently Reinforce Absence-Causing Behaviors.



It concludes with guidance for the best way to frame messages to parents about the importance of attendance for maximum impact.

[Webinar Recording](#)

[Webinar PowerPoint](#)

## VIII. LEAD Connecticut Programs

The Turnaround Principal Program is a statewide network for leaders of turnaround schools to provide support in improving the academic program, fostering a positive academic culture, managing human capital, and driving a strategic improvement process. The program includes a July summer institute, monthly principal communities of practice and high-quality executive coaching.

The spring fellowship is the Early Hire Principal Program which is designed to provide turnaround principals with a head start in strategically planning and strengthening capacity. Alliance Districts are encouraged to identify and hire turnaround principals by April, 2016 and enroll them in this intensive spring fellowship. The spring fellowship will better prepare turnaround principals to lead the transformation process in fall 2016.

The Alumni Turnaround Principal Program is for principals who have completed the Turnaround Principal Program. It provides continued networking and learning past year one. The alumni program will provide five community of practice meetings for the 2015-2016 academic year that bring together turnaround principals from all cohorts of the Turnaround Principal Program. The first meeting was October 22, 2015. For more information regarding LEAD CT programs, please contact Evette Avila at [eavila@ctschoolchange.org](mailto:eavila@ctschoolchange.org).

The LEAD CT/UCAPP Residency, a residency model principal training program for Alliance districts in Connecticut, will be seeking applications for the 2016-2017 cohort through an online application process beginning in January of 2016. This one-year principal training program is a joint effort between LEAD CT, UCONN and the CSDE, and focuses specifically on leadership training driven by the LEAD CT Turnaround Principal Competency Framework. A healthy balance of classroom instruction, on-site training and coaching comprise the core components of the program. Further information regarding the Residency program is available by contacting Jennifer Michno, Program Coordinator, at [Jennifer.michno@uconn.edu](mailto:Jennifer.michno@uconn.edu) or 860-978-0249.



## Spotlight on Excellence

### DiLoreto Magnet School, New Britain Public Schools

The New York Times recently highlighted the efforts New Britain has been making toward conquering the problem of Chronic Absenteeism. The article, [linked here](#), begins by following the story of Annabelle, a student at DiLoreto Magnet School. Joe Vaverchak, New Britain's supervisor of attendance, describes the district's discovery of its attendance problem and strategies the district is using to improve attendance.



### Uncas School, Norwich Public Schools

On Friday, October 16, 2015, students, staff, parents, community members and members of the Mohegan Tribe gathered at Uncas School in Norwich for a celebration. The Gathering of the Hearts and Minds celebration has been held for the past three years under the planning and direction of Principal Jason Foster. The school is named after Uncas, the Mohegan Sachem who led the tribe in the early 1600s and aligned it with English colonists, growing its power in Eastern Connecticut at a time of major upheaval. Principal Foster adopted the wolf as the school's mascot in tribute to the tribe. The name Mohegan means wolf people in the tribe's native language. Students and staff members performed songs and poems and discussed the history of the Uncas and the Mohegan Tribe. Mohegan Chief Lynn Malerba was presented with gifts from the school and also presented a gift from the tribe to the school. To view the entire article in the Norwich Bulletin, please [click here](#).

