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CSDE Releases School and District Performance Reports for All Connecticut Schools

Reports Highlight Strengths and Areas for Improvement

(HARTFORD, CT)—The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) today released the [2013 School and District Performance Reports](#), scorecards that inform parents and communities on the overall performance of their schools and districts. The reports are also designed to provide school and district leaders with information that identifies areas of strengths and opportunities for improvement. This release marks the first time that Connecticut’s accountability system is fully implemented, as approved by the U.S. Department of Education as part of this state’s Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) waiver in 2012.

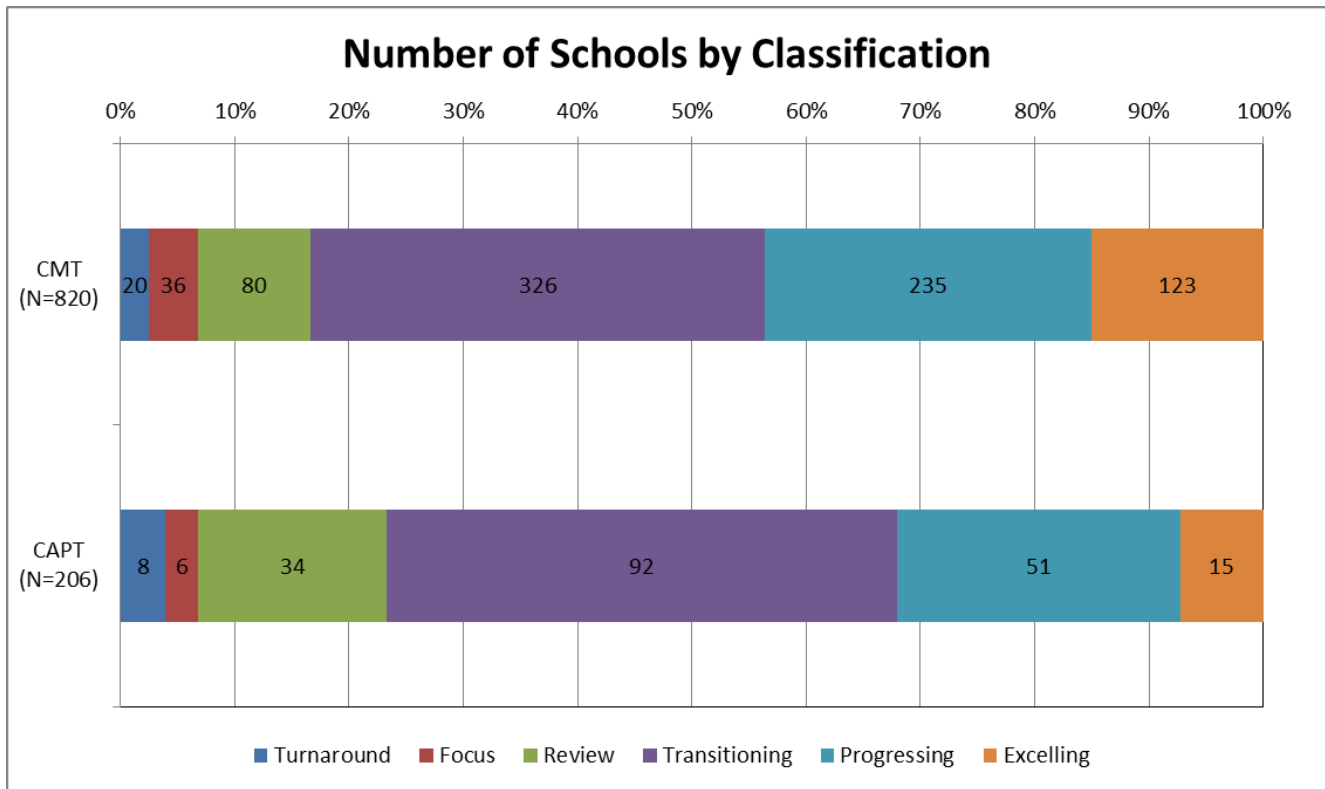
“Our accountability system is designed both to recognize the progress our schools are making and to reveal the challenges where they exist. These reports demonstrate that there are bright spots and best practices as well as areas in need of review and improvement in districts and schools across the state,” said CSDE Commissioner Stefan Pryor. “We encourage educators and parents to draw upon these reports – as well as other forms of input and insight – as they continue working together for our schools’ and our students’ success.”

The school and district reports provide perspective on where a specific school falls under Connecticut’s new accountability system. The reports also contain a breakdown of performance by subject area and subgroup to reveal achievement gaps, highlight areas of strength, and bring attention to where there is room for improvement. Parents and educators are also informed if a school is on track for meeting their long-term goals.

All schools statewide received one of the following classifications: Excelling, Progressing, Transitioning, Review, Focus, or Turnaround. Today’s announcement is the first time schools are categorized as Excelling, Progressing, or Transitioning. In 2012-13, more than two-thirds of Connecticut schools earned a Progressing or Transitioning classification (see Figure 1).

Notably, thirteen schools meet expectations to exit out of Focus School status this year, including Norwich’s John B. Stanton School, a Commissioner’s Network school.

Figure 1: Number and Percent of Schools by Classification Status



Under the new accountability system, all schools also receive an annual performance target. Based on 2012-13 CMT and CAPT data, just over half of Connecticut’s schools met their overall performance targets.

As part of Connecticut’s Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) waiver, this new accountability system is an improvement over the previous No Child Left Behind approach in several ways. This system uses a school performance index (SPI) score that recognizes improvement in student achievement at all performance levels, factors in all tested subjects, and sets higher expectations by aiming for “goal” rather than “proficient.” While the SPI is an important indicator, it is not the only determining factor in a school’s classification. Additional criteria—such as graduation rates, the size of achievement gaps, and attainment of annual SPI targets—also influence a school’s classification.

Over the next few years, as schools transition to Smarter Balanced Assessments and the CSDE seeks to renew Connecticut’s federal ESEA flexibilities, the indicators that inform the performance accountability system will evolve. For example, the CSDE expects to incorporate additional measures of college and career readiness. The department is also exploring the inclusion of factors indicative of school quality as pertains to civics, arts, and fitness programming.

Schools of Distinction

Schools with the highest performing subgroups, schools that are making the most progress, and schools with the highest overall performance are identified annually as Schools of Distinction. The CSDE has identified 73 schools as 2012-13 Schools of Distinction. For a complete list of schools, please visit <http://tinyurl.com/lkntspz>

To access all Connecticut School and District Performance Reports, please visit:
<http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/performance-reports/20122013-reports.asp>

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2013 School and District Performance Reports

Classification Distribution

Within districts, school classifications can vary. Table 1 shows the breakout of school classifications by district type¹.

Table 1: Percent of Schools by District Type within Each School Classification Category

DISTRICT TYPE	SCHOOL CLASSIFICATIONS					
	Excelling	Progressing	Transitioning	Review	Focus	Turnaround
Alliance: All Districts	0.3%	14.0%	42.6%	26.6%	9.6%	7.0%
<i>Alliance: Ed Reform Districts</i>	0.5%	14.6%	15.6%	41.5%	15.6%	12.3%
<i>Alliance: Non-Ed Reform Districts</i>	0.0%	13.1%	75.4%	8.6%	2.3%	0.6%
All Other LEA	23.6%	37.0%	39.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%
RESC	6.5%	32.3%	51.6%	9.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Public Charters	0.0%	40.0%	30.0%	5.0%	20.0%	5.0%
Unified School Dist. #2	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
CT Tech High Schools	0.0%	18.8%	50.0%	31.3%	0.0%	0.0%

It is noteworthy that over 30 percent of the schools in the State's ten lowest performing districts (the Educational Reform districts) fall in the three higher classifications.

Goals under Connecticut's Accountability System

The accountability system establishes the same ultimate goal for all schools:

- SPI of 88 or higher;
- Four-year Cohort Graduation Rate of 94 percent or higher; and
- Holding Power Rate (previously referred to as extended graduation rate) of 96 percent or higher.

While the ultimate goal is the same for all schools, the system is designed to consider every school's starting point when determining annual targets. To establish starting points, the CSDE calculated a baseline for every school by averaging the SPIs from 2009-10, 2010-11, and 2011-12. The baseline was then used to establish annual SPI targets for the school, its subgroups, and subjects such that the gap between the baseline and the ultimate goal is reduced by one-half in six years. Schools with a baseline SPI ≥ 88 are expected to maintain an SPI ≥ 88 . If a school's baseline is low such that its annual target rate will exceed 3 SPI points, the SPI target is capped at 3. This ensures that regardless of starting point, a customized trajectory is created. Achieving annual targets signifies on track achievement toward improving student performance and closing achievement gaps.

Based on 2012-13 CMT and CAPT data, just over half of Connecticut's schools are on track in terms of meeting overall SPI targets. Table 2 shows that target attainment varies across tests and by district type.

Table 2: Percent of Schools Attaining Overall SPI Targets by District Type

DISTRICT TYPE	CMT	CAPT	Total
Alliance: All Schools	28.0%	32.8%	28.8%
Alliance: Ed Reform	28.6%	32.5%	29.3%
Alliance: Non-Ed Reform	27.3%	33.3%	28.2%
All Other LEA	66.9%	74.3%	68.3%
RESC	47.1%	66.7%	53.8%
Public Charters	46.2%	66.7%	52.6%
Unified School Dist. #2	n/a	100.0%	100.0%
CT Tech High Schools	n/a	18.8%	18.8%
Total	50.5%	55.8%	51.6%

Thirteen Focus Schools Meet Expectations and Exit Classification

In fall 2012, 55 Title I schools were identified as Focus Schools. Using 2010-11 CMT data, the CSDE identified 49 elementary and middle schools with at least one of the lowest performing subgroups in the state. Six high schools were identified as Focus Schools because their 2011 four-year cohort graduation rates were below 60 percent. Upon identification, all Focus Schools were required to design and begin implementation of targeted interventions to improve student outcomes.

To exit Focus status, elementary and middle schools are required to demonstrate two consecutive years of improvement by meeting performance targets for the subgroup that was the reason for identification as a Focus School. Thirteen Focus Schools met the required subgroup performance targets in 2012 and 2013. Table 4 lists the schools that showed sustained improvement and exited Focus status this year. High schools will not be eligible to exit Focus status until 2013 graduation rates are finalized and reported in 2014.

Table 3: Focus Schools Demonstrating Sustained Subgroup Improvement and Exiting Focus Status

DISTRICT	SCHOOL	FOCUS SUBGROUP
Bridgeport	Black Rock School	Black/ African-American
Derby	Irving School	Black/ African-American
East Hartford	Dr. Franklin H. Mayberry School	Hispanic/ Latino
East Hartford	Robert J. O'Brien School	Black/ African-American
Ellington	Center School	High Needs
Hartford	Clark School	Hispanic/ Latino
New Britain	Chamberlain School	High Needs
New Britain	Jefferson School	Black/ African-American
New Britain	Lincoln School	Hispanic/ Latino
New London	Winthrop School	Hispanic/ Latino
Norwich	John B. Stanton School	Black/ African-American
Ridgefield	Veterans Park Elementary School	High Needs

Windham	Windham Center School	Hispanic/ Latino
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Achievement Gap Accountability

Connecticut’s accountability model draws appropriate attention to subgroup performance and allows for schools and districts to be held accountable for closing achievement gaps. The minimum number of students needed to publish an SPI for the State’s five traditionally underperforming subgroups and determine target attainment is 20 (in the past with AYP, this was 40). Both subgroup SPIs and subgroup target attainment are reported in the performance reports.

Additionally, the size of a school’s achievement gap factors into its classification. Schools where the difference between the overall SPI and the subgroup SPI for a majority of subgroups is 10 points or greater will drop a classification. For instance, of the 282 schools (245 CMT and 37 CAPT for a combined total of 282) with an overall SPI \geq 88, 54 percent (129 CMT and 22 CAPT for a combined total of 151 schools) received the Progressing and not the Excelling classification; in an overwhelming majority of these schools, gaps for a majority of subgroups were 10 SPI points or greater.

Table 4 provides the number of schools statewide that have subgroups meeting the minimum size requirement for reporting an SPI ($N \geq 20$) and the number and percent of those schools that met their subgroup targets.

Table 4: SPI Target Attainment Rate by Subgroup

	CMT			CAPT			Total % Met
	Count of Schools with Reportable Subgroup	# Met	% Met	Count of Schools with Reportable Subgroup	# Met	% Met	
Black/ African American	344	88	25.6	73	23	31.5	26.6
Hispanic/ Latino	473	161	34.0	89	28	31.5	33.6
Free or Reduced-Price Lunch Eligible	616	225	36.5	141	57	40.4	37.3
Students with Disabilities	585	155	26.5	92	29	31.5	27.3
English Language Learner	212	60	28.3	24	8	33.3	28.8
High Needsⁱⁱ	739	251	34.0	176	71	40.3	35.2

Accountability System Improvement and Validation

The new performance measurement system improves the State’s ability to provide more accurate and appropriate interventions, support and recognition to local schools. Connecticut’s new accountability system improves upon the old one (which was based upon the federal No Child Left Behind approach) in several ways:

- **Recognizes and values improvement in student achievement at all performance levels** unlike the old system, which only recognized movement of students from ‘not proficient’ to ‘proficient’;
- **Raises expectations** by setting the target that all students perform at the ‘goal’ level on the majority of tests they take rather than just perform at the ‘proficient’ level, as in the old system;
- **Integrates all tested subjects**, encouraging schools to improve instruction not only in Mathematics and Reading (as under No Child Left Behind), but also in Science and Writing;

- **Includes graduation rates** as important indicators of high school success;
- **Identifies schools with struggling student subgroups**, which in the past, may have been less visible to parents and educators; and
- **Enables schools to be classified into new categories**, including Turnaround, Review and Focus, Transitioning, Progressing and Excelling Schools, that will enable districts and the State to provide tailored support to individual schools.

The State Department of Education announced in August 2013 that the School Performance Reporting website used to share accountability data in fall 2012 contained inaccuracies. Since that time, all data from 2009-10, 2010-11, 2011-12 and 2012-13 used in the School and District Performance Reports have been independently verified by two external entities:

1. The CSDE engaged an independent audit firm, Blum Shapiro. Blum examined the processes relating to test data and accountability and then proceeded to independently validate and confirm all the SPI calculations.
2. Measurement Incorporated, the State’s testing contractor, also verified all the calculations.

As expected, there was no change to any school classifications announced in fall 2012. Also as expected, the average difference in overall CMT SPIs was less than one SPI point, while that for CAPT was slightly greater than one SPI point.

SPIs are derived through a complex computation that contains certain rules which must be applied to the data. For more information, please review the [Computational Guide](#).

ⁱ **Educational (ED) Reform Districts** — Public Act 12-116 defines an Educational Reform District as being among the 10 lowest performing districts statewide. These 10 districts are named in statute and represent a subset of Alliance Districts (see below). They are: Bridgeport, East Hartford, Hartford, Meriden, New Britain, New Haven, New London, Norwich, Waterbury, and Windham.

Alliance Districts — Public Act 12-116 established a process for identifying Alliance Districts and allocating increased Education Cost Sharing (ECS) funding to support district efforts to improve student outcomes and close achievement gaps. In 2012, the CSDE identified the 30 lowest performing districts. In addition to the 10 Educational Reform Districts, the following districts are also included as Alliance Districts: Ansonia, Bloomfield, Bristol, Danbury, Derby, East Haven, East Windsor, Hamden, Killingly, Manchester, Middletown, Naugatuck, Norwalk, Putnam, Stamford, Vernon, West Haven, Winchester, Windsor, and Windsor Locks.

All Other LEAs — All remaining local and regional school districts and Endowed and Incorporated Academies comprise this category.

RESCs—These are public schools operated by Regional Educational Service Centers throughout Connecticut.

ⁱⁱ **High Needs**—This is an unduplicated count of students in the English Language Learners, Free/Reduced Lunch Eligible and Students with Disabilities subgroups.