

2015-16 Alliance and Priority School District Consolidated Application Guidance

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Sections 10-262u and 10-266q of the Connecticut General Statutes

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2015-16 Alliance and Priority School District
Consolidated Application Guidance

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Levy Gillespie
 Equal Employment Opportunity Director
 State of Connecticut Department of Education
 25 Industrial Park Road | Middletown, CT 06457 | 860-807-2071

PART I: 2015-16 APPLICATION OVERVIEW

1. APPLICATION OVERVIEW

In response to feedback from districts and in an effort to streamline and align district strategic planning processes, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) is pleased to provide a consolidated grant application for 2015-16 for Alliance and Priority School Districts (PSDs). The purpose of the consolidated application is to centralize district reform priorities in one overarching plan, as supported and enabled by Alliance and PSD funding. To that end, the application is designed to ease reporting requirements and, more importantly, generate one unifying plan inclusive of grant expenditures supporting district transformation and school improvement efforts.

2. ALLIANCE DISTRICT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Alliance District program is a unique and targeted investment in Connecticut's 30 lowest-performing districts. C.G.S. § 10-262u established a process for identifying Alliance Districts and allocating increased Education Cost Sharing (ECS) funding to support district strategies to dramatically increase student outcomes and close achievement gaps by pursuing bold and innovative reforms. In total, Alliance Districts serve over 200,000 students in more than 400 schools.

Pursuant to C.G.S. § 262u, each Alliance District's receipt of its designated ECS funding is conditioned upon district submission of and the Commissioner of Education's approval of a plan, district progress and performance relative to that plan, and subsequent annual amendments, in the context of the district's overall strategy to improve academic achievement. The CSDE reviews district plans on an annual basis and approves plans aligned to the goals of the program. Annual plan approval is predicated upon district implementation and performance during the prior year. Proposals for the use of Alliance District funding will be reviewed for the quality of the plan, as well as the degree of alignment between the proposed use of funds and the overall district strategy.

3. PRIORITY SCHOOL DISTRICT OVERVIEW

The PSD grant was established to provide support for school districts with the greatest academic need. During the 2015-16 school year, 14 Alliance Districts also qualify as PSDs. Such designation provides for additional funding and also imposes additional responsibilities. As outlined in C.G.S. § 10-266q, the PSD grant provides funds to support districts in the pursuit of all or some of the following eight approved reform areas:

1. Create or expand innovative programs related to dropout prevention.
2. Establish alternative and transitional programs for students having difficulty succeeding in traditional educational programs.
3. Create academic enrichment, tutorial and recreation programs or activities in school buildings during non-school hours and during the summer.
4. Develop or expand extended-day kindergarten programs.
5. Develop or expand early reading intervention programs which include summer and after-school programming.
6. Enhance the use of technology to support instruction or to improve parent and teacher communication.
7. Strengthen parent involvement in the education of children, and parent and other community involvement in school and school district programs, activities and educational policies.
8. Obtain accreditation for elementary and middle schools from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.



PSDs must use at least 20 percent of the grant funding to support early reading interventions.

4. 2015-16 LIST OF ALLIANCE AND PRIORITY SCHOOL DISTRICTS

The following 30 districts are entering their fourth year in the Alliance District program. During 2015-16, 14 of these districts also qualify as PSDs and are identified with an asterisk (*) below.

Ansonia	East Hartford*	Manchester	New London*	Waterbury*
Bloomfield	East Haven	Meriden*	Norwalk*	West Haven
Bridgeport*	East Windsor	Middletown	Norwich*	Winchester
Bristol	Hamden	Naugatuck	Putnam*	Windham*
Danbury*	Hartford*	New Britain*	Stamford*	Windsor
Derby	Killingly	New Haven*	Vernon	Windsor Locks

5. APPLICATION SECTIONS AND DEADLINES

The 2015-16 application consists of the following sections due in draft form on April 24, 2015:

Section:	Format:
1. 2015-16 Consolidated AD/PSD Application and Budget	Separate Excel template
2. Statement of Assurances	Appendix A

6. APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Carefully review and follow all directions when completing the various sections of the consolidated district application. Complete all of the required sections. Year 4 consolidated applications must be submitted electronically in Microsoft Excel (Section 1) and Word (Section 2) formats to SDEAllianceDistrict@ct.gov by 4:00 PM (EST) on Friday, April 24, 2015. Alliance Districts will have the opportunity to revise and finalize 2015-16 consolidated AD/PSD applications in July 2015 upon the release of FY 16 allocations and assessment data. Please ensure budget proposals align to guidance provided in the Local Fiscal Processing Manual and to the Uniform Chart of Accounts (available here: <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/dgm/payments/lfpm.pdf>).

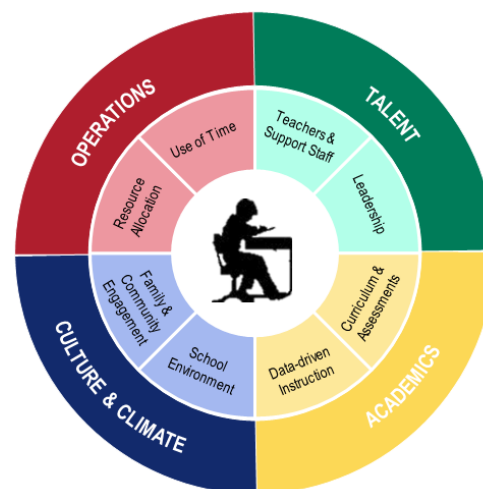
PLEASE NOTE: All applications become the property of the CSDE and are subject to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act.

7. TIMELINE SUMMARY

Activity:	Timeframe/Deadline:
1. CSDE releases the 2015-16 AD/PSD application guidance packet and planning template.	February 2015
2. Alliance Districts submit draft 2015-16 AD/PSD applications and assurances.	April 24, 2015
3. Alliance Districts revise and finalize 2015-16 AD/PSD plans and budgets informed by assessment data and final allocations.	July TBA, 2015

8. REFORM PRIORITIES

The CSDE’s turnaround framework identifies four research-based levers to dramatically improve district and school performance and student achievement. School and district success requires strong systems and performance in each of the following areas shown in the framework at right:

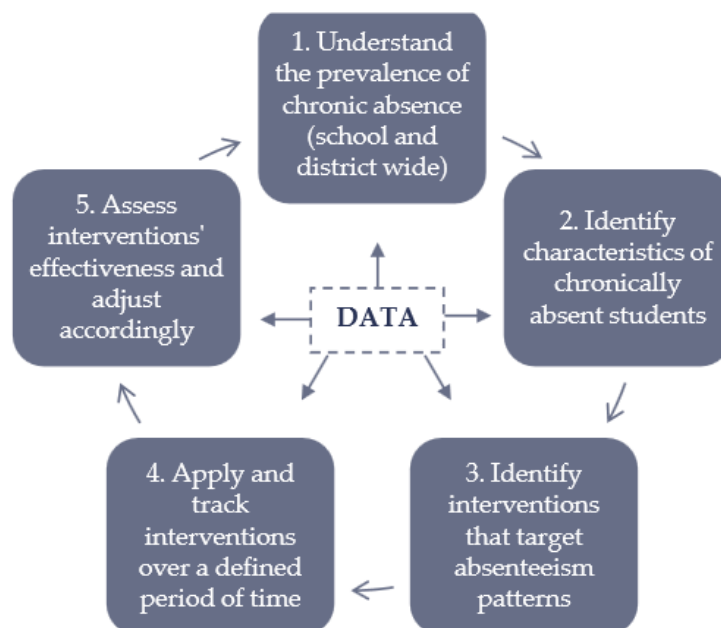


1. **Talent:** Employ systems and strategies to recruit, hire, develop, evaluate, and retain excellent school leaders, teachers, and support staff.
2. **Academics:** Design and implement a rigorous and engaging academic program that allows all students to achieve at high levels, including aligned curricula, instruction, and assessments.
3. **Culture and Climate:** Foster a positive learning environment that supports high-quality teaching and learning, and engages families and the community as partners in the educational process.
4. **Operations:** Create systems and processes that promote organizational efficiency and effectiveness, including through the use of time and financial resources.

9. 2015-16 PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Requirement #1: All Alliance Districts must have an educator evaluation plan approved by the CSDE’s Talent Office in order to be considered for approval of the district’s 2015-16 AD/PSD consolidation application.

Requirement #2: Alliance Districts with a 2013-14 student chronic absenteeism rate exceeding 10 percent must establish chronic absenteeism reduction as a priority in their 2015-16 AD/PSD application (see Culture and Climate tab/section). These districts must pursue comprehensive strategies aligned to elements 2-5 in the diagram shown at right.¹ During the May 7, 2015 Alliance District convening, districts will receive more information about this requirement and learn about best practices, strategies, and potential partnerships to decrease chronic absenteeism.



¹ John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities. (2012, April). *Collaborative Approaches to Reducing Absenteeism Among K-12 Students Policy Fact Sheet*. Retrieved from Stanford University: http://jgc.stanford.edu/resources/policy_fact_sheets/Absence_Interventions_PFS.pdf



10. QUESTIONS

Any and all questions regarding the Alliance and PSD programs and consolidated 2015-16 application should be directed to districts' CSDE points of contact and/or:

Iris White
Turnaround Office
Connecticut State Department of Education
Telephone: (860) 713-6794
Email: Iris.White@ct.gov



Appendix A. Statement of Assurances

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
STANDARD STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES | GRANT PROGRAMS

PROJECT TITLE: 2015-16 Alliance and Priority School District Consolidated Application

THE APPLICANT: _____ **HEREBY ASSURES THAT:**

(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)

References in this section to “contract” shall mean this grant agreement and to “contractor” shall mean the Grantee.

(a) For purposes of this Section, the following terms are defined as follows:

- i. "Commission" means the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities;
- ii. "Contract" and “contract” include any extension or modification of the Contract or contract;
- iii. "Contractor" and “contractor” include any successors or assigns of the Contractor or contractor;
- iv. "Gender identity or expression" means a person's gender-related identity, appearance or behavior, whether or not that gender-related identity, appearance or behavior is different from that traditionally associated with the person's physiology or assigned sex at birth, which gender-related identity can be shown by providing evidence including, but not limited to, medical history, care or treatment of the gender-related identity, consistent and uniform assertion of the gender-related identity or any other evidence that the gender-related identity is sincerely held, part of a person's core identity or not being asserted for an improper purpose;
- v. “good faith" means that degree of diligence which a reasonable person would exercise in the performance of legal duties and obligations;
- vi. "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;
- vii. "marital status" means being single, married as recognized by the state of Connecticut, widowed, separated or divorced;
- viii. "mental disability" means one or more mental disorders, as defined in the most recent edition of the American Psychiatric Association's "Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders", or a record of or regarding a person as having one or more such disorders;
- ix. "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 Connecticut General Statutes § 32-9n; and
- x. "public works contract" means any agreement between any individual, firm or corporation and the State or any political subdivision of the State other than a municipality for construction, rehabilitation, conversion, extension, demolition or repair of a public building, highway or other changes or improvements in real property, or which is financed in whole or in part by the State, including, but not limited to, matching expenditures, grants, loans, insurance or guarantees.

For purposes of this Section, the terms "Contract" and “contract” do not include a contract where each contractor is (1) a political subdivision of the state, including, but not limited to, a municipality, (2) a quasi-public agency, as defined in Conn. Gen. Stat. Section 1-120, (3) any other state, including but not limited to any federally recognized Indian tribal governments, as defined in Conn. Gen. Stat. Section 1-267, (4) the federal government, (5) a foreign government, or (6) an agency of a subdivision, agency, state or government described in the immediately preceding enumerated items (1), (2), (3), (4) or (5).

- (b) (1) 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, gender identity or expression, mental retardation, mental disability 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; and 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, gender identity or expression, mental retardation, mental disability or physical disability, including, but not limited to, blindness, unless it is shown by the Contractor that such disability prevents performance of the work involved; (2) 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; (3) the Contractor agrees to provide each labor union or representative of workers with which the Contractor has a collective bargaining Agreement or other contract or understanding and each vendor with which the 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; (4) the Contractor agrees to comply with each provision of this Section and Connecticut General Statutes §§ 46a-68e and 46a-68f and with each regulation or relevant order issued by said Commission pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §§ 46a-56, 46a-68e and 46a-68f; and (5) 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 Connecticut General Statutes § 46a-56. If the contract is a public works contract, the Contractor agrees and warrants that he will make good faith efforts to employ minority business enterprises as subcontractors and suppliers of materials on such public works projects.

- (c) 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.
- (d) The Contractor shall develop and maintain adequate documentation, in a manner prescribed by the Commission, of its good faith efforts.
- (e) The Contractor shall include the provisions of subsection (b) of this Section 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 Connecticut General Statutes §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.
- (f) The Contractor agrees to comply with the regulations referred to in this Section as they exist on the date of this Contract and as they may be adopted or amended from time to time during the term of this Contract and any amendments thereto.
- (g) (1) 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 the State of Connecticut, and that employees are treated when employed without regard to their sexual orientation; (2) 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; (3) the Contractor agrees to comply with each provision of this section and with each regulation or relevant order issued by said Commission pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes § 46a-56; and (4) 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 Connecticut General Statutes § 46a-56.

(h) The Contractor shall include the provisions of the foregoing paragraph 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 Connecticut General Statutes § 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)* _____

Title: *(typed)* _____

Date: _____