

Turnaround Office News



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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Message from the Chief Turnaround Officer

Dear Colleagues,

I want to remind you of an Alliance District opportunity. The Turnaround Office released the Commissioner's Network Expression of Interest application on Wednesday, February 22, 2017. As is customary, schools will be applying for a planning year with the Turnaround Office during the 2017-2018 school year. Any of the state's Turnaround or Focus schools are eligible to apply. The application should be submitted on or before March 17, 2017.

Please note that an expression of interest in no way guarantees Network participation or grant funding. Future selection and an invitation to initiate the planning process will be contingent on available funding, legislative authorization, and plan quality. As always, if you have questions please don't hesitate to contact me directly.

In closing, our final Alliance District Symposium of 2016-17 will be held on Friday, April 7, 2017. You will be receiving an agenda in the coming days. Thank you for your continued efforts on behalf of all students.

Desi D. Nesmith

Chief Turnaround Officer

Turnaround Office Important Dates



- April 7: Alliance District Symposium
- April 28: Network NetStat Session
- March 6—24: Network/AD Monitoring Meetings

Lincoln Bassett Community School in New Haven

Lincoln Bassett Community School's mission is to educate their children and equip them with the intellectual, emotional, and social tools necessary to become thriving, contributing and productive members of the community. The staff stays true to their mission and vision, and as a result Lincoln Bassett has seen double-digit gains on the Smarter Balanced Assessment. These initiatives are led by a dynamic leadership team which includes the Principal, Assistant Principal, Director of Operations, Climate and Culture Director, Data/Technology/Truancy Coach, Literacy Coach and Math Coach. All members serve as instructional leaders and evaluators. Daily Professional Development is driven not only by student assessment data but also by staff needs, observation trends and teacher voice sought through feedback surveys. This creates a cycle of development for staff. The staff is devoted to understanding the issues students encounter on a daily basis. As courageous educators, the staff identify and nurture a passion for equity as a family.



East Hartford Middle School

In November 2016, East Hartford Middle School had the opportunity to partner with Kappa Kappa Gamma (KKG) to implement the Girls Academy. Throughout EHMS's history, this was one of the most powerful and impactful experiences ever offered to students. The program was directed and facilitated by KKG alumni and active members from UCONN, Syracuse, Trinity, Carnegie Melon, Illinois and Washington. Keeping the challenges facing our young girls in mind. KKG empowered and inspired EHMS girls to believe in themselves, to develop their personal identity and to find ways to impact the community. The girls left the weekend Girls Academy with



confidence, a renewed sense of hope, and with a plan to make great things happen for themselves and others. School Leaders continue to work to build a sense of community at EHMS. This involves a true grass roots movement that is geared towards empowering young people to understand themselves, their talent, and the many ways that they can positively contribute to the EHMS community. School leaders plan to continue to cultivate these opportunities as a school. As the school, ESMS commits to truly investing in its students—they in turn will truly invest in EHMS!

Hamden Middle School Navigator Program

Hamden Middle School's Pioneer and Navigator teams are oriented around experiential, and project-based learning. The teams rely on strong cross-curricular instruction and the creation of an influential and supportive learning community to support students who have not succeeded in traditional classroom environments. Both teams are dedicated to the idea that the most vital products that we grow or build are our students. The teams work in close cooperation with partners like Mystic Seaport, Massaro Community Farm, and Community Mediation to support both curricular and social development goals.

From a current parent of a student on Team Navigator: "I know that my son would not be as successful as he has been this school year if he were not on this team... For the first time ever he actually enjoys school and when he comes home he can't wait to tell me about what they learned and how they went about learning it. The Navigator team has had such a positive effect on him; I am truly grateful that he has been allowed the opportunity to be a part of it."

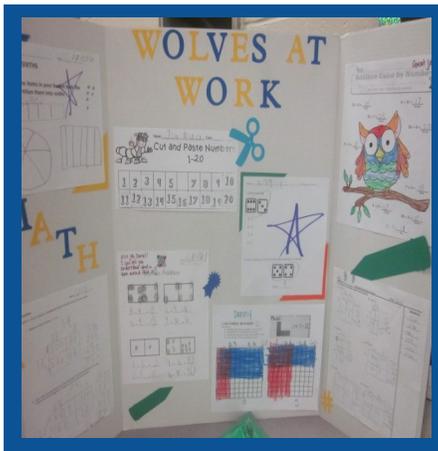


Uncas Elementary School

On January 13th Uncas Elementary held its annual Gathering of Hearts and Minds. The Gathering of Hearts and Minds celebrates Uncas School's namesake, Sachem Uncas and the school's ongoing partnership with the Mohegan Tribe. The event showcased student work, including poem and essay readings, as well as performances from the 4th and 5th grade students.

Superintendent Abby Dolliver, Chief Lynn Malerba of the Mohegan Tribe, and Mayor of Norwich, Mrs. Debercy Hinchey were some of the special guests who shared in the celebration. Mrs. Dolliver presented the Mohegan Tribe and the Uncas students with a book titled Big Wolf and Little Wolf by Nadine Brun-Cosme.

Fourth grade student Takeema Cook read an essay titled "Tradition and Values" and the kindergarten and 3rd graders read a poem titled, "Start in the Heart." Other performances included a traditional song by Justin Scott of the Mohegan Tribe as well as the Uncas chorus singing a variety of songs, such as 'Go My Son' which has been the Uncas School song for over 25 years. The ceremony also included an exchanging of gifts between Uncas School and the Mohegan Tribe. Guests and visitors were also able to view various pieces of student work on display and a mural of a wolf (Uncas School's mascot) which was painted on the library wall.





School Year 2015-16 Shows Decrease in Chronic Absenteeism Rate

During the School Year 2015-16, data show that chronic absenteeism rates decreased across the state. This is a clear sign that all of our collaborative efforts to keep students across Connecticut in school and engaged are having a positive impact. The number of chronically absent students dropped to 9.6 percent in 2015-16, down from 10.6 percent the year before and down from a high of 11.5 percent in 2012-13. The decline in Connecticut's chronic absenteeism rate means that over 10,000 more students are attending school on a daily basis than four years ago.

The data also shows that while minority students have disproportionately high rates of chronic absenteeism when compared with their white peers, rates of chronic absenteeism are decreasing for black and Hispanic students in Connecticut. In 2015-16, the chronic absenteeism rate for Hispanic students was 15.7 percent, down from 19.1 percent in 2012-13. For black students, the rate was 14.5 percent in 2015-16, down from 16 percent in 2012-13. The new data is available on the CSDE's data portal, [EdSight](#). The department released the data as part of a Chronic Absenteeism [presentation](#) delivered to the State Board of Education on November 2, 2016, and announced in a subsequent [press release](#).

"We have identified several areas where we are shifting our focus to fulfill our promise of an excellent public education for every Connecticut child. One of those focus areas is chronic absence," said Commissioner of Education Dianna R. Wentzell. "We want every public school student in our state to be in school and engaged. That means we have to work with families, educators, and community stakeholders to decrease the number of days that students are out of school."

The data shows positive trends towards reducing chronic absence in many Alliance Districts and Commissioner's Network Schools. Search for your district's or school's data on [EdSight](#). Trend data is available from 2011-12 to 2015-16.

A new guidance document for reducing chronic absenteeism will be released in the near future. For additional information on addressing chronic absenteeism, please visit the [Chronic Absenteeism webpage](#) or contact Kari Sullivan at kari.sullivan@ct.gov or 860-807-2041.

Mathematics Family Engagement Institute for Educators

In support of the recommendations in the Commissioner's Council on Mathematics Report, the CSDE, in partnership with WestEd, is offering a three-day Family Engagement Institute for educators. This professional learning opportunity will take place at the Radisson in Cromwell, CT from March 7-9, 2017. The aim of this Institute is to support systems change and the reorganization of school family engagement efforts in order to connect specific student learning goals with family supported learning in the home. [Register](#) now!