

# Report on Commissioner's Network Schools

February 2019



Connecticut State Department of Education

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## INTRODUCTION

The Commissioner's Network is a commitment between local stakeholders and the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) to improve student achievement in up to 25 schools. It offers new resources and authorities to empower teachers and school leaders to implement research-based strategies. Schools are selected by the Commissioner of Education to participate in the network for a period of three to five years. Network schools remain part of their local school districts, but the districts and the CSDE secure school-level flexibility and autonomy for the schools in exchange for heightened accountability. The network began in the fall of 2012. At present, there are 15 schools participating in the network.

Subsections (j)(1) and (j)(2) of Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-223h require the CSDE to submit an annual report on the academic performance of schools in the network to the Connecticut General Assembly. Subsection (j)(3) of Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-223h requires the CSDE to submit a final report that evaluates the turnaround plan and the academic performance of exiting schools and make recommendations for the operation of such school. This report fulfills these requirements.

## METHODOLOGY AND DATA

The primary data source for this report are the results from Connecticut's Next Generation Accountability System. This system is a broad set of 12 indicators that help tell the story of how well a school is preparing its students for success in college, careers, and life. A brief overview of the system is contained in [this FAQ](#) and [introductory video](#). The system began implementation in 2014-15. For purposes of comparing and analyzing the academic performance of the network schools, this report will focus on the following indicators from the accountability system:

- Accountability Index
- Performance Index
- Academic Growth
- Chronic absenteeism
- Graduation Rate

In addition to these accountability indicators, the report will also analyze student suspension rates because they are an important measure of school climate and student engagement.

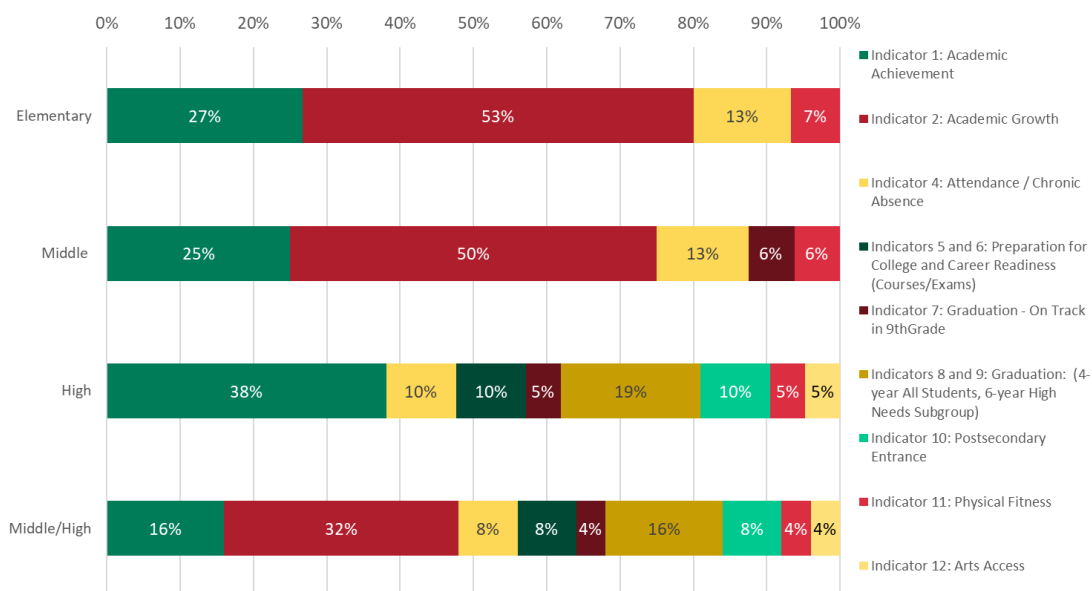
For many of these indicators, disaggregated data by race/ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, special education status, and English learner status are available on the CSDE’s interactive data portal, [EdSight](http://edsight.ct.gov), at <http://edsight.ct.gov>. EdSight also includes the complete accountability report for each school along with the report card for each school. Also included in this report are the aggregate performance evaluation results for educators.

## RESULTS

### Overall Performance: The Accountability Index

The accountability index is the total percentage of possible points earned by the school on all applicable indicators in the system. Each indicator is allotted a maximum amount of possible points. Based on the results achieved on an indicator, the school earns points on a sliding scale toward that indicator. The total points earned divided by the total possible points that could have been earned on all applicable indicators is the accountability index. The maximum possible points allotted for each indicator is visually represented as proportional weights below. Based on school grade configurations, anywhere from 36 percent to 44 percent of all points are allotted separately toward the achievement, growth, chronic absenteeism, and six-year high school graduation rates of high needs students<sup>1</sup>.

*Indicator Weights by School Type for 2017-18*



<sup>1</sup> These are students who are English learners, students with disabilities, and/or those eligible for free or reduced price meals.

*Accountability Index Trend for Commissioner’s Network Schools*

District Name	School Name	When Entered Network	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Bridgeport School District	Columbus School	Fall 2016	51.3	58.0	49.1	53.8
	<b><i>Dunbar School</i></b>	<b>Fall 2013</b>	<b>53.0</b>	<b>41.3</b>	<b>44.8</b>	<b>47.1</b>
	<b>Luis Munoz Marin School</b>	<b>Fall 2014</b>	<b>41.1</b>	<b>43.7</b>	<b>46.9</b>	<b>44.4</b>
East Hartford School District	<b>East Hartford Middle School</b>	<b>Fall 2015</b>	<b>61.9</b>	<b>58.0</b>	<b>56.2</b>	<b>61.6</b>
	<b>Robert J. O'Brien School</b>	<b>Fall 2014</b>	<b>63.0</b>	<b>61.3</b>	<b>66.7</b>	<b>61.3</b>
New Britain School District	New Britain High School	Fall 2017	55.8	55.1	56.3	57.8
New Haven School District	Clinton Avenue School	Fall 2016	54.6	61.2	58.0	66.0
	<b>Lincoln-Bassett School</b>	<b>Fall 2014</b>	<b>48.9</b>	<b>72.4</b>	<b>59.2</b>	<b>55.1</b>
	<b><i>Wilbur Cross High School</i></b>	<b>Fall 2013</b>	<b>52.2</b>	<b>55.3</b>	<b>57.3</b>	<b>57.5</b>
Norwich School District	<b>Uncas Network School</b>	<b>Fall 2014</b>	<b>62.7</b>	<b>56.3</b>	<b>64.8</b>	<b>68.1</b>
Waterbury School District	<b><i>Crosby High School</i></b>	<b>Fall 2013</b>	<b>50.3</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>51.3</b>	<b>52.3</b>
	<b><i>Walsh School</i></b>	<b>Fall 2013</b>	<b>51.5</b>	<b>64.5</b>	<b>58.0</b>	<b>61.5</b>
Winchester School District	Batcheller Early Education Center	Fall 2016	65.1	65.2	88.8	79.8
	Pearson School	Fall 2016	74.0	71.2	65.3	75.3
Windham School District	<b><i>Windham Middle School</i></b>	<b>Fall 2013</b>	<b>56.3</b>	<b>55.3</b>	<b>53.4</b>	<b>53.5</b>
	<b>Statewide Accountability Index</b>		<b>76.1</b>	<b>73.1</b>	<b>73.2</b>	<b>74.9</b>

*Note: Schools in **bold** have been in the network for more than two years. Italicized schools exited the network June 2018.*

Though the network schools perform substantially below the state accountability index, seven of the ten schools that have been in the network for more than two years (i.e., entered in either fall 2013, 2014, or 2015) demonstrated improvement in their accountability indexes from 2014-15 to 2017-18.

## Academic Achievement: The Performance Index

The performance index, which is commonly referred to as the DPI (for districts) and the SPI (for schools), is an aggregate measure of student achievement. It tells us how well students are doing academically in a given school year. The accountability expectation is that the performance index will be 75 or higher. A [7-minute video](#) produced by the CSDE provides an overview of the performance index. The primary advantage of an index approach is that it encourages educators to help improve all students, and not just those on the cusp of the “proficiency” level.

*School Performance Index Trend for Commissioner's Network Schools*

District Name	School Name	English Language Arts			Mathematics		
		2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Bridgeport School District	Columbus School	49.8	45.7	48.3	39.0	37.5	36.1
	<i>Dunbar School</i>	<b>46.1</b>	<b>41.7</b>	<b>48.4</b>	<b>35.5</b>	<b>35.6</b>	<b>38.6</b>
	<i>Luis Munoz Marin School</i>	<b>38.5</b>	<b>40.2</b>	<b>43.9</b>	<b>30.6</b>	<b>34.4</b>	<b>33.8</b>
East Hartford School District	<b>East Hartford Middle School</b>	<b>54.5</b>	<b>54.8</b>	<b>57.1</b>	<b>44.7</b>	<b>44.1</b>	<b>48.4</b>
	<b>Robert J. O'Brien School</b>	<b>56.1</b>	<b>56.7</b>	<b>56.7</b>	<b>45.0</b>	<b>47.7</b>	<b>46.7</b>
New Britain School District	New Britain High School	42.0	44.4	45.3	40.9	41.7	41.9
New Haven School District	Clinton Avenue School	54.5	57.5	61.1	48.5	46.4	51.6
	<b>Lincoln-Bassett School</b>	<b>56.1</b>	<b>56.0</b>	<b>52.8</b>	<b>51.5</b>	<b>53.8</b>	<b>44.5</b>
	<b>Wilbur Cross High School</b>	<b>47.0</b>	<b>45.1</b>	<b>47.4</b>	<b>42.4</b>	<b>40.3</b>	<b>43.3</b>
Norwich School District	<b>Uncas Network School</b>	<b>52.6</b>	<b>54.8</b>	<b>62.5</b>	<b>48.5</b>	<b>52.2</b>	<b>57.4</b>
Waterbury School District	<b>Crosby High School</b>	<b>43.9</b>	<b>41.5</b>	<b>38.5</b>	<b>38.5</b>	<b>36.6</b>	<b>35.8</b>
	<i>Walsh School</i>	<b>53.2</b>	<b>50.5</b>	<b>52.2</b>	<b>44.9</b>	<b>48.3</b>	<b>48.0</b>
Winchester School District	Pearson School	63.7	63.8	65.8	55.6	57.8	66.1
Windham School District	<i>Windham Middle School</i>	<b>55.0</b>	<b>54.5</b>	<b>51.1</b>	<b>44.8</b>	<b>45.7</b>	<b>45.9</b>
	<b>Statewide Performance Index</b>	<b>67.7</b>	<b>67.1</b>	<b>67.6</b>	<b>61.4</b>	<b>62.2</b>	<b>62.7</b>

Note: Schools in **bold** have been in the network for more than two years. Italicized schools exited the network June 2018.

Of the ten schools that have been in the network for over two years, six improved achievement in ELA while eight improved achievement in mathematics from 2015-16 to 2017-18.

## Academic Growth

While achievement is a one-time snapshot measurement of a student's academic performance, growth is the *change* in that achievement score for the same student between two or more points in time. Connecticut's growth model is a matched student cohort growth model. It evaluates the achievement of the same student from one grade in year 1 to the next higher grade in year 2. This is generally considered the gold standard for growth because there are no mismatched students; only those students who are matched across years are included in this calculation.

Connecticut's growth model is based on the Smarter Balanced ELA and Mathematics assessments and applies to students in Grades four through eight. Each student's growth is evaluated against an individualized growth target amount on the Smarter Balanced vertical scale.

The growth targets, if achieved, are designed to get students to higher levels of achievement in future years. A [20-minute video](#) produced by the CSDE provides an introduction to this growth model. For those who have a working knowledge of Connecticut’s growth model, an [8-minute video](#) provides a brief explanation of the two different ways that Connecticut reports academic growth in English language arts and mathematics. The growth indicator used for accountability purposes is the Average Percentage of Target Achieved; this is the *percentage of the growth target* that is achieved on average by all students. The accountability expectation is that this average will be 100 percent for all students and student groups. Since this growth measure applies only to students enrolled in Grades four through eight, high schools are excluded from the growth results table below.

*Average Percentage of Growth Target Achieved – Trend for Commissioner’s Network Schools*

District Name	School Name	English Language Arts			Mathematics		
		2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Bridgeport School District	Columbus School	67.4	37.9	61.2	61.8	42.5	51.1
	<b><i>Dunbar School</i></b>	<b>36.8</b>	<b>36.3</b>	<b>55.2</b>	<b>26.5</b>	<b>42.3</b>	<b>48.3</b>
	<b>Luis Munoz Marin School</b>	<b>49.8</b>	<b>51.6</b>	<b>50.5</b>	<b>47.8</b>	<b>52.0</b>	<b>39.5</b>
East Hartford School District	<b>East Hartford Middle School</b>	<b>52.9</b>	<b>49.5</b>	<b>58.8</b>	<b>47.0</b>	<b>47.8</b>	<b>59.0</b>
	<b>Robert J. O'Brien School</b>	<b>67.2</b>	<b>65.6</b>	<b>62.7</b>	<b>38.3</b>	<b>56.5</b>	<b>50.5</b>
New Haven School District	Clinton Avenue School	64.9	60.3	62.1	66.4	39.1	66.6
	<b>Lincoln-Bassett School</b>	<b>78.5</b>	<b>49.6</b>	<b>44.7</b>	<b>94.6</b>	<b>63.7</b>	<b>33.9</b>
Norwich School District	<b>Uncas Network School</b>	<b>43.6</b>	<b>64.9</b>	<b>63.6</b>	<b>52.3</b>	<b>56.7</b>	<b>50.7</b>
Waterbury School District	<b>Walsh School</b>	<b>76.0</b>	<b>37.3</b>	<b>55.9</b>	<b>62.3</b>	<b>61.2</b>	<b>58.7</b>
Winchester School District	Pearson School	69.1	56.2	61.9	64.1	54.9	79.7
Windham School District	<b>Windham Middle School</b>	<b>58.4</b>	<b>46.4</b>	<b>38.6</b>	<b>49.6</b>	<b>40.7</b>	<b>40.7</b>
	<b>State Average</b>	<b>63.8</b>	<b>55.4</b>	<b>60.7</b>	<b>65.0</b>	<b>61.7</b>	<b>61.9</b>

*Note: Schools in bold have been in the network for more than two years. Italicized schools exited the network June 2018.*

## Chronic Absenteeism

Indicator four of the accountability system is chronic absenteeism. It represents the percentage of students missing at least 10 percent of the days enrolled for any reason. Chronic absence has been shown to be related to low academic achievement, high drop-out rates, and juvenile delinquency. Absences occur due to many factors, e.g., health issues, unstable housing, lack of transportation, student disengagement from school, and safety/climate issues at the school. By

removing barriers to attendance, districts, schools, and community partners can improve school attendance.

### *Chronic Absenteeism Trend for Commissioner's Network Schools*

District Name	School Name	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Bridgeport School District	Columbus School	24.3	24.3	20.3	26.6
	<b><i>Dunbar School</i></b>	<b>28.7</b>	<b>26.6</b>	<b>21.9</b>	<b>33.6</b>
	<b><i>Luis Munoz Marin School</i></b>	<b>25.8</b>	<b>24.5</b>	<b>22.2</b>	<b>26.7</b>
East Hartford School District	<b><i>East Hartford Middle School</i></b>	<b>11.9</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>12.4</b>	<b>15.3</b>
	<b><i>Robert J. O'Brien School</i></b>	<b>16.5</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>14.4</b>
New Britain School District	New Britain High School	39.3	33.3	34.0	37.5
New Haven School District	Clinton Avenue School	23.2	18.7	14.9	18.2
	<b><i>Lincoln-Bassett School</i></b>	<b>30.0</b>	<b>19.5</b>	<b>13.7</b>	<b>10.5</b>
	<b><i>Wilbur Cross High School</i></b>	<b>50.5</b>	<b>41.6</b>	<b>37.4</b>	<b>38.6</b>
Norwich School District	<b><i>Uncas Network School</i></b>	<b>12.3</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>3.1</b>
Waterbury School District	<b><i>Crosby High School</i></b>	<b>34.6</b>	<b>32.0</b>	<b>30.6</b>	<b>31.9</b>
	<b><i>Walsh School</i></b>	<b>21.4</b>	<b>12.9</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>17.1</b>
Winchester School District	Batcheller Early Education Center	12.1	12.2	6.8	8.7
	Pearson School	5.7	4.1	4.8	5.2
Windham School District	<b><i>Windham Middle School</i></b>	<b>19.9</b>	<b>16.4</b>	<b>15.0</b>	<b>11.4</b>
	<b>State Average</b>	<b>10.6</b>	<b>9.6</b>	<b>9.9</b>	<b>10.7</b>

Note: Schools in **bold** have been in the network for more than two years. *Italicized* schools exited the network June 2018.

Of the 10 schools that have been in the network for over two years, seven show lower chronic absenteeism rates in 2017-18 as compared to 2014-15. Consistent declines are evidenced at Lincoln-Basset School in New Haven and at Uncas Network School in Norwich.

## Suspension Rate

The suspension rate is the percentage of students in a school year receiving at least one suspension (in-school or out-of-school) or expulsion. Studies suggest a correlation between exclusionary discipline policies and practices and an array of serious educational, economic, and social problems. These include: school avoidance and diminished educational engagement; decreased academic achievement; increased behavior problems; increased likelihood of dropping out; substance abuse; and involvement with juvenile justice systems.



*Suspension Rate Trend for Commissioner's Network Schools*

District Name	School Name	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Bridgeport School District	Columbus School	9.7	8.0	13.2	10.9
	<b><i>Dunbar School</i></b>	<b>23.3</b>	<b>16.1</b>	<b>14.6</b>	<b>14.1</b>
	<b><i>Luis Munoz Marin School</i></b>	<b>16.2</b>	<b>13.0</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>12.3</b>
East Hartford School District	<b>East Hartford Middle School</b>	<b>23.1</b>	<b>18.6</b>	<b>20.5</b>	<b>22.4</b>
	<b>Robert J. O'Brien School</b>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>*</b>
New Britain School District	New Britain High School	29.2	30.6	24.1	26.8
New Haven School District	Clinton Avenue School	5.5	*	*	3.5
	<b>Lincoln-Bassett School</b>	<b>11.2</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>8.9</b>	<b>12.4</b>
	<b><i>Wilbur Cross High School</i></b>	<b>9.3</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>10.5</b>
Norwich School District	<b>Uncas Network School</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>3.4</b>
Waterbury School District	<b><i>Crosby High School</i></b>	<b>36.0</b>	<b>41.8</b>	<b>37.3</b>	<b>37.8</b>
	<b><i>Walsh School</i></b>	<b>16.9</b>	<b>10.6</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>5.3</b>
Winchester School District	Batcheller Early Education Center	*	*	*	4.7
	Pearson School	3.8	6.5	8.8	3.8
Windham School District	<b><i>Windham Middle School</i></b>	<b>32.1</b>	<b>30.0</b>	<b>23.5</b>	<b>26.3</b>
	<b>State average</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>6.8</b>

Note: Schools in **bold** have been in the network for more than two years. Italicized schools exited the network June 2018.

\* Counts are small and data have been suppressed to protect student confidentiality

Of the 10 schools that have been in the network for over two years, six show lower suspension rates in 2017-18 as compared to 2014-15. Clinton Avenue School in New Haven, Uncas Network School in Norwich, and Walsh School in Waterbury evidence consistent reductions and generally low suspension rates.

## High School Graduation Rate

The four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate is the percentage of ninth graders who graduate with a regular high school diploma in four years or less. In addition to the four-year rate, Connecticut's Next Generation Accountability System incorporates the six-year rate in the accountability system to serve as an important additional measure of high school success. Separate points are awarded for the six-year graduation rate of high need students.

*High School Graduation Rate Trend for Commissioner’s Network Schools*

District Name	School Name	Four-Year Rate (All Students)			Six-Year Rate (High Needs Students)		
		2014-15 Cohort	2015-16 Cohort	2016-17 Cohort	2012-13 Cohort	2013-14 Cohort	2014-15 Cohort
New Britain School District	New Britain High School	70.0	75.5	77.6	67.6	72.5	74.7
New Haven School District	<b><i>Wilbur Cross High School</i></b>	<b>66.2</b>	<b>77.0</b>	<b>81.3</b>	<b>72.5</b>	<b>69.5</b>	<b>69.6</b>
Waterbury School District	<b><i>Crosby High School</i></b>	<b>69.7</b>	<b>74.1</b>	<b>66.3</b>	<b>68.4</b>	<b>74.7</b>	<b>70.7</b>
	<b>State Average</b>	<b>87.2</b>	<b>87.4</b>	<b>87.9</b>	<b>78.6</b>	<b>82.0</b>	<b>81.8</b>

*Note: The Cohort year is the year of on-time (four-year) graduation. Schools in **bold** have been in the network for more than two years. Italicized schools exited the network June 2018.*

The four-year graduation rate of all students is above 75 percent at New Britain High School and Wilbur Cross High School in New Haven but is still below the state average and the ultimate graduation rate target of 94 percent. The six-year high needs graduation rate improved at New Britain High School but is still below the state average and the ultimate target of 94 percent.

## Performance Evaluation Ratings

With the exception of New Britain High School, almost all educators in the Commissioner’s Network schools were rated as Proficient or Exemplary.

*Number of Educators by Rating in Commissioner’s Network Schools, 2017-18*

District Name	School Name	Below Standard	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
Bridgeport School District	Columbus School	0	0	29	10
	Luis Munoz Marin School	0	0	34	18
	<i>Dunbar School</i>	0	*	25	*
East Hartford School District	Robert J. O'Brien School	0	0	26	9
	East Hartford Middle School	0	*	67	23
New Britain School District	New Britain High School	31	*	66	55
New Haven School District	Clinton Avenue School	0	*	36	*
	Lincoln-Bassett School	0	*	22	7
	<i>Wilbur Cross High School</i>	0	0	88	7
Norwich School District	Uncas Network School	0	*	11	9
Waterbury School District	<i>Walsh School</i>	0	0	21	23
	<i>Crosby High School</i>	0	*	62	46
Winchester School District	Batcheller Early Education Center	0	0	22	8
	Pearson School	0	0	11	15
Windham School District	<i>Windham Middle School</i>	0	0	29	13

*\*Represents fewer than six educators. The precise count is not displayed in order to protect confidentiality. Italicized schools exited the network June 2018.*

## SCHOOLS EXITING THE NETWORK

Schools that exited the Commissioner's Network in Spring 2018 include five Cohort 2 schools which entered the Commissioner's Network in Fall 2013. As outlined in Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-223h, schools may participate in the Network for up to an additional two years based upon approval from the State Board of Education. The following schools were in the Network for the full extent of the permissible five years.

- P.L. Dunbar, Bridgeport Public Schools
- Crosby High School, Waterbury Public Schools
- Walsh Elementary School, Waterbury Public Schools
- Windham Middle School, Windham Public Schools
- Wilbur Cross High School, New Haven Public Schools

During Spring 2018, a CSDE Turnaround Office consultant worked directly with school and district administration to compose the Network School Exit Audit Report including school data trends, successful initiatives and remaining challenges in the areas of Talent, Academics, Climate/Culture and Operations, as well as recommendations from the Department to the District. Using the Turnaround Office's School Turnaround Rubric, schools were rated on sub-indicators of Talent, Academics, Climate/Culture and Operations, and a summary of strengths and growth areas were provided to the schools in order to build a stronger understanding of the Network Operations and Instructional Exit Audit findings. In addition, the reports indicate the districts' commitment to sustaining the successful initiatives that the schools have implemented since entering the Network, as well as supporting the schools with remaining challenges.

## SUMMARY

Among schools that have been in the network for more than two years, many are improving including Clinton Avenue School in New Haven, Uncas Network School in Norwich, and Pearson School in Winchester. Specifically, Pearson School evidences strong academic growth, and low rates of chronic absenteeism and suspension. East Hartford Middle School and New Britain High School are trending in the right direction on the academic measures. Wilbur Cross High School in New Haven has shown modest improvement in several measures and has a four year graduation rate above 80 percent. Overall, the state-local partnerships established through the Commissioner's Network School and the Alliance District programs can lead to greater levels of student engagement, growth, and achievement in the network schools.